

Magne Dypedahl (Ed.)

Moving English Language Teaching Forward



Festschrift in Honor of
Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund

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ÇAPPELEN DAMM AKADEMISK

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Preface

Editing this Festschrift in honor of Ragnhild E. Lund has indeed been different from any other editing job. On the one hand, the work has been kept secret from Ragnhild. On the other hand, her presence has been strongly felt throughout the whole process. First of all, the contributors' willingness to be part of this project is a result of Ragnhild's position in the field of English language pedagogy, or English didactics. The same willingness to support the project was shown by the publication fund at the University of South-Eastern Norway, for which we are very grateful. As the personal greetings on p. 311 reveal, however, there has been extra warmth in the responses from contributors in this project that only a very well-respected person can bring forth. There are a number of reasons for this high regard of Ragnhild, but more than anything else, it can be explained by her lifelong and unconditional commitment to both her students and English language pedagogy. As Mona E. Flognfeldt – her co-author of the best-selling textbook *English for Teachers and Learners* – has commented, the guiding question for Ragnhild as a teacher and writer is the following: “What do students need to know?”. And her other principle is to always speak or write plainly. Indeed, there are sure to be many sentence structures and forms of expression in this anthology that Ragnhild would never approve of. Still, we know that she always respects colleagues who really *care* about English language pedagogy. And we all do.

The title of the anthology, *Moving English Language Teaching Forward*, reflects Ragnhild's great contribution to the field of English language pedagogy as a teacher and researcher. While there are many scholars who are doing their fair share in this regard, the authors of this book have in some way or other moved English language pedagogy forward together with Ragnhild, for example as co-writers, fellow doctoral committee members, colleagues at the University of South-Eastern Norway, or just good colleagues sharing the same commitment to English language pedagogy.

Ragnhild's international network is also evident in this anthology. Most notably, she is an original member of the Cultnet group, being one of the teachers and researchers who were invited by Michael Byram to come to Durham, England to meet for the first time in 1997. Byram, or Mike – as he would be called by Ragnhild and other Cultnet members, is arguably the most influential theorist of intercultural competence development and language pedagogy in the world, and he has helped shape policies on teaching and learning languages all over Europe. In chapter 1 of this anthology, he writes about the first meeting of the Cultnet group in 1997 and charts some of the changes that have happened in “the cultural dimension” of language teaching since then. The chapter winds up with reflections made by original members of the Cultnet group, including Ragnhild herself – who of course had no idea she was contributing to her own *Festschrift*.

The other chapters in the anthology have been written by scholars affiliated with universities and university colleges in Norway. In chapter 2, Janice Bland writes about opportunities for deep reading to achieve in-depth learning. In chapter 3, Cecilie Waallann Brown and Jena Habegger-Conti present an argument for the relevance of using photographs for intercultural learning in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. In Chapter 4, Tony Burner and Christian Carlsen report on findings from a European ERASMUS-funded project, OpenEYE (Open Education for Young Europeans through History, Art and Cultural Learning). In chapter 5, Magne Dypedahl presents a four-week intervention study that explores the systematic use and analysis of intercultural encounters in the English classroom. In chapter 6, Mona E. Flognfeldt discusses language-pedagogical theories and recent ELF research with a view to framing useful steps in a post-deficiency approach to English language education. In chapter 7, Sissil Lea Heggernes discusses in what ways recent international developments around the notion of interculturality might enrich English language teaching (ELT) in Norway. In chapter 8, Hild Elisabeth Hoff explores the affordances of literature as an educational medium in the School of the Future. In chapter 9, Sara Barosen Liverød examines the relationship between gamers' and non-gamers' self-efficacy when using English while playing video games at

home and using English in the classroom. In chapter 10, Juliet Munden and Catharine Veronica Perez Meissner report on a study of textbooks in teacher education. More specifically, the chapter investigates authors' perspectives on professional textbooks in English didactics, and one of the participants in the study was Ragnhild – again, without knowing that she was contributing to her own *Festschrift*. In chapter 11, Asli Lidice Göktürk Saglam explores the impacts of learning-oriented online integrated assessment tasks on students' learning. In chapter 12, Delia Schipor and Vilde Smeby Hammershaug present an analysis of language learning strategies in the Norwegian national curriculum for English, LK20. And in chapter 13, Heike Speitz and Gro-Anita Myklevold explore aspects of multilingualism and intercultural competence in the subject of English in the LK20 curriculum in Norway.

All of these chapters have been written with enormous respect for all the work Ragnhild has done to move English language pedagogy forward. In the words of Juliet Munden, Ragnhild is truly “a Dame of English didactics”, which is an appointment Ragnhild could share with Juliet herself. Although the authors have contributed to the anthology because Ragnhild is a Dame of English didactics, the anthology is first and foremost compiled in gratitude for Ragnhild's role as the wonderful, straight-shooting Dame of the English section in Vestfold. She takes responsibility regardless of the task in question, and regardless of what might benefit her own interests. While she may disagree with colleagues on theory or other points, there is no end to how much room she will leave for others to excel and how much support she will offer to make her colleagues the best teachers and researchers they can possibly be. It is a great privilege and a gift in life to work with someone who is always there to take responsibility, give you that uplifting smile and, if necessary, cover your back. We are forever grateful to Ragnhild for really *caring* about English language pedagogy – and us.

Magne Dypedahl

CHAPTER 1

Change and Development in the Cultural Dimension of Language Teaching, and Beyond

Michael Byram

Durham University

Abstract: Ragnhild E. Lund attended the first meeting of the group which became known as Cultnet in 1997. This chapter charts some of the changes which have happened in “the cultural dimension” of language teaching since then by comparing the programme and people of 1997 with the same event in 2021. It is completed by some reflections from others who were there in 1997 and how they have changed but stayed the same in their intercultural lives.

Introduction

In December 1997, a group of 14 PhD students, including Ragnhild E. Lund, met at the University of Durham, England, to talk about “Research Methods in Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Learning”. They were all in the midst of or about to begin their doctoral studies and had had difficulty in finding an appropriate supervisor or felt that they needed help with their research methodology. They had all been in contact with the fifteenth person present at the meeting – the author of this chapter – asking for help in some way. The best way forward seemed to be to invite them to share their concerns and help each other. This was the first meeting of a network which soon after took the name of “Cultnet” and then, in

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2021, “Cultnet: Intercultural Community for Researchers and Educators”, at its 23rd meeting¹ (<https://cultnetintercultural.wordpress.com/>).

The title of a second meeting, in December 1998, was – somewhat grandly – “Second International Research Students’ Conference on Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Teaching”, with a significant change from “cultural” to “intercultural” studies and from “learning” to “teaching”. Later meetings were sometimes described as “symposium” or “meeting” and eventually as “meeting” and not “conference”. This is important because the function of the meetings is to provide an opportunity for talking about work in progress rather than presenting completed studies.

One of the purposes of this chapter is to compare programmes and topics in 1997 with those of 2021 in order to consider what this tells us about the “cultural dimension” in language teaching and its evolution. I use the phrase “cultural dimension” deliberately as a cover term, since terminology has also changed, reflecting the field’s deeper changes. This comparison is a case study which, while it cannot be generalised, can stimulate analysis and reflection in other cases and, perhaps, in the field in general, whatever terminology is used to designate this field.

From 1997 to 2021

Comparing the programs from 1997 and 2021 (the latter held virtually because of the pandemic) reveals the following:

- The focus on methodology in 1997 is prominent in the title of the meeting and participants’ abstracts, whereas in 2021 methodology was present only implicitly, and topics included: citizenship, cultural identities, literature, picture books, teachers’ beliefs, internationalisation, the public engagement of universities, humanitarian aid, linguacultural encounters, pupil mobility etc.

¹ The meetings have taken place every year except 2020, which was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In 1997 all participants, with two exceptions, were concerned with language teaching, most having practised or still practising as teachers, whereas in 2021 the proportion of topics other than language teaching was substantially higher².
- Participants in 1997 were all presenters and, with two exceptions, were “students”, whereas in 2021 “students” were a small minority, and most presenters were in employment as teacher researchers in higher education, including some who had been students in 1997.
- In 1997 the terms used to describe the content of participants’ research included “the cultural dimension”, “teaching culture”, “promoting cultural knowledge”, and “intercultural understanding”, whereas by 2021 other terms appear such as “intercultural competence”, “intercultural awareness”, “intercultural citizens/citizenship”, and one reference to “global citizenship”.
- In 1997 oral presentations were “works in progress” dealing with plans for data collection, methods of analysis, or simply initial plans, whereas in 2021, most presentations were of completed work and, though still a “meeting”, the event had many characteristics of a “conference”.

What does this list tell us?

Most immediately and obviously, there is a change away from worries about the research methods, which may indicate more research confidence in general and in particular that research students have sufficient guidance from their supervisors in ways not evident in 1997.

Secondly, there is an inclusion of other areas of study beyond language teaching, and even beyond education, although language teaching and education are still dominant. The network remains true to its origins.

The presence of references to “citizenship” and education for citizenship in 2021 is a third noticeable feature.³

2 I refrain from statistical analysis since the total of 14 in 1997 became 120 participants and 53 presenters in 2021.

3 There is no denying that the membership of Cultnet Intercultural largely comprises “language people” and “language teachers”. Networks develop like rolling snowballs, bringing more people with similar interests into the group, which currently has approximately 300 members.

Fourthly, the change towards being a conference rather than a meeting for sharing work in progress perhaps indicates more certitude and maturity and, again, a reduced need for help with research design, methodology and so on.

Fifthly, the membership of the network and the presenters at the 2021 meeting include many people who are well established in their careers and who supervise their own PhD students, and this suggests that the field has acquired a degree of maturity and recognition. Such recognition is for both research and teaching, since such people are now also teaching university courses which reflect their research interests.

Finally, the shift in terminology and the strong presence of “intercultural” and to a lesser degree “citizenship” in 2021 suggests a considerable conceptual change as well as a widening of the focus from “language”.

In short, in the specific case of this network of researchers and researcher teachers, there have been substantial changes over the period of two decades or so. Some changes are peculiar to the case – the characteristics of participants and their presentations – and some are probably indicative of developments in research on “cultural studies / intercultural competence”: broadening of focus from language to citizenship as well as from education to migration and de-colonising. Similar changes can doubtless be observed elsewhere⁴.

Will the trends continue?

Future-gazing is notoriously fraught with problems, but the significance of the “intercultural” in a time of globalization, migration and constant interaction among people of different origins and identities is not difficult to predict. Research on social issues that include education will follow – and try to anticipate – societal evolution. The widening of focus in the Cultnet meetings, both within education and beyond

4 At about the same time as Cultnet was founded, the International Association of Language and Intercultural Communication (IALIC) grew out of a series of conferences on “Cross-Cultural Capability”. A similar analysis could be carried out if its programs are still available (www.ialic.international).

education, is not difficult to predict, either. Although this book is concerned primarily with language teaching, it is also predictable – or at least desirable – that language teaching should also turn its attention to societal changes.

And what about the people?

Apart from any intrinsic value this analysis may have, the Cultnet network is, perhaps primarily, a collection of people. Changes in the field of study depend on the research interests and academic careers of such people.

In 1997, the PhD “students” included some recent undergraduates and others in the midst of their career, usually in teaching. The recent undergraduates are now senior academics, and those in mid-career have entered into active retirement – or in one important case is about to do so.

One of the senior academics says that since 1997 she has “come full circle – in a roundabout way! – and am now immersed in care ethics theory and decolonisation”. Another says her ideas have changed substantially:

I (now) think what’s important is not what to teach about culture but what attitudes we, teachers and students, should hold toward others’ cultures. It is widely accepted that we should respect others’ cultures, but it is easier said than done. When a foreign cultural behavior, belief, or value really challenges the core value of my culture, how should I respond to it? And how should I teach my students?

She also emphasises how she would now like to “teach my students through the lens of foreign cultures, how they can understand their own culture more and value it”.

Of those who moved into active retirement, one says:

The voluntary work in which I am engaged draws daily on my experience of straddling the divide between different worlds – regions and nations in the UK, the UK and other nation-states, education and business/industry, private sector and public sector ... all call for mediation between different aspects of the *other*.

Another retiree, who is also working voluntarily, says:

In this voluntary work I have helped African asylum seekers who speak French to find their way through the cultural maze of the British asylum system (I speak French). Intercultural teaching has meant that I have a heightened awareness of a person's cultural identity.

As for the one about to retire, last and most important, Ragnhild refers to her research⁵ on and development of curricula and textbooks as connected with the “cultural dimension of FLT”, explaining that her work has resulted in a book: *Teaching English Interculturally*. She too refers to working with immigrants:

For me, the most fruitful way to work with ICC has been via our growing immigrant population. Most teachers have quite diverse classrooms. When we discuss the opportunities and the challenges of this situation, we get concrete examples that can be related to the teaching and learning – and the use – of English as well.

Whether Ragnhild will follow others into voluntary work is not for me to predict or even suggest. Retirement has many options and, yes, duties, but whatever she does, she has an enviable achievement on which to lean.

5 Ragnhild provided her notes in answer to a request sent to everyone at the first meeting without knowing the true purpose behind this request. I hope she will forgive this minor deception.

CHAPTER 2

Deep Reading and In-depth Learning in English Language Education

Janice Bland

Nord University

Abstract: This chapter focuses on the opportunities of deep reading for in-depth learning. By in-depth learning, not only deepening but also widening of English teaching is meant – embracing cross-curricular learning on subjects that are interdisciplinary and relevant for students’ out-of-school lives. The importance of connectedness for in-depth learning is discussed, and the *how* of deep reading is examined – both the physical aspect of reading – on paper as opposed to reading on screens, and a suggested structure for responding to texts in the classroom. I describe an example of in-depth learning using a framework for deep reading with *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014) by Neil Gaiman, illustrated by Chris Riddell, and incorporating other related texts such as different versions of fairy tales. With the deep reading framework, four interweaving steps suggest ways that students could be supported with unpuzzling, investigating, critically engaging with literary texts, and experimenting with creative response. The suggested activities include reciprocal teaching, exploring the multisensory nature of story, inferencing global issues such as gender, ageism, and ableism, activating agency through media literacy, and creative writing.

Introduction

In this chapter, I question how deep reading of an adolescent-friendly literary text could pursue in-depth learning in English language education. Applying a deep reading framework to Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell’s *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014), I examine how this work (an illustrated

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fairly tale suitable for language students in their mid-teens) might be used for in-depth learning. Goals of in-depth learning include the objectives to help students see connections between their school subjects, help them reflect on their learning and master challenges in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and, most importantly, help them see how their learning can be applied to the world beyond school. In-depth learning is understood to mean that students become invested in their learning as they recognize its immediate relevance for their lives in the real world. In this way, in-depth learning seeks to involve students as agentive and ambitious participants in their own learning. Fullan, Gardner and Drummy (2019) define in-depth learning, as “learning that helps them [students] make connections to the world, to think critically, work collaboratively, empathize with others, and, most of all, be ready to confront the huge challenges that the world is leaving their generation” (p. 66). This seems to link both to Dewey’s approach to education as a mechanism for social change and Freire’s (1985) critical pedagogy approach, in which adults as well as children gain agency through reflecting on problems, developing critical consciousness and critical thinking, while taking on a certain degree of personal responsibility by working on possible solutions.

The role of connectedness and deeper knowledge in moving English language teaching forward

The in-depth learning approach appears appropriate for moving English language teaching (ELT) forward as there is currently a worldwide interest in critical thinking and in-depth learning across school subjects. The field of ELT can well embrace opportunities for critical thinking and in-depth learning as the educational goals of English language education are broad, often including multiple literacy, metacognition, learner autonomy and creative problem solving in addition to interculturality, empathy, diversity competence, engaging in cross-curricular topics and global issues. Fullan et al. (2019) emphasize connectedness for learning in depth – connecting to others, connecting to the world, and connecting to the purpose with passion (p. 68).

There is also at the present time an escalation of online interactions raising demands for criticality precisely while making connections to the world. Social media have been key in helping communications stay open during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Salomon (2016) argues that “it is questionable whether virtual interaction truly functions as a collaborative tool as it usually does not afford the creation of shared beliefs, values and deeper knowledge” (p. 155). Rather, the echo chamber effect of online communication is resulting in societies becoming ever more polarized. Kramsch and Zhu (2016) describe the dangers in the following manner: “Such environments risk isolating them [people] in communities of like-minded peers, makes them vulnerable to electronic surveillance and makes them addicted to peer approbation and peer pressure” (p. 45). Connectedness is central to the notion of in-depth learning, and educational goals of ELT call for intercultural connectedness, in addition to the practice of language skills. Nonetheless, in-depth learning within ELT can be more nuanced and sensitive to the possibility of polarization when taking place in a classroom community of learners. And while ELT can be usefully supplemented by virtual interaction, this must be fully integrated into the pedagogical goals.

Comparing digital reading and print reading for complex cognitive growth

Another issue that needs attention in the context of ELT and in-depth learning relates to reading on paper compared to reading on screens. It is a key educational responsibility to question the wisdom of allowing digital reading to entirely replace print reading in school language education. Norway has widely facilitated the use of digital devices in the classroom; as a result, children use their tablets for writing, illustrating, creating, reading texts digitally (often including the coursebook) as well as retrieving information, quizzes, and digital contests. This development progresses fast, overtaking the research that explores the consequences of this major shift – the move away from physical materials such as print books, pens, pencils, and different kinds of papers. In response, Støle, Mangen and Schwippert (2020) cautiously state, “We need a more nuanced picture of

what various digital technologies are good for, and when long form print (book) is preferable for learning” (p. 10). The research team also warns of potentially changing students’ reading behaviour through encouraging only digital reading: “As online reading typically involves skimming and scanning, rather than reading for pleasure or to learn, it is possible that some children develop a screen reading behaviour that is not beneficial for deep reading for comprehension” (Støle et al., 2020, p. 10).

English-language fiction and nonfiction for children and adolescents are frequently a part of school curricula, including in Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Story apps especially designed for interactivity work well on tablets, can be very motivating and, in shared reading situations, can prompt dialogue in the language classroom. However, the students’ hunting for hotspots in story apps can distract from the story and message (Brunsmeier & Kolb, 2018; Schulz-Heidorf et al., 2021). Therefore, it is imperative that children do not completely lose print reading, which supplies them with opportunities for deep reading. It is also important that teachers, librarians, and curriculum designers become better acquainted with children’s literature scholarship. This is because most kinds of illustrated children’s literature (picturebooks, graphic novels and illustrated chapter books, see Bland 2018b), which are designed to be read as print books, do not work well in digital format. The layout is changed when creating ebooks from multimodal print books, which affects the meaning and the opportunities for artefact emotion. Artefact emotion refers to an aesthetic response to a striking artistic creation, such as a literary text (Hogan 2014), and can be inspired by a combination of meticulous craft and literary cohesion.

Similarly, sensory anchoring of language and meaning is supported when students can touch and smell the books they read. Baron (2015) reminds us of the “physical side of reading: holding books in your hands, navigating with your fingers through pages, browsing through shelves of volumes and stumbling upon one you had forgotten about” (p. xiv). Particularly younger students should be encouraged to “explore and use their senses in a variety of ways to experience language learning” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 5). However,

all students profit from multisensory, whole-person learning, which is also known as head, heart and hands learning (Gazibara, 2013). Students can and do lose the fascination of print books. For instance, I have seen picturebooks left untouched on students' desks after the class of 12-year-olds, who use digital coursebooks as a rule, had listened to a story being read aloud while watching corresponding scanned images in the student teacher's slideshow. It did not occur to any of the students to study the pages and pictures more closely during follow-up oral and written response activities by opening the physical picturebook that lay on their desks.

The relatively new practice of skimming rather than deep reading that is influenced by online browsing encourages many students to understand reading – and writing – as fleeting activities. Baron (2015) emphasizes how reading and writing are intertwined, and ephemeral online reading habits lead to less formality, precision and stamina in students' writing: "Computers, and now portable digital devices, coax us to skim rather than read in depth, search rather than traverse continuous prose. As a result, how – and how much – we write is already shifting" (p. xiii). Carr (2020) maintains that our reading style has fundamentally changed: "What is different, and troubling, is that skimming is becoming our dominant mode of reading. Once a means to an end, a way to identify information for deeper study, scanning is becoming an end in itself – our preferred way of gathering and making sense of information of all sorts" (p. 138).

However, helping students achieve deep concentration on issues through focused reading and listening in addition to sharing thoughts through speaking and writing should be at the heart of ELT work for in-depth learning. A study of Norwegian 10-year-olds conducted by Støle et al. (2020) has revealed the importance of not entirely supplanting print reading with digital reading because children's complex cognitive growth is best achieved through print reading. The strong implications of their study indicate that "in order to ensure comprehension development, children still need time to read enjoyable long-form texts to consolidate reading, develop vocabulary, automaticity and fluency, and thereby comprehension. If this does not happen in the home, it is even more urgent that schools encourage book reading" (p. 10).

A framework for deep reading and in-depth learning

Using carefully selected literary texts, we can combine a focus on both language and in-depth learning; language learning will thereby become central to education and not simply an acquisition of English as a useful commodity. In-depth learning should support our gaining new perspectives on the world and ourselves, which is sometimes known as world-mindedness and defined as “global openness and the disposition to reflect on how our actions and decisions concern us not only locally but also affect all peoples around the world” (Bland, 2022, p. 318). In-depth learning seeks to expand students’ limited subject knowledge and promote cross-curricular learning. When classroom teaching is dependent on memorization and divorced from global culture, opportunities for students to apply their learning beyond school in unfamiliar contexts are lost. The experiential learning approach emphasizes the role of students’ experiences outside of school as significant and relevant for their learning processes. So it is certainly worrying when, as Brevik’s (2016) study indicates, adolescents in Norway tend “not [to] see the educational profits of their out-of-school English usage” (p. 55). For the heart of in-depth learning is two-way agentic learning: students are empowered by having their out-of-school experiences made relevant in the classroom, and further empowered when their classroom learning helps them master fresh challenges by transferring their new learning to different contexts outside of school.

In order to become discerning participants of text, language learners need guidance in exploring ideas, investigating, critically engaging and experimenting with creative response, activities that can begin with picturebooks already in the primary school. Student teachers in teacher education need in-depth support in learning about deep reading of texts that primary and lower secondary language students could manage. A successful literary text aimed at young people is very often accompanied by transmedia stories and reimaginings such as audio books, fanfiction, films, images on the Web and graphic novel versions, which provide additional comprehension support through retellings, all-important shared multisensory experiences, and inspiration for students’ own creativity. They also provide opportunities for critical literacy, for instance

reading against the text. The strong intertextual characteristics of much children's literature is highly valuable for language and literacy learning, however a shortage of pre-service guidance in teacher education with this focus may be a global phenomenon (see Bland, 2019).

Figure 1 presents a framework of four interweaving steps as a potential guiding structure for the deeper exploration of various fiction or nonfiction texts in ELT. With this framework, the learning goals could embrace aspects of multiple literacy, critical thinking, interculturality, diversity competence, global issues, empathy, cross-curricular topics, creativity, metacognition, and learner autonomy.



Figure 1. Deep Reading Framework

Note. Figure reproduced from Bland, J. (2022). *Compelling stories for English language learners: Creativity, interculturality and critical literacy*. © Bloomsbury.

In the light of this deep reading framework, I will examine the opportunities provided by Gaiman and Riddell's *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, a complex literary text that is an object of beauty while being adolescent-friendly, and – I will argue – can support young people's acquisition of deep reading and in-depth learning in ELT.

Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell's *The Sleeper and the Spindle*

The Sleeper and the Spindle (2014) by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Chris Riddell is a reimagining of two interwoven fairy tales, with some dark and ominous elements. The central character is an intrepid woman – a young queen – who succeeds through courage and wisdom (painfully gained through her past experiences with an evil stepmother), where many heroic princes have previously failed. The following ideas make use of the deep reading framework (see Figure 1).

Step One: Unpuzzle and explore

Before reading the story, students can be shown the book and invited to think about the format and predict the genre. The format certainly resembles a picturebook, it has the typical shape, and illustrations on every double-page spread. However, the book is twice the length of a regular picturebook, and the verbal text is detailed and challenging, indicating that this is not a book for elementary learners. Chris Riddell's pen-and-ink illustrations are stunning and sumptuous, and at times menacing. The elaborate black ink drawings are highlighted with flashes of metallic gold in the hardback version and embellished with deep red in the paperback edition. The images are filled with intricate visual storytelling. Students could explore the details of beauty, such as the dark-haired queen and exquisite roses, and look for contrasting symbols of death, for example the cobwebs and skull motifs. Students may spot the signs in the illustrations such as the queen's armour and the dwarfs' swords that recall the ancient origins of oral tales, which were popularized through the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm folklore collections (published in several

editions in Germany between 1812 and 1857). The class could examine how *The Sleeper and the Spindle* evokes medieval manuscripts through its drawings with accents in gold (or red in the paperback version) that decorate the borders, some of the words are hand lettered by Riddell, and many pages are headed by illuminated initial capitals.

The genre is quite easy to predict after glancing at the book's first few pages. In the illustrations the students will detect dwarfs, trolls and underground pathways, high mountains, a many-towered palace, and roses with sharp thorns, all of which suggest fairy tale and fantasy. Fairy tales have never been meant for young children alone; rather, they reflect the rich oral tradition of storytelling passed on and shared from generation to generation. *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, a very literary fairy tale, is most appropriate for adolescents who can deal with the book's linguistic complexities as well as its intertextuality. The title refers to a spindle, suggesting *Sleeping Beauty*, while the dwarf characters and dark passages beneath the mountains suggest the fairy tale *Snow White*. While the book is indeed a reimagining of *Sleeping Beauty* cunningly blended with *Snow White*, this is only gradually and tantalizingly revealed. Postmodern literature generally disrupts expectations, and as Salomon (2016) conveys, "the construction of knowledge is facilitated by ambiguity, conflict and uncertainty" (p. 155). The book's intertextuality will therefore be discussed under Step Two with the recommendation that students be allowed to discover the merging of these two fairy tales for themselves.

The book cover makes an immediate visual impact as both the hardback and paperback covers are exquisitely beautiful. Thus, the book is packaged in an attractive way, which is key for igniting students' interest and motivation from the outset (see Bland, 2018a, p. 12). The hardback edition (see Figure 2) appears to confirm that this is a version of *Sleeping Beauty*; it also provides a visual clue as to the meaning of "spindle". The cover certainly tempts the reader to enter into the story and discover the sleeping princess. Invitingly, she is partly concealed by the golden climbing roses that cover the transparent dust jacket.

The cover of the paperback edition of 2019 features a disputed and very strikingly drawn image from inside the book, the moment when the

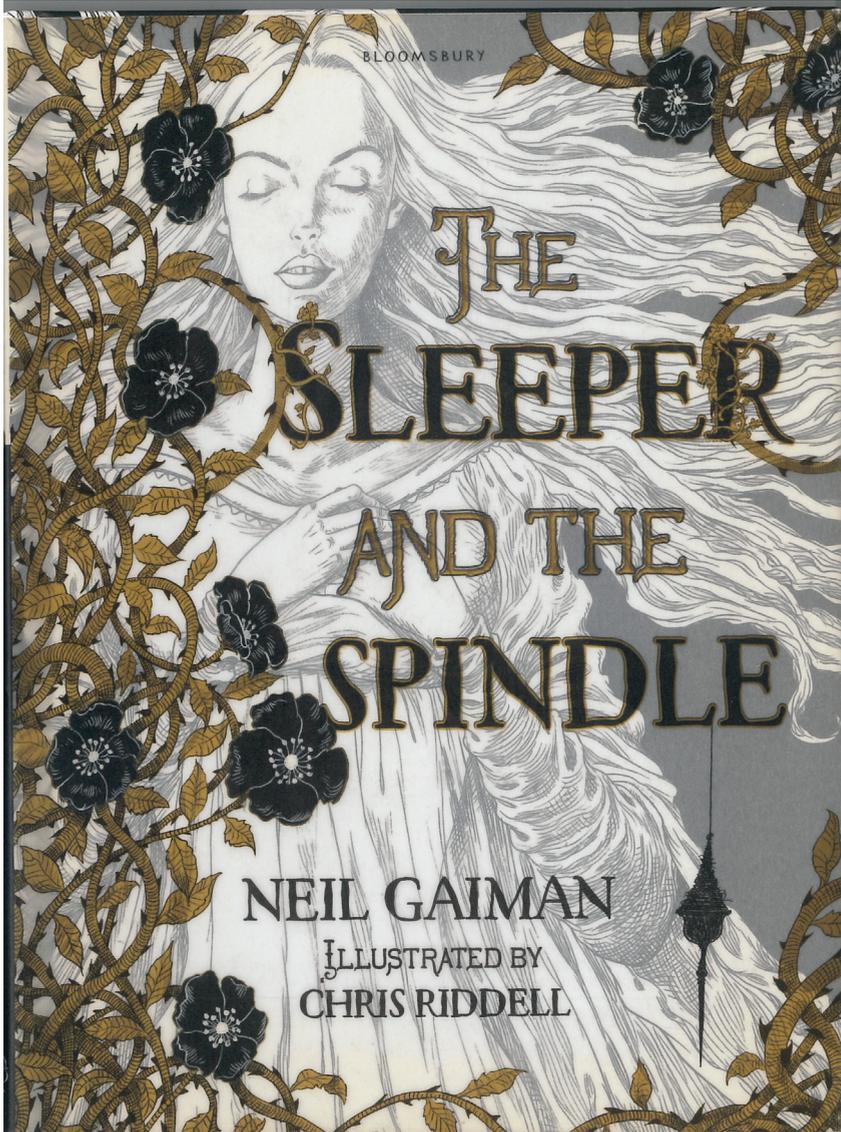


Figure 2. Hardback Cover from *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014) by Neil Gaiman, Illustration by Chris Riddell. Copyright © 2014, published by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

queen kisses the lovely young woman awake (see Figure 3). This image generated much publicity for the book, and both negative and positive reactions. Some readers rejected a fairy tale that championed (as they believed) LGBTQ+ issues, while other readers were disappointed that *The*

Sleeper and the Spindle is not a lesbian retelling and considered this to be an example of queerbaiting. (The stunning paperback cover, though somewhat misleading, is probably as enticing to students as is the hardback cover – this will be revisited under Step Three.) The golden disk on the cover also alerts the reader that the book won the CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) Kate Greenaway medal in 2016, an award that recognizes distinguished illustration in children’s literature. In fact, Chris Riddell is so far the only triple winner in the history of this award. Neil Gaiman is similarly an award-winning author. He has won both the CILIP Carnegie Medal, an award that annually recognizes an outstanding literary achievement in a book for children or young adults, and the American Newbery Medal (both for his *The Graveyard Book*, 2009). This information should be noted by both students and teachers alike; while many have heard of texts for adults that are culturally marked as classics of the literary canon, far fewer are well informed regarding canonical texts of children’s literature.

Neil Gaiman’s text is poetically told in a condensed manner. It was originally published as a short story, a format that favours rich but succinct glimpses into other worlds. However, the language of *The Sleeper and the Spindle* has far more descriptive detail than either the Grimms’ versions or other traditional *Sleeping Beauty* retellings. The teacher could help the students enter into the story by reading the first page aloud, with books open so the students can follow along with the text and enjoy the pictures that aid their understanding. Students could then be given the task of making notes about language that points to the fairy tale genre. Already on the very first page, this would include *kingdom*, *queen*, *finest silken cloth*, *dwarfs*, *magic*, *magical gift*, and *ruby*. The three dwarfs, who are hastening to the neighbouring kingdom through underground pathways to buy the finest gift for the young queen, are introduced on the first page as “tough, and hardy, and composed of magic as much as of flesh and blood” (Gaiman, 2014, p. 10). Through the urgency of their speed through the tunnels beneath the mountains in search of the finest gift, and their exclamations “Hurry! Hurry!” we understand – before we even meet her – that the young queen is an exceptional person. This motivates us to continue with the story.

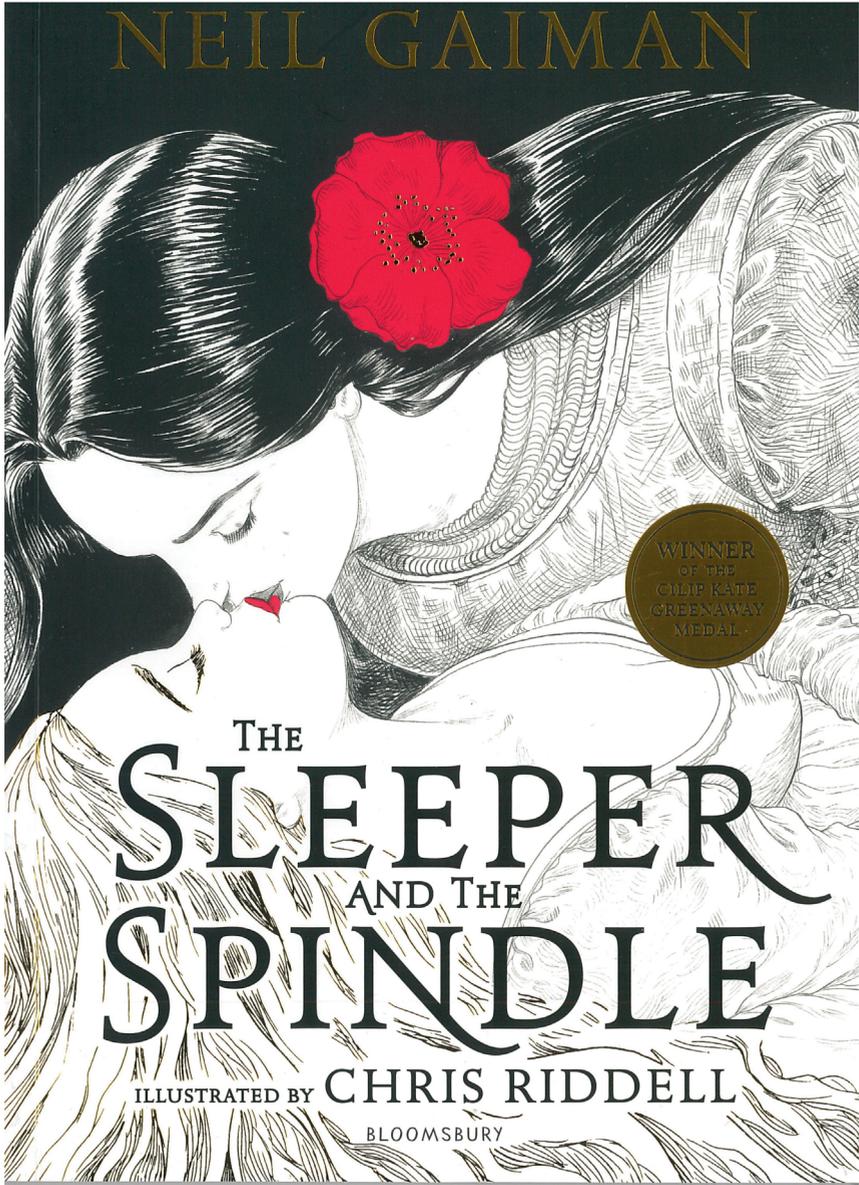


Figure 3. Paperback Cover of *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2019) by Neil Gaiman, Illustration by Chris Riddell. Copyright © 2014, published by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Step Two: Activate and investigate

If the students read through *The Sleeper and the Spindle* first at home, the in-depth work can take place in the lessons. The story begins when the three dwarfs discover that a magical sleeping sickness has spread outside of the walls of a cursed castle in a neighbouring kingdom that lies beyond the high mountains. They inform the young queen that the zone of the spell is expanding fast, assuring her that “if any of you big people can stay awake there, it’s you” (Gaiman, 2014, p. 20). The queen had previously been in a cursed sleep for a year and had woken again unharmed. So, she delays the preparations for her wedding to the prince and immediately sets off with her loyal dwarf companions to investigate the threat to the two kingdoms.

A fairy tale reimagining is motivating in that it both affirms and interrogates students’ pre-existing knowledge of fairy tales. Some of the students have probably noticed by now that there are elements from *Snow White* (dwarfs, underground passages with precious stones and the death-like sleep) in addition to the *Sleeping Beauty* story. Prior knowledge of fairy tales can be activated when students compare versions they know, for instance as a *think-pair-share* activity. The teacher could initiate this by inviting the students to reflect individually on the versions of *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty* with which they are familiar. Next, each student pairs with a partner to share their experiences of these fairy tales. Students should have time to recall versions they have read or seen and to formulate their response before further sharing in a whole-class discussion. *Sleeping Beauty* tales that students may know might include the version in the folklore collection published by the Brüder Grimm (various English translations based on the final 1857 collection are freely available online through Project Gutenberg). Two Walt Disney versions may be familiar, the animated film *Sleeping Beauty* (Geronimi, 1959), and the live-action film *Maleficent* (Stromberg, 2014). Well-known versions of *Snow White* include the Grimms’ *Sneewittchen* (*Snow White*), Walt Disney’s first animated feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Hand, 1937), and the recent films *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012) and *Mirror Mirror* (Singh, 2012).

As one aspect of deep reading is to encourage pleasure in books, the teacher could show well-known book illustrations of these fairy tales to prompt discussion of different versions. Award-winning fairy tale illustrators, whose works have entered the public domain and can easily be found online, include Walter Crane (1845–1915), Warwick Goble (1862–1943), Franz Jüttner (1865–1925), and Arthur Rackham (1867–1939). Figures 4 and 5 could be used to discuss the characterization of Snow White and the dwarfs in the older tales in comparison to their characterization in *The Sleeper and the Spindle*.



Figure 4. Franz Jüttner Illustration of *Sneewittchen*, 1905. Public domain.

Chris Riddell’s illustrations offer many opportunities for groupwork centred on the pictures, and groupwork is important for this is a postmodern reimagining of the fairy tale that can be confusing to students who are not used to twists in traditional tales. *Reciprocal teaching* is a dialogic, cooperative process of learning from literary text that helps students acquire strategies for learning from story. In groups of four, students



Figure 5. Warwick Goble Illustration of *Snow White*, 1913. Public domain.

discuss either an image or a section of text in detail. Each student has a specific role in reciprocal teaching: oral summarizer, clarifier, predictor, or questioner. The summarizer describes in detail what is happening in the picture (this can be quite complex in *The Sleeper and the Spindle*) and suggests a suitable title for the page. The clarifier describes what has led up to this point and attempts to clarify any confusions. The predictor studies the picture to interpret the scene and predict what will happen next. The questioner investigates the meaning of any symbols, any intertextuality or historical background of the story. Once each student has briefly discussed and understood their role in their own small group, these groups disperse, and all the summarizers, clarifiers, predictors, and questioners then meet, compare notes, potentially revise their findings, and report back to their group and, finally, to the entire class.

Reciprocal teaching groupwork might, for example, revolve around the illustration on page 53 (see Figure 6) showing a flashback of when the princess pricked her finger. Some of the students who have read the book to the end may still be confused – who exactly is the sleeping young

woman on the bed, and who is the old woman? Whom must the queen save? Working in groups, students can compare their understanding. The questioner could investigate why spinning has such a negative image in fairy tales, and collect expressions for wearisome work (such as monotonous, women's work, long hours, humdrum, mind-numbing). So, century after century, women relieved the tedium of spinning by telling and listening to stories. How do people relieve monotony today? Are stories still important?

Next, the students might compare to what degree the narration of *The Sleeper and the Spindle* differs from the fairy tale retellings of the Brüder Grimm. Their traditional folklore is characterized by a plot-driven story, swift narration, and conventionalized, one-dimensional characters. In contrast to this, Neil Gaiman's narration is full of opulent description. For instance, the citizens who seem to be sleepwalking below the castle of Sleeping Beauty are described in multisensory, chilling detail:

Sleeping people are not fast. They stumble, they stagger; they move like children wading through rivers of treacle, like old people whose feet are weighed down by thick, wet mud. (...) Each street they [the queen and the dwarfs] came to was filled with sleepers, cobweb-shrouded, eyes tight closed or eyes open and rolled back in their heads showing only the whites, all of them shuffling sleepily forwards. (Gaiman, 2014, p. 35)

Step Three: Critically engage

There are good reasons to critically engage with any retelling of fairy tales, including both *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*. There are often gender issues and the patriarchal code of bygone ages to consider. Especially in films, critical issues can easily be overlooked. There is usually an aspect of ageism in *Snow White* films – fairy tale expert Jack Zipes (2012) refers to the “glorification of the virgin princess” in the recent films *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Mirror Mirror*. The characteristic of ageism often found in fairy tales is neatly reversed in *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, when students finally discover that it is the old woman who is the true heroine of that Sleeping Beauty story. As we can be strongly influenced by the



Figure 6. The Princess Pricks her Finger. Page 53 from *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014), © Chris Riddell (illustrator) and © Neil Gaiman (author), Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

stories we read and watch, critical literacy and media literacy should be exercised in ELT as an important element of deep reading, while simultaneously exercising communication skills, critical thinking, visual literacy, and diversity competence, all of which are interconnected across the curriculum and with relevance for students' lives outside school, and thus contribute to in-depth learning.

To begin with gender issues, in the Grimms' canonical retelling of the *Sleeping Beauty* tale, the princess's fate is sealed at her christening party. She then sleeps for much of the story, so it is no surprise when the prince who discovers her in the tower one hundred years later seizes the initiative to decide their future, leaving the princess with no voice in the matter at all. In a slightly less patriarchal age a century later, Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (Geronimi, 1959) has the prince and princess meet in the woods and fall in love before she falls into a charmed sleep. On the other hand, the Grimm's *Snow White* has a child protagonist who is only seven years old when she flees from the palace. As a mere child, it is unsurprising that she fails to recognize her disguised evil stepmother three times. After the apple poisoning, even while the dwarfs mourn her loss, they allow an entirely unknown prince to carry her off in her glass coffin. Apparently, he has fallen in love with a beautiful child corpse; yet when Snow White awakes, his suitability as her husband is not questioned. Disney's version, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Hand, 1937), introduces the prince to an adolescent Snow White before her flight into the woods, in an episode at a well and a balcony scene that is reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Nonetheless, Snow White's apparent lack of agency when she awakes in her glass coffin could not be more different from Shakespeare's intrepid Juliet, who similarly awakes in a tomb after a death-like sleep. These are important issues to discuss, for in some countries girls learn to behave with humility and restraint as part of the social code. Student teachers from Norway, for example, might consider whether *Janteloven* suppresses self-esteem more powerfully in girls than it does in boys.

While *The Sleeper and the Spindle* also has a bewitching "Once upon a time" feel, both familiar and strange at the same time, the three strong central characters – two good and one bad – are all female, which completely changes the texture of the story. Unorthodoxy is a common trait

in postmodern literature, and *The Sleeper and the Spindle* disrupts and transforms older versions. If they read the peritext, students will discover that the author/illustrator team of Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell dedicated this book to their respective daughters. The message that girls need to be resilient and self-confident (and not meek and intimidated) could be highlighted through discussion and comparison with traditional versions. In the past, Gaiman's Snow White had learned a lesson about coercion from her malevolent stepmother: "Learning how to be strong, to feel her own emotions and not another's, had been hard; but once you learned the trick of it, you did not forget" (Gaiman, 2014, p. 59).

The Sleeper and the Spindle is an affirmation that girls and women can and should take the initiative, and princes are anyway not always charming (see the dangerous tendencies of the prince in the Grimms' *Snow White*). It is a good idea to help students exercise media literacy by introducing them to what has become known as the Bechdel test (or Bechdel-Wallace test). This is a way of calling attention to gender inequality in contemporary books and, in particular, films. The test, which was first introduced by graphic artist and novelist Alison Bechdel, examines whether a film (or other narrative) is worthwhile. This requires that it has at least two female characters whose names we get to know and who talk to each other about something other than a man. In recent years, the Bechdel test has drawn attention to the lack of breadth and depth of female characters in popular movies as well as to gender one-sidedness in serious films and fiction. Given that its three central characters are all female, *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is an almost complete turnaround from the many stories that fail the Bechdel test.

This unsettling might be engaging to adolescent students, as a reversal of norms and literary conventions can be appealing to them. However, it might be interesting to debate in class whether male students find the lack of a prince concerning while the lack of a female lead in narrative is still very much the norm, especially in popular narrative. Students can hopefully discover that *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is less female dominated than many traditional works of fiction are male dominated. The three dwarfs may be the only male characters of significance, but they certainly talk to each other and take initiative, too. Still, the prince remains invisible

throughout the plot of *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, and once Snow White has overcome both sleeping sickness and the wicked enchantress, she makes the decision to abandon her wedding plans (see Figure 7):

She said nothing, but sat on the moss beneath an oak tree and tasted the stillness, heartbeat by heartbeat.

There are choices, she thought, when she had sat long enough. *There are always choices.*

She made one. (Gaiman, 2014, p. 66)

Students could also compare Chris Riddell's illustrations with enduring scenes from fairy tales, for example comparing the image of the resolute queen helper in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* with that of the three good-fairy helpers in Walt Disney's animated film *Sleeping Beauty* (Geronimi, 1959). The female helper is a traditional feminine role, but this function has developed hugely in postmodern literature from the portrayal of the fairy helpers in the Disney classic as stereotypically middle-aged and often ridiculous – another instance of ageism. This can be seen in the screen grab in Figure 8 and in a film clip freely available on YouTube Kids depicting the humorous fight over the colour of the princess's dress – <https://www.youtubekids.com/watch?v=D1fOLHnTlyA>. In contrast, the young queen in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is not only determined, courageous and strong-minded but also thoughtful and perceptive.

The Sleeper and the Spindle is not a queer love story, even though it is Snow White herself who kisses the beautiful sleeper awake, but it is disturbing that the boy-kisses-girl imperative of traditional fairy tales is still so strong that the book garnered much controversy for its same-sex kiss. Once all the students have finished reading the book, the class could critically engage with the choice of covers for the hardback and paperback editions (see Figures 2 and 3) in the light of conflicting issues: homophobia, which caused rejection of the book in many circles due to the same sex kiss, and queerbaiting, the marketing ploy of featuring the same sex kiss on the cover when this is not an LGBTQ+ retelling. The author and illustrator Gaiman and Riddell discuss the illustrations and this controversy in an entertaining three-minute video – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1yvbXJDz1c>.

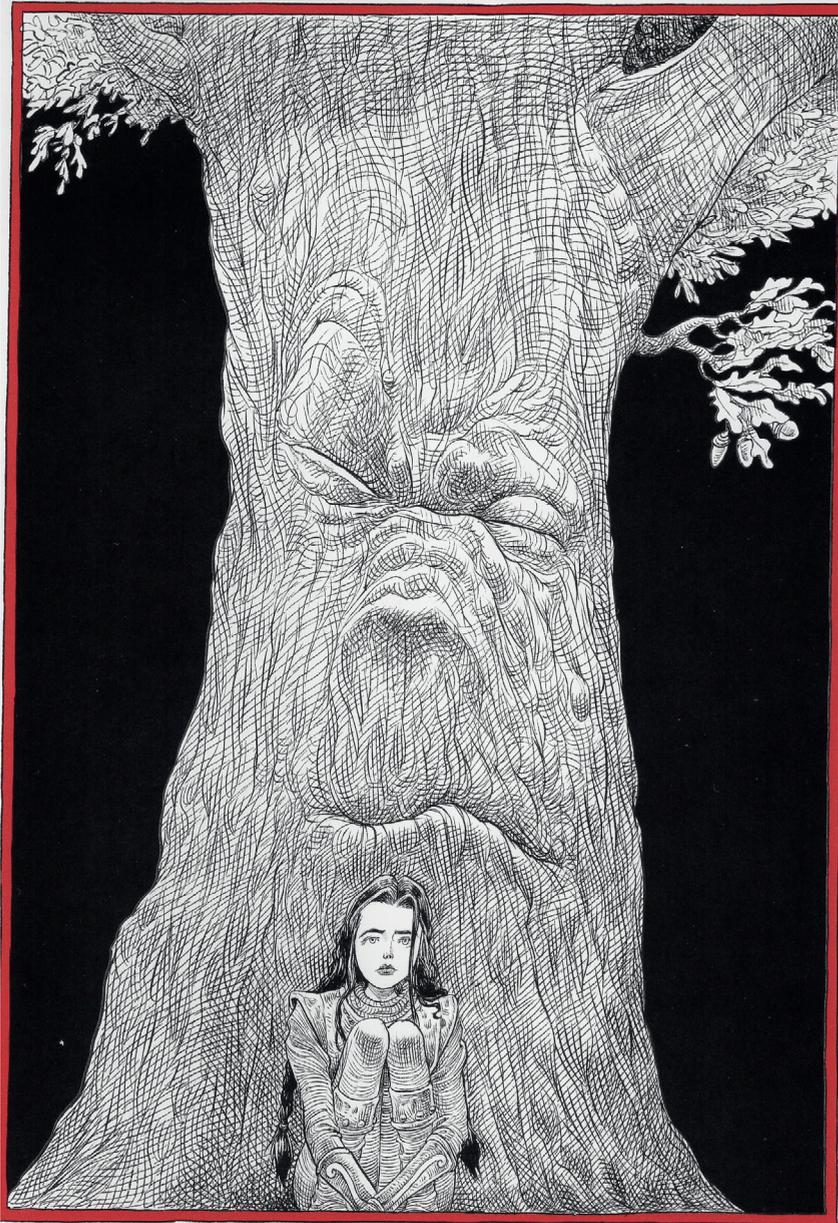


Figure 7. "There are choices", she thought. Page 67 from *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014)
© Chris Riddell (illustrator) and © Neil Gaiman (author), Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.



Figure 8. The Three Good Fairies: Screen Grab from Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959).

Students themselves could take the debate on these issues further than *The Sleeper and the Spindle* offers, by investigating in groups and presenting concise information on important current concerns which might include the #MeToo movement, coercive control, sexual objectification through social media and advertising, body shaming, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, victim blaming, rape culture, hegemonic masculinity and the *Everyone's Invited* website.

The dwarfs in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* are magical creatures – the magic number of three rather than the magic number of seven – who play a guiding role throughout the story, finally accompanying Snow White following her decision not to return to her kingdom and marry the prince. In Warwick Goble's illustration of the dwarfs (see Figure 5), they are represented as mature miners of small stature, some with long grey beards. In Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Hand, 1937), the dwarfs are named Happy, Sleepy, Sneezy, Bashful, Grumpy, Doc and Dopey, and Snow White describes their home as "just like a doll's house". In keeping with their absurd names, they are infantilized, goofy and mucky. Indeed, all of the comedy in this film derives from the dwarfs'

cute but silly behaviour and antics. Snow White, who is not yet an adult, immediately takes charge of the older men (and also cleans and cooks for them) until the prince turns up, when he immediately takes charge of Snow White. The infantilization of the dwarfs is very apparent in the scene when Snow White wakes up in their home and meets them for the first time. This is freely available on YouTube Kids – <https://www.youtubekids.com/watch?v=jSkE-bozEqY>.

A classroom discussion after watching the Disney film, trailer or above scene can help students engage critically with the topic of ableism – discrimination in favour of non-disabled people – in the film’s representation of the dwarfs. Currently, actors who are members of the dwarfism community are deeply concerned about Disney’s forthcoming live-action remake of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. According to actor Kiruna Stamell (2022), the 1937 animated film “is still problematic but with more distance from me, in the real world. The dated nature of the animation also reduces the hurt it causes because it was from another time, predating the disability rights movement”. Stamell doubts, however, whether Disney is “capable of making the massive ideological leap needed to create a film in which the seven dwarfs are the fully fledged humans they should be. With real names, rounded characters and having some kind of agency”.

The dwarfs in the live-action film *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012) were not performed by professional actors living with dwarfism, but by actors of average height whose faces were digitally united with small bodies. Thus, the opportunity of a humanizing media portrayal of dwarfism and the casting of professional actors of short stature was lost. Do students see this as equally problematic as when a Native American character is portrayed by an actor who is not Native American? *Mirror Mirror* (Singh, 2012), on the other hand, represents disabled bodies respectfully. The dwarfs are portrayed by professional actors with dwarfism, the characters all have real names and real professions (at least until they become outcasts), and the prejudice they experience due to their stature is a topic in the storyline. Paying attention to such issues belongs to the cross-curricular learning goals of media literacy and interculturality.

Step Four: Experiment with creative response

Fairy tales have key elements that are repeated in all different versions. In *Sleeping Beauty* this includes an enchantress who was not invited to a christening feast, a baby princess who is cursed to prick her finger on a spindle and fall into a death-like sleep, and a magical awakening by a kiss. These elements are important building blocks so that a story can be identified, allowing the pleasure of recognition.

Students could be invited to write an episode from a well-known fairy tale; but instead of focusing on the plot, they exercise creative writing by focusing on setting and/or characterization. Myhill (2020) refers to a weakness in secondary school writing as “over-emphasis on plot, resulting in plot-driven narratives with much weaker characterisation, and establishment of setting” (p. 204). Students can be asked to describe a character from a fairy tale, including not only their appearance, but also how they behave and move. The following is a detail from *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, which illustrates the importance of movement in characterization, while also emphasizing the magical number three:

The three dwarfs scrambled out of a hole in the side of the riverbank, and clambered up into the meadow, one, two, three. They climbed to the top of a granite outcrop, stretched, kicked, jumped and stretched themselves once more. Then they sprinted north, towards the cluster of low buildings that made the village of Giff, and in particular to the village inn. (Gaiman, 2014, p. 15)

Riddell’s illustrations, or images from fairy tales available on the Web, could be used as a prompt for creative writing. Looking carefully at a picture can inspire students to include sensory details, so that the reader can engage with the characters and experience the setting in a multisensory way. Pictures can help students visualize what they want to write, for as Burmark (2008) highlights, language should help the reader “to *recall* things we have already seen and experienced. This is why writing is so much more detailed and evocative when students can look at an image before they start writing” (p. 11, emphasis in original).

In addition to using pictures to help students create convincing settings and characterization, careful, deep reading of a creative language

model could mentor students' own writing. The following extract from *The Sleeper and the Spindle* includes many sensory impressions – visual, aural, kinaesthetic, tactile, and olfactory – so that the reader can see, hear, feel the motion (the rustle and movement of the crawling maggots), and smell the stinking fish, while the seven-fold repetition of “sleeping” creates cohesion and a well-interconnected scene.

There were sleeping riders on sleeping horses; sleeping cabmen up on still carriages that held sleeping passengers; sleeping children clutching their ball and hoops and the whips for their spinning tops; sleeping flower women at their stalls of brown, rotten, dried flowers; even sleeping fishmongers beside their marble slabs. The slabs were covered with the remains of stinking fish, and they were crawling with maggots. The rustle and movement of the maggots was the only movement and noise the queen and dwarfs encountered. (Gaiman, 2014, p. 34)

Creative writing should not be a silent mode, on the contrary, students can better focus on the poetry, rhythm, and other auditory aspects of their writing if they read their texts aloud. Students should be encouraged to make use of synonyms to “enrich their vocabulary and create a powerful textual rhythm. A castle, for example, is not just big, it can be *vast, grandiose, and with an infinity of strangely shaped towers*. The forest can be *deep, dark, and with dense, melancholy shadows*” (Bland, 2022, p. 154, emphasis in original). Creative writing tasks help students to write effectively, making language choices carefully and taking pride in their work. The cognitive depth achieved is far greater than gap-filling exercises could possibly provide. And, as Fullan et al. (2019) point out, “filling in the blanks on a laptop is no more cognitively challenging than doing so on paper” (p. 65).

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have discussed why it is imperative that students continue to include deep reading of print in their reading repertoire. I have then questioned how deep reading of a literary text might enable students'

in-depth learning in English language education, helping young people to reflect on their learning and see connections to the world beyond school and, hopefully, to better master challenges in new contexts. In this connection, I have introduced a deep reading framework (see Figure 1), using it to explore a high-quality literary text suitable for adolescents, *The Sleeper and the Spindle*.

When applying the deep reading framework, it became apparent that in order to reach some of the learning goals, it would be helpful to include additional texts, such as older fairy tale versions, fairy tale illustrations or films, thereby creating a text ensemble. For example, handsome illustrations of the fairy tales (see Figures 4 and 5) can inspire cross-curricular work with the art class, and films or film trailers can provide an additional opportunity for media literacy and discussion of global issues. It became clear that the inclusion of other texts, however short, would help previously unquestioned perspectives to be questioned. Additionally, more critical thinking on global issues could be included, so supporting in-depth learning as students recognize the immediate relevance for their lives outside of school. This suits the postmodern definition of text, which is also reflected in the Norwegian *Curriculum for English* (ENGO1-04):

The concept of text is used in a broad sense: texts can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical. The texts can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3)

Salomon (2016) has claimed that while “mastery of information can be demonstrated by its reproduction; mastery of knowledge is demonstrated by its novel application” (p. 155). In this sense, in order to move English language teaching forward, a fresh focus on in-depth learning that includes students taking on a central role as discerning, agentive, and ambitious participants in their own learning process, seems to be a fruitful path to follow.

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CHAPTER 3

Intercultural Learning and Images in ELT: Exploring Cultural Imaginaries through Photographs

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Abstract: This chapter presents an argument for the relevance of using photographs for intercultural learning in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. More specifically, we suggest that by activating, expanding, and challenging the cultural imaginaries learners bring to and take from photographs, a more dynamic form of intercultural learning can be encouraged. A dynamic form of intercultural learning emphasizes the “inter” of intercultural and dismantles the dichotomy between “us” and “them”, making intercultural learning a personal and transformational process. Based on theoretical explorations and classroom experiences, we propose a set of general principles as well as three specific activities which have been implemented with secondary school and university-level learners. The activities all utilize photographs as prompts for reflective dialogues surrounding cultural imaginaries and aim to create complexity and multiplicity in the learners’ understanding of themselves and others. Encouraging this type of understanding is crucial given the increasingly complex and culturally diverse environments learners need to navigate in their everyday lives, formal education, and future work lives.

Introduction

The aim of the current chapter is firstly to provide a theoretical exploration of the utilisation of images, and photographs in particular, as a tool for intercultural learning, and secondly to suggest specific

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photograph-based classroom activities that aim to facilitate learners' reflections on and understanding of their own position when navigating between different cultural perspectives. In the last two decades, intercultural education has increasingly been recognized as an explicit aim of English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in many countries, including Norway (e.g., Faas et al., 2014; Grant & Portera, 2011). In parallel with this, theoretical and empirical investigations into *what* intercultural learning is and *how* it might best be promoted within EFL classrooms have proliferated. This chapter adds to these theoretical discussions by proposing that the field should incorporate more intercultural practices which emphasize the “inter” of intercultural and the fluidity of culture and identity; namely, practices that dismantle the “over here / over there” cultural divide. We feel that the need for this new focus is particularly acute as teachers and learners around the world negotiate new multicultural realities in their classrooms. We propose that one way of remedying some of the polarizing practices that weaken intercultural learning is by activating, expanding, and challenging the learners' cultural imaginaries through the use of photographs. As will be argued, the reading of cultural differences in photographs can be considered an intercultural encounter in its own right. Images play a central role in young people's lives today and have been shown to serve as a powerful basis for critical discussions surrounding interculturality in the language classroom (Brown, 2022; Hoff & Habegger-Conti, Forthcoming; Habegger-Conti, 2021; Heggernes, 2019). In the following, we will first discuss some challenges we have identified in intercultural education and outline the main principles behind approaching intercultural learning, which we define as “the process of developing the ability to navigate between different cultural perspectives” (Brown & Savić, in review). Following this, we will discuss the relationship between intercultural learning and the process of reading images through as an investigation of the social and cultural imaginaries that affect our readings. Finally, based on our theoretical explorations and classroom experiences, we will propose some general principles for working dialogically and reflectively with photographs in the EFL classroom as well as three activities for classroom use that aim to promote a more dynamic form of intercultural learning.

Intercultural learning and EFL teaching in Norway

Intercultural education “emphasizes a particular intercultural perspective” and is a “way of understanding teaching and education [...] which takes into account and tries to face with *all manner of diversity* which may be present in the classroom” (Portera, 2011, p. 21). As both a perspective on and a way of understanding education, intercultural education encompasses a declaration of *what* should be taught and how. Further, it is delineated through policy documents and curricula as well as research on education. In this chapter we refer to intercultural learning as a more specific component of intercultural education: namely, what occurs in the classroom in the processes of learning and interaction between teachers and pupils.

In practice, the premises of intercultural education tend to portray concepts like culture, nation and identity as stable and unified while also upholding an “our-culture/their-culture” binary (Dervin, 2015; Holliday, 2011). For example, even the reflective practice of decentring, which has been defined as “a willingness to suspend one’s own values, beliefs and behaviours [...] and an ability to see how they might look from an outsider’s perspective” (Byram et al., 2009, p. 23) is premised on an “outside/inside”, “centre/periphery” system. Firstly, it implies that the learner must somehow step out of his/her own perspective to understand “the other”, which suggests that there is no “I” in the other; thus, there are no similarities or overlapping ground from which a common understanding can be built. Secondly, the idea of seeing something from someone else’s perspective implies a degree of knowing that reduces the other to one’s own epistemological system (Habegger-Conti, 2019). It may thus fall into essentialism and stereotyping, failing to consider that all cultures are comprised of individuals and that every culture “reflects and is constitutive of a multiplicity of voices reflecting a whole array of conflicting and competing discourses” (Crawford & McLaren, 2003, p. 131). We therefore suggest that intercultural learning should aim to create complexity and resist the urge to provide clear answers by bringing forth a multiplicity of perspectives and reflecting on their intersections and

contradictions. Similarly, through accepting the dynamic nature of identities and cultures, intercultural learning should also aim to be transformative, to “spur change in [the learners’] worldviews” (Kearney, 2016, p. 2), as opposed to treating “us” and “them” as static entities incapable of change.

In fact, several scholars have suggested that cultures should not be regarded as entities at all. Dervin (2015), for example, argues that one does not meet another culture “but people who (are made to) represent it – or rather represent imaginaries and representations of it” (p. 9). Kramsch (1998) has similarly argued that culture is “a discourse community that shares a common social space and history and common imaginings” (p. 19). Social imaginaries can be understood as “the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings” and as “a common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy” (Taylor, 2004, p. 23). Gaonkar (2002) writes that imaginaries “exist by virtue of representation or implicit understandings, even when they acquire immense institutional force; and they are the means by which individuals understand their identities and their place in the world” (p. 4).

Cultural imaginaries help to form, but also keep in place, a society’s main institutions, while simultaneously reinforcing “culture” as a single, stable entity. These imaginaries also help us to define others in such a way so as to highlight their differences from us. For example, we may consider indigenous cultures as “more traditional”, and ourselves as “more modern” and reproduce these imaginaries when presenting certain aspects of Native Americans to our learners by only showing photographs of Native Americans wearing their traditional dress and not ever in business attire. Cultural imaginaries may also create labels about people that give legitimacy to a certain way of viewing the world. Words like “immigrant”, “expat”, or “economic migrant” are applied to different groups of people and reflect imaginaries about social class, economic status, and country of origin.

An awareness of culture as a common imagining has yet to constitute a starting point for intercultural inquiries in the English classroom. On the contrary, learners are asked to comprehend culture as a stable entity (even when allowing for diversity within a culture), to study culture as a

set of facts that can be learned, and to view other cultures as fundamentally different from their own. We therefore propose a radically different understanding of culture in intercultural education and a shift in practice from learning *about* other cultures to learning about the way that we *imagine* cultures to be (including our own) and why.

From this perspective, intercultural learning can be seen as deeply personal and as being equally concerned with gaining increased awareness of oneself in relationship to others as it is about gaining awareness of others. However, while there has been a relatively consistent focus in the literature on intercultural education on knowledge, skills, and attitudes, self-awareness is often overlooked or not separated from the knowledge-component (cf. Khanukaeva, 2020). In line with this, self-awareness is often treated as a *means* towards understanding the other, rather than as an aim in itself. As argued by Kramersch:

Breaking down stereotypes is not just realising that people are not the way one thought they were, or that deep down ‘we are all the same’. It is understanding that we are irreducibly unique and different, and that I could have been you, you could have been me, given different circumstances – in other words, that the stranger, as Kristeva says, is in us. (1995, p. 85)

It is only by working within the realm of the personal that these understandings can be created, expanded, and further nuanced, and as such it is here that the “inter”, the betweenness, can be addressed. The aim of intercultural learning should therefore not just be to examine different perspectives but to create opportunities for expanding, challenging, and/or reconsidering one’s own. As a result, learners should also be guided to challenge and/or reconsider the uniqueness and differences that reside within their home country.

Another challenge of intercultural education is that the concept of intercultural competence itself is often treated as a stable and unified concept as opposed to an ongoing and never-ending process (Dervin, 2015; Lund, 2008) which can manifest itself differently in different contexts. By seeing intercultural learning as deeply personal and transformational, there is a need to recognize that “discomfort, anger, and annoyance are part of the process” (Dervin, 2015, p. 96), and thus challenge the idealistic

notion that intercultural competence can lead to complete harmony and acceptance of differing viewpoints.

Similarly limiting perspectives can be seen in how intercultural learning is defined and operationalised in the curriculum for English in Norway. While the curriculum recognizes the diversity within nation borders, for example when it is stated that the subjects shall provide the foundation for “communicating with others, both locally and globally” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 1), there seems to still be an equation between culture and language, seen for example in the use of the phrase “encounters with [...] English-language cultures” (p. 7). This reductive concept of culture can be problematic as it can “rid ‘the other’ of his/her plurality” (Dervin, 2015, p. 13) and has implications for intercultural learning, where students should develop an understanding of the “different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 1) of an implicit “other”. The curriculum further states that the English subject should “open for new perspectives on the world and ourselves” and “develop the pupils’ understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 2), but it provides little guidance for how teachers can achieve this goal. Moreover, these ideals are not reflected in the specific competence aims for learners, which ask learners to compare the difference of the rest of the world (other, periphery) to Norway (normal, centre). For example, after Year 4 learners are expected to “talk about some aspects of different ways of living, traditions and customs in the English-speaking world and in Norway”. Without specific guidance for how teachers should lead learners to this goal, and by maintaining a “rest of the world” and “Norway” divide, such aims undermine the overarching goals of intercultural education defined by the curriculum. In Year 10, the final year of obligatory education in Norway, the specific competence aims lead learners towards a unidirectional acquisition of knowledge, asking them to “explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 9). As such, while working with this type of competence aim in the EFL classroom “*may* entail a

critical investigation and comparison of different worldviews (including the learners' own)" (Hoff, 2018, p. 78), this is not explicitly stated, even though the verb "to explore" is defined by the curriculum as "in some cases" including "to investigate different aspects of an issue through open and critical discussion" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 16).

Based on the challenges described above, we propose that intercultural learning is better understood as developing the ability to navigate between a multiplicity of cultural perspectives. An important part of this is that intercultural education should include practices which help learners understand the situatedness of their own perspectives and imaginaries, and practices which do not aim to search for any one "truth" or "answer" but rather a multiplicity and complexity of truths and answers. Perhaps most importantly, intercultural learning needs practices that allow for discomfort and tension in the classroom as both learners and teachers explore opposing feelings and beliefs. In the following, we will discuss the ways in which images, and photographs in particular, can provide a powerful starting point for engaging in these types of practices in the EFL classroom.

Using images for intercultural learning in the EFL classroom

The process of making meaning from images, as with any other text, is deeply connected to cultural practices. Images communicate through already-formed pictures in our head about what a thing is. For visual recognition to occur – for learners to understand what it is they are seeing – they must be able to confirm and organize visual codes according to what is already known (the word "recognize" literally means to "know again"). For example, which cultures we consider as "modern" is grounded in our imaginaries of what "modern" *looks like* to us (Habegger-Conti, 2018, p. 49). Lippmann (1922/2017), one of the first scholars to study stereotypes as "pictures in our heads", writes:

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out

what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture. (p. 81)

Images may also activate our cultural imaginaries more quickly and easily than written text as our markers of cultural difference are mainly visual: hair and skin colour, style of clothing, etc. Because of the way and speed with which visual recognition occurs, we argue that images offer a unique possibility for investigating not only the imaginaries that are enacted in the representation of a culture but also those which arise in our culturally situated readings of these images (Habegger-Conti, 2018, p. 49).

Central to this argument is the fact that the reading of images can be considered an intercultural encounter in its own right. As stated above, the markers of difference that activate our imaginaries will often be visual, whether they are activated in face-to-face encounters or mediated through images. Consequently, a textbook image of someone who is marked as different will allow learners to form some impressions about the peoples and cultures that are represented, while the meaning taken from the image will also be guided by learners' previous imaginaries, beliefs, and assumptions. In this sense, the reading of an image created in a cultural context different from one's own can be seen as "a form of intercultural communication in itself" (Hoff, 2016, p. 52), a communication between the learners' previous imaginaries/meanings and the imaginaries/meanings at play in the image. While a learner may never travel to Ghana or India, and while a learner might not encounter people from these parts of the world in their everyday lives, they will still have ample access to encounters mediated through visual media. Moreover, as opposed to real-life intercultural encounters, the reading of images allows the reader the possibility to slow down the processes that happen during meaning-making and reflect on them. As Sturken and Cartwright (2009) argue, "To interpret images is to examine the assumptions that we and others bring to them at different times and in different places" (p. 46). By engaging in interpretation and reflection, the personal and cultural imaginaries can be brought out into the open and a more multifaceted understanding can be created, indicative of intercultural learning.

In this context, photographs must be seen as particularly powerful potential intercultural encounters. Photographs often go unanalysed and unchallenged because of the common belief that a photograph depicts reality accurately (Sherwin, 2008). The “truth claim” that we give to photographs means that we more readily accept photographic representations as factual rather than as constructed. We may ignore the role of the photographer or editor in creating a photo, or a particular context for the photo (a textbook including images of people with darker skin tones in a unit on “immigrants” may unwittingly define people with brown skin as outsiders of the majority culture). And while the (mis)recognition of an image of a person with brown skin as an “immigrant” may function at the level of the imagined, this categorization is also enacted outward to the real world as we determine who belongs and does not belong to “our culture”. This is particularly problematic in FL education where photographs are made to represent a culture, or subculture, rather than an individual, and photographs included in EFL textbooks have been found to portray a “fragmentary, one-sided and superficial” presentation of cultural groups (Lund, 2006, p. 281). Moreover, an image is by default a static representation, drawn or shot from a single perspective, unlike a literary text which may be heteroglossic and provide opportunities for exploring stories from several angles. Photographs in the FL classroom may thus lead to the reinforcement of stereotypes and single stories about a particular nation or culture or individual. As Nigerian author Adichie (2009) explains, to “show a people as one thing, and only one thing, over and over again” represents not only a form of stereotyping but an abuse of power: “Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person”.

Nevertheless, the very roadblocks to the aims of intercultural education that photographs and our practices of visual recognition constitute may also be used to create complexity and resist the urge to provide clear answers. By investigating our cultural imaginaries through photographs, we can help learners to develop “thick descriptions” of people or cultures (as opposed to thin, superficial knowledge; Holliday, 2011, pp. 28–29), and thus encourage the creation of a richer story, based on multiple perspectives, along with a better understanding of the complexities of discourse

and ideologies. Moreover, unlike a verbal text that requires comprehension of a specific language, photographs are immediately comprehensible to learners of all language levels. They are also easily accessible as a teaching tool: plentiful in textbooks and other EFL learning materials and within hand's reach on laptops and mobile phones. Photographs may thus be some of the best tools we have in the FL classroom for encouraging the type of intercultural learning that seeks to examine different perspectives while simultaneously helping us to challenge and reconsider our own.

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the cultural significance of images within the field of FL research. This can be seen in the growing number of studies investigating images in EFL textbooks with a specific focus on culture (e.g., Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Derakhshan, 2021; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). However, fewer studies have investigated how images are actually interpreted and engaged with in EFL settings, or how we can best engage with them to promote intercultural learning. The research that has been conducted supports the argument made above that learners use their existing knowledge, experiences, and imaginaries to make meaning from photographs when other context is missing (e.g., Brown, 2019; Kiss & Weninger, 2017). Likewise, instructional studies have pointed to the potential of engaging with images in the EFL classroom to encourage empathy, perspective taking, and cultural awareness (Heggernes, 2019; Lindner & Garcia, 2014; Yeom, 2019); to gain awareness of one's own and other's perspectives (Yeom, 2019); and to modify previous stereotypes (Forsman, 2010). Importantly, however, the studies all point to the significance of facilitating in-depth engagement with the images to reach these aims, for example through structured questions (Lindner & Garcia, 2014), questions which encourage reflection on stereotypes more generally (Forsman, 2010), or allowing learners to co-construct meaning by letting them explore possible answers themselves through asking open questions (Brown, 2022; Heggernes, 2019). Building on this research, as well as the theoretical framework presented above, we will in the following propose and discuss some general principles and three specific classroom activities which can be utilized in the EFL classroom when working with photographs to promote intercultural learning.

General principles and specific classroom activities

The general principles we will suggest here are grounded in Freire's (1970/1993) problem-posing model of education, which was proposed as a counterpart to the traditional "banking" model of education. In the banking model of education, teachers are seen as keepers of knowledge, which can then be transmitted to the learners who will passively receive, memorize, and repeat it. Classroom discourse will focus on reporting on what is already known, i.e., recalling and displaying assigned information (Nystrand et al., 2003). In the problem-posing model of education, on the other hand, teachers and learners explore, learn, and solve problems together through critical dialogue. Rather than asking questions which aim to elicit pre-defined answers, teachers pose open questions and allow the dialogue to develop from the learners' contributions. Although originally situated within the field of critical pedagogy, we believe that this approach to education is aligned with the aims of intercultural learning in several ways.

Firstly, if, as we have suggested here, culture is viewed as multifaceted, dynamic, and diverse, then it follows that any attempts at addressing culture in the classroom, whether through photographs or otherwise, must aim to disrupt rather than reinforce reductive imaginaries surrounding cultural groups. As such, the creation of complexity is an important aim in itself. One way to create such complexity is through dialogue, as dialogue can prompt learners to "examine issues from different angles, broaden their views, and deepen their understanding of the text, and, by extension, the world around them" (Abednia, 2015, p. 84). However, this type of dialogue cannot be created through asking questions which aim to elicit pre-defined answers, as these types of questions have the effect of restricting rather than encouraging classroom dialogues. As such, an important principle for creating complexity through classroom dialogue is to pose authentic questions; that is, questions which are asked without a predefined answer in mind and which allow for a range of responses.

Secondly, if intercultural learning aims to be transformative, then the *process* of learning is as important as the outcome. When teachers ask closed questions with pre-defined answers in mind, the focus is on the

answer and the process is overlooked. By engaging in authentic dialogue in which learner contributions are considered important and valuable, learners are seen as agents capable of creating meaning, rather than just receiving it. As such, through this process they can engage in real learning and real transformation (Freire, 1970/1993) initiated partly by themselves. A second important principle is therefore that the teacher allows the learners space and time to work through problems and co-construct new understandings together. To achieve this, teachers need to be keenly aware of their own position of power in the classroom and avoid guiding the learners towards specific ideological positions (McConachy, 2018). In addition to asking authentic questions, this also entails withholding evaluative statements, both positive and negative, and resisting the urge to provide answers (Brown, 2022; Heggernes, 2019).

Furthermore, as outlined previously, intercultural learning is personal and transformative, and classroom activities should therefore allow for tension and discomfort as learners and teachers engage in exploring opposing feelings and beliefs and in challenging their own. When teachers invite learners to bring their own experiences, beliefs, and feelings into the classroom dialogue, they are also asking them to expose themselves – to become vulnerable to the comments and judgements of their peers and teachers. The types of topics dealt with in relation to cultural beliefs and imaginaries are often very sensitive in nature and may lead to conflicts between groups of learners in the classroom (Granville, 2003). A third principle is therefore to actively create a classroom environment for dialogue; an environment in which disagreements are encouraged, but within a framework which is recognized by mutual respect and trust between learners and between learners and teachers alike. This includes making the aims and rules of classroom dialogue explicit, e.g., openness, humility, respect for difference of opinion, and scaffolding the process by providing continuous feedback and advice on how to be a good listener, e.g., by providing eye-contact and paying attention to the responses by their peers (Abednia, 2015).

We suggest that these principles should underpin any activity and discussion which aims to encourage intercultural learning. That is, to encourage intercultural learning which is aimed at creating complexity in

the learners' understandings, rather than a divide between our culture / their culture, and which is transformative and personal, rather than merely academic, teachers should aim to 1) engage in dialogue *with* the learners, 2) allow learners to take a lead in the common co-construction of complexity, and 3) facilitate an environment where learners feel free to be vulnerable and to respectfully disagree with each other. In the following, we will propose a set of three specific activities which utilize photographs as a starting point for such dialogues and then discuss these in relation to their affordances for intercultural learning within the EFL classroom. Our experiences with these activities in both upper-secondary and university classrooms provide the basis for our discussion and reflections. However, we believe that with some adaptations, these activities can also be used in lower secondary and primary school classrooms.

Reflecting on and challenging imaginaries through photographs

As argued previously, imaginaries develop and are reinforced as people interact with their environments, whether in real life or mediated through various media, and these imaginaries are often activated visually. While imaginaries are unavoidable, or perhaps because they are, it is important to facilitate an increased awareness and critical reflections on these in order to promote intercultural learning. With the following activities these imaginaries can be activated, challenged and/or expanded through the use of photographs in the EFL classroom. The activities were selected based on our classroom experiences with them, in teacher education and/or as part of a PhD research project conducted in an upper secondary school (Brown, 2021), as being particularly useful for moving the focus away from the “other” as a separate entity, and towards oneself in relation to others.

Activity I – Blindfold task

The first activity, which we have named “Blindfold task”, is inspired by Vasquez et al. (2013) and involves the learners in making guesses about what

a photograph of a specific group of people might look like and, following this, reflecting on the sources of these assumptions in classroom discussions. Depending on the level of engagement in the follow-up dialogue, the activity may take between 10–20 minutes. The activity does not require any pre-knowledge on the part of the learners and may in fact be best suited at the start of a teaching unit on a specific cultural group as a way of activating the learners' prior knowledge. The aims of the activity are for the learners to 1) develop their awareness of their own imaginaries, i.e., self-awareness, and 2) challenge these imaginaries and reflect on their origins.

In preparation for the activity, the teacher should find a photograph depicting people from a cultural group that they want to focus on. The photograph should break with common imaginaries about the group in one or more ways (for example, the photo could depict an older Native American man dressed in a business suit in a city setting). It is advantageous if the specific cultural group is one that the learners are likely to be familiar with through various media as the activity will work best if the learners have rich imaginaries about the group. The grouping can be defined either broadly (e.g., Native Americans, African Americans, immigrants) or more narrowly (e.g., “thugs”, politicians).

The activity is conducted in two stages in a full-class setting. During the first stage, the teacher tells the learners that they will show them a photograph depicting the chosen cultural group. For the sake of simplicity, we will in the following use “Native Americans” as the chosen group. It is important that the photograph remains hidden at this point, but the teacher can provide some contextual information (e.g., that it is a group of Native Americans). The teacher then asks the learners to imagine what the photograph will look like. To scaffold this imaginative process, a list of questions can be displayed for the learners, focusing their attention on different aspects of their imaginaries. The questions could for example be:

1. What are the ages of the people in the photograph?
2. What are they wearing?
3. What are they doing?
4. Where will they be?

5. What other things might we see in this photograph (items/buildings/surroundings)?
6. What type of colours will the photograph have?

The learners should be given 2–3 minutes to imagine the photograph and note down their thoughts, individually or in pairs. Following this, the learners are invited to share their thinking in a full-class discussion, and the teacher may write down the ideas that come up to create a visual representation of the class's joint imaginaries. Once the sharing of ideas is over, the learners can be asked to reflect on why these were the ideas that came to mind, thus starting to address the second aim related to reflecting on the origins of their imaginaries.

Following this, the second stage of the activity is initiated by showing the photograph to the learners. It can be advantageous if this is displayed on a big screen so that everyone gets time to look at it in some detail. After giving the learners a minute to read the image, the teacher initiates a discussion on whether or not their imagined photograph conformed with the actual photograph, and if so, in what ways it was similar or different. Frequently, this part of the activity will contain an element of surprise for the learners if the photograph is sufficiently different from what they are accustomed to seeing. Regardless of whether it did or did not conform with the learners' imaginaries, however, the reflections on the similarities and differences between the imagined and real photograph can form a powerful basis for a discussion on why this was or was not the case. In this way, the learners can jointly reflect on their own imaginaries and the effects of these, as well as their origin, which in turn promotes self-awareness.

Activity II – Which country is this a photo of and why?

Activities that point to our knowledge about other cultures as “a common imagining” (Kramsch, 1998, p. 19) can help learners to recognize that culture is a social construction, not an actual entity that exists. With this in mind, the second activity for exploring imaginaries with photographs is called “Which country is this a photo of and why?”. It has been adapted from the Reading International Solidarity Centre's (RISC) online toolkit

for challenging stereotypes, “Brazil or UK?”. The activity asks learners to guess whether the people represented in the photographs live in Brazil, India, or the UK, and then to explain what in the photograph makes them think that. The activity is best run in small groups for about 10 minutes (or enough time to think, respond, and listen to what others in the group have to say). Another 15–20 minutes can be used afterwards for a classroom discussion and summary for a total of around 30 minutes. The main aims of the activity are 1) to explore our imaginaries of Brazil, India, and the UK; 2) to reflect on the sources of these imaginaries; and 3) to become more aware of diversity within cultures and nations.

In preparation for the activity, the teacher can use the 22 photographs available on the RISC toolkit website (risc.org.uk/toolkit) or find images from the internet that do not immediately look like the places they are (for example, the RISC toolkit uses an image of a child on Santa’s lap from Brazil and a park filled with deer from India). The images can be downloaded from the website and photocopied so that each learner or group has a copy to work from, or they can be displayed on a screen. If time is limited, or to make the task slightly easier for younger learners, the teacher may want to choose a smaller selection of photographs.

At the beginning of the activity, the teacher should explain that the main goal is not getting the right answer; rather, what is most important is what the learners think and why they think this. The learners should first be asked to look at the images individually and decide on the countries that the photographs are from. The learners should then be divided into groups (4–5) where they share their answers and explain to each other why they chose as they did. (In our experience the learners are still very interested in who guessed correctly, but this initial excitement did not detract from eventually discussing their imaginaries about the UK, Brazil, and India.)

The groups will then share their responses in a full-class setting with their teachers. The teacher can help to encourage the ‘why’ part of the discussion. If, for example, learners chose the photograph of the deer as coming from the UK, the teacher can ask: What makes this look like the UK? Where do our ideas about what the UK looks like come from? Why did not you choose India for the deer photo?

Depending on the age level and ability for critical thinking, the teacher may simply summarize the lesson in terms of “how we imagine India / the UK / Brazil to be” versus how we usually see it depicted, or, with more mature students, ask the learners to think about why we need or want to imagine these countries this way, and how these imaginaries help us define ourselves. (For example, the fact that we think of India as having only elephants and tigers, may help us to define our own culture as “normal” and the culture of India as “exotic”, or very different from ours.)

Activity III – Exploring the single story: Cultural belonging and individual identity

So far, the activities have been focused on activating the learners’ imaginaries and promoting self-awareness. The final activity presented here builds on this but extends the focus to creating complexity in the learners’ understanding of themselves and others by helping them 1) to challenge the existence of any one “truth” about a culture, also within their own community; 2) to seek out and create multiple, and thus more complex, stories about a culture; and 3) to reflect on single stories in their own culture and the extent to which they feel that cultural imaginings are important to an individual’s identity. This activity should be given at least 30–45 minutes so that learners have sufficient time to think and reflect.

To prepare for the activity, the teacher should find a photograph from the internet that contains strong cultural associations for the country in which they are teaching. (In Norway, for example, this might be a photograph of snowy mountains with skiers, a photo of a sweater knitted in a traditional pattern, or a photo of someone wearing a *bunad*, the Norwegian national costume).

At the start of the activity, the teacher shows the learners the photograph and asks them to write down the first 2–3 things that come to mind when they see this photograph. Their associations can then be shared with the class and written down by the teacher on either the blackboard or a similar visual tool. This visual representation of the class’s association can then work as support during the ensuing discussion in which the class will come up with a single story that the photo tells (for example, “Norwegians ski”).

In the second stage of the activity, students should discuss the following in small groups (4–5):

1. Where do you think this story about Norwegians comes from?
2. Is it still an important story to use when describing Norwegian culture today?
3. To what extent do you feel that this story defines you?
4. What other stories could be told about Norwegians?

In the third and final stage of the activity, the teacher will ask the learners to perform their own search for images of a particular country (for example, “India”) or a particular group of people (for example, “Irish” or “Native Americans”). In groups they should discuss the following:

1. What single stories about _____ do you find in the images on the internet?
2. Where do you think these stories come from?
3. What other stories can be told about these people / this country?

To conclude this activity, the teacher may initiate a discussion with the learners about the extent to which it might be helpful or harmful to create single stories about a nation’s cultures, and the extent to which any group of people can agree on a single identity. Some questions to help learners consider different perspectives on identity and culture could be:

1. In what ways might it be helpful to create single stories about a nation’s culture? In what ways might this be harmful?
2. Why might people choose to identify with a national culture?
3. Who is included and excluded by our stories about national cultures?

A possible follow-up activity, which could also be connected to a textbook unit on a particular country or culture, asks learners to actively search for additional images about that country or culture, and then create a digital

montage (using free online tools like Google's Book Creator or Padlet) with the aim of showing multiple and differing, or even contradictory stories about a people or culture. In this way, the learners are encouraged to construct more complex understandings of the cultural group in question. With older learners, the teacher can also initiate a higher-level discussion about what the consequences of single stories might be for how we understand people as similar or different to ourselves.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have argued that some of the challenges in intercultural education can be addressed by focusing more attention on the “inter” of intercultural education; that is, the intricate, complex, and dynamic relationships between ourselves and various others. We have proposed that by approaching cultures as imaginaries – as assumptions, beliefs, and ideas we and others carry – the divide between our culture / their culture can be problematized. Furthermore, as these imaginaries are activated visually, we have suggested that photographs can be a powerful tool in the EFL classroom to initiate the type of reflective dialogues necessary for intercultural learning to be personal and transformational, and to aim for complexity and multiplicity.

Based on this, we have proposed some general principles as well as specific activities for how photographs can be used as prompts for reflective dialogues surrounding cultural imaginaries in the EFL classroom. While our experiences with these activities have been restricted to the upper-secondary and university level, we believe that given sufficient scaffolding (e.g., use of L1 vs. L2, simplification of the questions and dialogues) the activities can also be adapted for use in lower secondary and primary school classrooms. Additionally, we would like to point out that such activities do not need to be treated as one-off events. Rather, we suggest that the underlying principles and the types of questions presented here could strengthen an approach to intercultural learning and images in the ELT classroom more generally. Moreover, it can be advantageous to, for example, routinely discuss learners' imaginaries when encountering new photographs in textbooks or other media. Given the centrality of

images in today's society and their significant "role in shaping individual and collective attitudes, beliefs and identities" (Gil-Glazer, 2019, p. 68), we believe it is crucially important to see photographs not simply as illustrations but as intercultural encounters, and to analyse and discuss them through the lens of cultural imaginaries.

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CHAPTER 4

Integrating Migrant Children in Primary Education: An Educator Survey in Four European Countries

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Abstract: This chapter describes the findings of a survey focusing on migrant education of children conducted in four European countries. The survey was carried out as part of the interdisciplinary Erasmus Plus funded project OpenEYE (Open Education for Young Europeans through History, Art and Cultural Learning), with the aim of shedding light on the attitudes and perceived needs of educators (n = 255) working with children of migrant backgrounds relating to pedagogical challenges, learning priorities, institutional support, and desired training. The chapter begins with a description of the aims and participants in the project and an outline of approaches to migrant education in the four countries in question: Greece, Italy, Norway, and Slovenia. The second part of the chapter reports and discusses the findings from the needs survey, highlighting findings that are especially relevant for language teachers, teacher educators and other stakeholders working with multilingual and multicultural children. The findings indicate a need for appropriate further training opportunities for educators working with migrant children, especially concerning multilingualism and the learning potential of cultural expressions to aid integration and language development.

Introduction

This chapter reports on findings from a European ERASMUS-funded project, OpenEYE (Open Education for Young Europeans through History,

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Art and Cultural Learning), an interdisciplinary project that includes stakeholders in four countries: Greece, Italy, Norway, and Slovenia¹

The project was designed in response to the refugee crisis in 2015–2016, which led to increased migration to all four countries involved, and which produced questions relating to appropriate educational models and approaches for migrant children renewed currency and urgency. The topic is highly relevant still today, not least due to the recent outbreak of war in Europe. In addition to educational specialists from the University of South-Eastern Norway, who have coordinated the project, this interdisciplinary project involves a primary school and continuing education center from Slovenia, the Museum of Natural History in the province of Livorno, Italy, the Museum of Greek Children’s Art as well as a research consultancy institution in Greece.

The aim of the OpenEYE project is to enable educators in primary school education (formal and non-formal) to support migrant children in language learning and integration in their school and community. The project develops and tests learning methodologies and tools based on cultural expressions (music, dance, heritage, painting, storytelling, theater etc.) that will be applied in formal and non-formal primary education in order to help migrant children integrate in their new communities in the respective four countries. Although the aims of the project are cross-curricular, i.e., they relate to language learning and intercultural learning in all subjects, they are not least timely for English Language Teaching (ELT) in second and foreign language classrooms.

The present chapter reports and discusses findings from a survey carried out initially in the OpenEYE project to gain insight into the stakeholders’ attitudes, practices, and needs regarding the integration of migrant children. Attitudes and self-perceived practices are important to study, since research indicates that there are inconsistencies and sometimes contradictions or incompatibilities in what educators express (De Angelis, 2011). Moreover, attitudes and self-perceived practices mutually

1 We would like to thank the project partners for collecting and reporting data from their national contexts: PRISMA Center for Development Studies (Greece), Provincia di Livorno (Italy) and Izobrazevalni Center Geoss d.o.o. (Slovenia).

influence actual practices (Barcelos & Kajala, 2013). The study concentrates on the following research question:

What are educators' attitudes and practices in four European countries regarding the integration of migrant children and use of cultural expressions to promote integration?

We will describe the findings and discuss their relevance for language teaching in general and ELT in particular.

Integration and the use of cultural expressions

In recent years, the population of children in Europe has become increasingly diverse both linguistically and culturally, leading to what Vertovec (2007) refers to as *superdiversity* or *trans-culture*. Educators need to adapt to super-diverse, or pluralistic, groups of children (García, 1991), since all children have the need to be acknowledged, cared for, and appreciated (Honneth, 2006). This requires active measures on the part of educators to facilitate integration, for example in intercultural education, where various cultures, languages, backgrounds, differences, and similarities are highlighted and discussed (Lahdenperä, 2004). Amongst other things, educators need to engage in conversations with the children through which intercultural understanding can be developed and reflected by their own practices. Not surprisingly, children who experience intercultural education where their backgrounds are acknowledged and used, and where education is adapted to their needs, have a higher chance of feeling included and being successful in school (Persson & Persson, 2012).

Intercultural education is important for migrant children in particular since they are often socially, economically, and politically marginalized (Gearon et al., 2009). However, as argued by Miller (2004), *all* schools have a moral obligation to provide such education that provides conditions which challenge the marginalization of migrants. According to this view, integration means using teaching and learning methods that address all learners, taking care not to exclude or marginalize migrant children due to language or culture requirements which cannot be expected of them.

The importance of intercultural pedagogical approaches is reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which is used as a basis for language curricula throughout Europe (Council of Europe, 2001). We would like to extend these principles to non-formal educational settings, such as museums and libraries that offer educational workshops for children, since children learn, play, and interact with others in several other contexts in addition to a formal school context.

Before the 1990s, it was not uncommon to consider language and culture studies as separate entities; from the 1990s onwards, the strong relationships between language learning and culture have been highlighted and elaborated on (e.g., Byram, 1997; Kramsch 1993). However, studies on teachers' attitudes towards intercultural language teaching in various national settings indicate that while teachers are generally positive towards such an approach, few say that they pursue this in their day-to-day teaching (Oranje, 2021). This may be due in part to a lack of emphasis on this area of language teaching in teacher education programs in the past. However, a growing number of empirical and theoretical research, as well as pedagogical textbooks on the topic, indicate increased interest and emphasis on the practical implications of this area of language teaching (e.g., Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; Houghton et al., 2013; López-Jiménez & Sánchez-Torres, 2021).

A core assumption of the OpenEYE project is that a focus on cultural expressions, i.e., history, art, and culture, can be especially useful in supporting learners with highly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In the areas of second and foreign language learning, literature, storytelling, film, and drama are established tools for developing linguistic and intercultural competences. Literature and film have traditionally been valued both because they provide authentic examples of language use and because they can provide insights into different cultures and differing individual perspectives (see for example Bland, 2020; Heggernes, 2021; Villanueva, 2020). These objectives have also been at the core of drama-related approaches in language learning. Research has indicated that drama can in an especially effective way challenge learners to step into different situations and viewpoints in addition to communicative skills, including vocabulary range and fluency (see for example Wagner, 2002).

Visual approaches in language teaching represents a notable strand of research on multilingual and intercultural education. Together with his colleagues, Jim Cummins has developed the concept of “identity texts” with the aim of fostering linguistic and cultural inclusion (Cummins et al., 2015). Several recent studies have examined the benefits of this approach in highly diverse multilingual classes (e.g., Kalaja & Pitkänen, 2020; Krulatz & Iversen, 2019). Kalaja and Pitkänen-Huhta (2020) provide a review of research on “arts-based methodologies” which highlights the usefulness of visual narratives for exploring learners’ subjective and lived experiences with multilingualism in the context of the EFL classroom. Art-based approaches such as these exploit the pedagogical benefits of multimodal texts, where relationships between image and text are central, both as objects of study and as tools for language learning (Rimmereide, 2020). Like drama, art helps learners to visualize language, thereby vitally supporting the cognitive processes of language acquisition, particularly for young learners.

Context

The effort to integrate migrant children into the primary school system, has in recent years placed the partner countries’ educational authorities and schools under considerable stress; in Greece and Italy, the need to integrate great numbers of children – especially after 2015 – was urgent and put pressure on the respective educational systems, while in Norway and Slovenia the need to integrate newcomers to the educational system has put schools under pressure, especially in areas with a high concentration of migrant children. Key features of the national frameworks for the integration of migrant children into primary education are presented below.

Greece

Based on the core principle that every child has both a right and obligation to go to school, the Greek Ministry for Education formulated a plan in 2016 for the integration of children up to the age of 15 to the

national school education system (Ziomas et al., 2017). Daily 4-hour afternoon classes (Reception Classes) on the Greek language, English, Math, and cultural activities were introduced in selected public schools, while Education Coordinators were introduced at the refugee camps to assist children in attending school.

In parallel to the processes and tools put in place by the Ministry for Education, NGOs and cultural organizations (e.g., museums) support migrant children with their integration in the formal school education through non-formal learning activities that usually take place either in the camps or in the organizations' facilities; these focus on developing the language skills of the children in Greek as well as providing them with psychosocial support.

Italy

In Italy, it is established by law that migrants present in the national territory have the right to education regardless of residence status in the same forms and ways provided for Italian citizens. Migrant children must be enrolled in the class according to their age and considering their skills, abilities, preparation, and courses attended or qualifications acquired in their country of origin. A board of teachers located at each school decides how to adapt teaching for individual students, creating a personalized education plan for each child. While the authority given to schools to define their own methods and criteria gives them the flexibility necessary to cope with the heterogeneous nature of migrant children in Italy, it results in a lack of a clear common strategy.

In addition to formal education, it is quite common for migrant children to attend other educational institutions, both public (libraries, museums, regional or local services) and private (NGOs, private educational agencies), which provide extra language classes and/or special activities.

Norway

In Norway, children who do not speak Norwegian or Sami at home have a right to individual language support in Norwegian at school. Migrant

children in Norway receive different types of schooling depending on the model chosen by the local municipality in primary and lower secondary education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012). One of the three models below providing different levels of integration into the mainstream schools is usually adopted by municipalities for integrating migrants:

- A partly integrated model, in which migrant children are placed in a mainstream class of a school but receive part of their learning in separate groups.
- A non-integrated model in mainstream schools, where migrant children attend introductory classes based in mainstream schools, but most commonly receive all their teaching in a separate class.
- A non-integrated model in reception schools, where migrant children receive separate teaching based in a reception school for up to two years before transferring to mainstream schools.

The main criterion for transferring a migrant child to a mainstream school or a mainstream class is the student's competency level in Norwegian. This normally takes place after a year in reception school or in introductory classes at mainstream schools.

Civil society organizations offer complementary learning services and support. The Red Cross, for example, assists children with homework support during after-school hours.

Slovenia

According to the Primary School Law in Slovenia, children who are foreign citizens or stateless persons and reside in the Republic of Slovenia have the right to compulsory primary education under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia (European Commission, 2022). The primary school determines which class a child will join when enrolling, based on the submitted evidence of previous education, the child's age as well as their ability level in the Slovenian language. Students with migrant backgrounds may advance to the next class level

in individual subjects without having been awarded formal grades, the only exception being the ninth grade, the final year of primary school, where pupils are assessed in order to advance to upper secondary education. Overall, schools in Slovenia enjoy a great level of autonomy and flexibility in implementing these guidelines. The first two years of school for a migrant child are commonly regarded as an adjustment period.

Method

Sample

Most participants of the survey in all countries are educators working in formal primary education. The participants in Greece, Slovenia and Italy work with heterogeneous classes (a mix of migrants and non-migrants) with a small percentage working only with migrants (around 25%). The teachers who responded in Norway work in classes where migrant children are a majority (this is due to the sampling technique followed in Norway, where schools with a high percentage of migrant children were approached). Most participants in Greece and Italy are from NGOs and cultural organizations; they are working exclusively with migrant children. When it comes to specialist training for working with migrant children, the participants in Norway and Greece stand out with the largest proportion having received pre- or in-service training, and Italy and Slovenia having participants with the least training.

Data collection

For the purpose of identifying educators' attitudes, practices and needs, an online questionnaire was distributed to educators in Greece, Italy, Norway, and Slovenia in the spring of 2020. The questionnaire was based on a survey carried out with stakeholders in adult education for newly arrived migrants in a previous project. It targeted representatives of stakeholder organizations (i.e., teachers, learning facilitators, school leaders etc.) active in the field of primary education regarding 1) their experience and needs when it comes to working with migrant children, and 2) their views on cultural expressions. By using a purposeful convenient

sampling, the questionnaire was distributed to educators who belong to the partner institutions' professional networks. For example, in Norway the questionnaire was sent to the principal of a primary school, and she distributed it to relevant teachers (the ones who are involved in educating migrant children). The questionnaire was translated into the native languages in Greece, Italy, and Slovenia. In Norway, the questionnaire was used in English due to the high level of English competency amongst teachers. In total, 255 educators responded to the online questionnaire. The number of participants varied quite a lot between the countries due to the Covid19 pandemic.

The questionnaire consisted of a set of background questions (6 items) in addition to 20 closed and open-ended items. The open-ended items provided in-depth elaborations of the numerical data. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts:

1. Experience in multicultural classrooms (8 items). Example of an item from this scale: "What are the obstacles in adapting your teaching material and methods to accommodate the multilingual and multicultural diversity in the class?" The response was given on a Likert scale; it also gave the opportunity for "other" responses:

"Please rate "1-Not important at all," "2-Of some importance," "3-Of great importance"

 - Lack of support from the educational framework (policy, curriculum, management etc.)
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of relevant learning methodologies/guidelines/resources
 - Lack of relevant skills
 - Increase in workload
 - Other: _____"
2. Experience with cultural expressions A (3 items; for those who respond that they do not have any experience using cultural expressions in working with migrant children). Example of an item from this scale: "If you don't use cultural expressions in your work with multilingual and multicultural classes, to what extent do the reasons given below play a role?" Here the response was also given on

a Likert scale: “Plays a huge role / Plays a role to some extent / Plays no role

- I don’t know enough about what a cultural expression is
 - I don’t know enough about how to use cultural expressions
 - I am personally not interested in cultural expressions
 - I’m not encouraged to use them in my organization
 - I don’t have enough time and resources in my organization to use such methods
 - I don’t think they are relevant to my teaching”
3. Experience with cultural expressions B (9 items; for those who respond that they have experience using cultural expressions in working with migrant children). Example of an item from this scale: “To what extent could cultural expressions be used to support newly arrived pupils in need of extra support in their learning and development?” The response was given on a Likert scale here as well: “Rate “1-Not at all”, “2-To some extent”, “3-A great deal”.
- Language learning
 - Basic skills training
 - Mental well-being
 - Overall performance in school

The analysis was based on the topics of the items and was related to the three main parts of the questionnaire:

Part one:	Experience in multicultural classrooms
Categories:	Challenges and learning priorities, and support and practices
Part two and three:	Experience with cultural expressions A and B Categories: Experience using cultural expressions; benefits of using cultural expressions; and further education needs.

Findings

The following sections respond to each of the two parts of the research question posed in this chapter.

Part one: Experience in multicultural classrooms

Challenges and learning priorities

Respondents in all four countries agreed that working with migrant children requires a different approach to classes of non-migrant children only. Results ranged from 97.6% in Norway to 84% in Greece. Among the respondents who disagreed with this statement in Greece, several highlighted the principle that differentiation is a necessary concern with all children regardless of background. They also pointed out that it is important to create a learning environment that favors the development of language skills for pupils with different mother tongues.

In all four countries, the issue of migrant children's language difficulties was identified as most important (Means on a three-point Likert scale: Greece $M = 2.8$, Norway $M = 2.9$, Slovenia $M = 2.9$; Italy $M = 2.6$). Concerns about children's different ability levels were highlighted as the second most important issue in Norway ($M = 2.6$) and Italy ($M = 2.5$), while 59.5% of all the respondents marked communication problems between teachers and parents as highly important. Respondents in Greece ranked communication problems between educators and children as the second most important issue ($M = 2.3$). As in Norway, communication problems with children's families were ranked as the third most important issue here. In Slovenia, communication problems between educator and children, migrant and native children within the class, as well as between teachers and parents were highlighted as the second most important issues ($M = 2.7$). The relevance of social issues such as classroom management challenges, conflicts between groups of children or bullying is ranked lowest in all four countries.

Respondents were asked to rank the learning priorities for the integration of children of migrant backgrounds to the school community. Developing teamwork skills is ranked as the top priority in Greece ($M = 3.0$), Norway ($M = 2.9$), and Italy ($M = 2.8$). In Slovenia, acquiring competence in the native language and developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills were identified as top priorities (2.9 and 2.8 respectively). In Greece, Italy, and Norway, developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills and competencies in the native language were also

ranked as highly important. In the following open-ended item, respondents in Slovenia highlighted amongst other things learning cultural and behavioral patterns of the new, local environment, while teachers in Norway emphasized learning social codes in playing and the values of the school community. The need to develop skills in English as a foreign language is ranked lowest in all countries (Slovenia $M = 2.0$; Norway $M = 2.0$; Greece $M = 2.1$; Italy $M = 2.0$).

Support and practices

The vast majority of the respondents in the four countries stated that they have to adapt their learning material and methods in order to accommodate the multicultural and multilingual character of their classes (100% in Greece; 97% in Norway and Slovenia; 90% in Italy).

In Norway, access to relevant learning material and resources stand out as the most significant factors in supporting work with migrant children ($M = 2.8$). Support from management and support from pupils' parents are seen as highly significant as well ($M = 2.8$). Eighty percent of participants highlight the support of native children as a factor of great importance ($M = 2.6$). In Greece, the vast majority recognizes the great importance of all factors proposed in the survey. In Slovenia, all factors were rated as highly important by a majority of participants, with support from management as the most important factor ($M = 2.9$), and support from children's families ($M = 2.8$) as second. In Italy, respondents highlight the importance of necessary resources ($M = 2.8$) and support from management ($M = 2.7$).

In Greece and Norway, over 70% of respondents stated that they must adapt their material and methods often or very often. In Italy and Slovenia fewer respondents reported that they did this to a great extent (45% and 42% respectively). Between 15% and 20% in these two countries say that they rarely do so. Regarding the constraints respondents face in adapting teaching material, lack of relevant learning methodologies is highlighted as the most important issue in Greece ($M = 2.7$) and Italy ($M = 2.6$). Respondents in Slovenia identified lack of support from the educational framework and increase in workload as the most important issues ($M = 2.4$).

Other factors highlighted in different countries are lack of time and lack of support from the educational framework. Notably, lack of relevant skills was among the two least highlighted constraints in all countries.

Part two: Experience with cultural expressions

Experience using cultural expressions

A majority of the respondents in all four countries have experience working with cultural expressions, although the amount varied significantly in the four countries (Greece 79%; Italy, 65%; Norway 69%; Slovenia 56%). The respondents who do not yet have experience with using cultural expressions in their work attributed this mainly to a lack of knowledge of what cultural expressions are and how to use them in a learning environment as well as the lack of time and resources in their organization to use such methods. It is also important to note that a large majority of these participants are interested in cultural expressions and think they are relevant to their work; moreover, receiving encouragement from their organization to use them is not a decisive issue (Greece $M = 1.5$; Italy $M = 1.6$; Norway $M = 1.7$; Slovenia $M = 2.4$).

The participants who had at that point experience in using cultural expressions in their work were invited to state which types of cultural expressions they have used in their work with pupils having a migrant/refugee background. In Greece, over 70% stated they had used art, photography, and design in their work. In Italy, storytelling (80%), and working with cultural heritage objects and topics (69%) were the most popular answers, while in Norway, music (89%) and literature (86%) were most widely used. In Slovenia, storytelling (68%) and music (66%) were the most popular items.

Asked to give examples of themes and activities carried out in this regard, responses included “creating collages of images, presentation of customs from the countries of origin, narration of fairy tales and stories from the homelands of students, flavors and traditional foods from the different countries represented in the class, using ethnic dances and musical instruments” as well as “international days and UNESCO and Comenius projects”.

Benefits of using cultural expressions

The respondents were invited to rank in terms of importance the different ways in which learning through cultural expressions can help migrant children. In Greece, most weight was placed on the cultural expressions' ability to help and encourage migrant children to develop their self-esteem, express difficult emotions, be active in class and increase their feeling of happiness and wellbeing ($M = 3.0$). In Italy, easing children's integration into the school community and encouraging them to be active in classes receive the highest score ($M = 2.8$). In Norway, the benefit highlighted by most participants is the potential for cultural expression to help children discover cultural similarities ($M = 2.8$). In Slovenia, the benefits highlighted the most are encouraging children to be active in classes ($M = 2.7$), supporting them to learn a new language ($M = 2.6$), helping them to develop an understanding of the new country's culture ($M = 2.6$), and easing their integration into the school community ($M = 2.5$).

Respondents were also asked whether, in their view, the use of cultural expressions could have any potential negative effects. Although the vast majority of respondents did not think so, some described possible challenges. For instance, among the respondents in Norway, two mentioned issues related to stereotyping and insensitive student reactions:

If the teacher isn't aware of and follows up on negative or condescending reactions to cultural expressions that co-students perceive as strange or funny.

Younger children often laugh at/make fun of cultural expressions from a foreign country, without thinking. This has, in my experience, led to unpleasant experiences and memories for others, and has discouraged them from talking about their own cultures at school and even resulted in them being embarrassed by their cultural backgrounds.

Respondents in Italy raised similar issues and underlined the importance of mediating between different ideas and stressing the positive values of diversity.

Respondents who saw negative effects in Slovenia (14%) perceived a danger in the over-use of cultural expressions, stating amongst other

things that “immigrant pupils involve too much of their culture in thinking and inclusion in the system... some do not even try to speak Slovene as they think we understand them in some way”.

Regarding the extent to which the cultural expressions can be used to support different fields of learning and development of migrant children, the vast majority recognize that cultural expressions can be of great use in language learning, basic skills training, mental wellbeing, and children’s overall performance in school. Asked to expand on an open-ended question, respondents added the following comments:

- “The use of cultural expressions can be used in all fields of learning and personal development, including the pupils’ integration into the school and local community” (Greece).
- “Adult learning activities involving parents” (Italy).
- “Inclusion in the social and cultural system outside schools (sport, after school activities, leisure, etc.)” (Italy).
- “Social skills, cooperation, respect, identity affirmation” (Norway).
- “Native learners learn about different cultures and will welcome newcomers with less prejudice. Newcomers will thus be accepted more easily and integrated more easily into the peer groups” (Norway).
- “Developing a positive self-image and making friends” (Slovenia).

An additional open-ended item invited respondents to state in what way they believe their own practice would benefit from the increased use of cultural expressions. Most responses focus on the cultural expressions’ ability to facilitate the learning process and offer opportunities for the development of new learning techniques and making teaching more interesting. Examples of comments made in the open-ended question are:

- “Gain new educational tools for multicultural classes and all kinds of students” (Italy).
- “Explore new kinds of educational activities” (Italy).
- “Facilitate the relationship between teacher and migrants/refugees” (Italy).

- “Adds more color to my teaching. Gives pupils shared experiences across cultural backgrounds, which in turn makes the class more unified” (Norway).
- “I will have a greater variety of materials to use in teaching. I too will learn something new about other cultures” (Norway).
- “Improved relations with students and their families” (Norway).

Further education needs

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate what form of training or material they would find more helpful in order to implement or better employ cultural expressions in their work as educators. In Norway and Slovenia, inspirational material with good examples of activities gained the highest score as being very helpful ($M = 2.8$ and $M = 2.7$ respectively). In Greece, training on how to communicate the importance of using cultural expressions ($M = 2.7$) as well as ready-made modules ($M = 2.6$) were seen as very helpful by most respondents. In Italy, basic training courses ($M = 2.8$) and modules that are easily adaptable ($M = 2.9$) were seen as most helpful. The greatest variation in this item relates to the usefulness of gaining more theoretical knowledge about cultural expressions. While a majority of respondents in Greece found this very helpful ($M = 2.5$), participants in the other countries rated this factor as much less important: in Norway ($M = 2.2$) and Italy ($M = 2.4$), less than one-third of respondents highlighted this factor, while in Slovenia just above one-third rated this very helpful ($M = 2.3$).

Respondents were invited to comment on further factors that would help them implement cultural expressions in their practice. Highlighted factors included the following:

- More time for preparation (Slovenia and Norway).
- Building a local network of educators to share experience and good practices (Italy).
- Websites and/or Facebook pages with examples and tools for educators (Italy).
- Experience sharing among entire school staff and creating common methodologies within schools (Italy).

- The need for immigrants to learn Slovene before they enter school, which would make it easier for all (Slovenia).
- Opportunities to work in smaller groups with a mentor/supervisor (Slovenia).

Discussion and implications for ELT

Concurring with research charting the needs of people with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds (García, 1991; Lahdenperä, 2014), the respondents in the present study to a great extent agree that migrant children need different types of learning activities than the ones they usually use, even though it is worth noting that a smaller number of respondents say they actually carry this out in practice (compare Oranje, 2021). The need for appropriate learning material has been highlighted in a number of studies on teachers in migrant education (e.g., Burner & Carlsen, 2017, 2019; Illman & Pietilä, 2018). Teachers of introductory classes interviewed in Norway stated that they are constantly looking for resources and textbooks to vary and adapt their teaching approaches to migrant children. Finding and using adapted material and approaches is a challenge when national educational authorities maintain the same curricula and tests for migrant children as with non-migrant children and expect the same results. Perhaps it would be wiser to adapt curricula and tests to migrant children's needs and abilities, then progress and expect more of them the longer they have lived in their new country. When not doing so, the experienced gaps between what migrant children can do and say compared with non-migrant children may be perceived as problematic. Evidence of this is found in the present study when the respondents highlight differences in the children's "language abilities" (general language abilities even though they probably mean the target language) and communication problems as challenging.

As the responses on learning priorities show, the language of the new country is, understandably, considered to be the most important language. Some open-ended comments from educators in Slovenia emphasized this point especially forcefully, stating that students should learn the language of schooling before attending school and that focusing too

much on students' cultural diversity can hinder their willingness to integrate. Similar attitudes have been described in international studies on teachers' attitudes towards migrant students and multilingualism, among other things resulting in school policies prohibiting the use of languages other than the language of schooling (De Angelis, 2011; EU, 2015).

Interestingly, the migrant children's third language, English, has low priority among the respondents. This echoes results from our own studies in Norway, which showed that EFL classes were sometimes reduced or neglected in order to spend more time on Norwegian (Burner & Carlsen, 2017, 2019). To explain this reaction, English teachers interviewed in these studies expressed a belief that migrant children learn English through the language of the host country. However, for successful integration to take place, we recommend concurrent stimuli of children's entire language repertoire – first language (mother tongue), second language (the language of the new country), and not least any other foreign languages (such as EFL) (García & Wei, 2014).

Sometimes all the demands put on educators can seem unbearable. As pointed out by the respondents in the present study, it's important for them to have a reduced workload and more support from the leadership. As evidenced in the study, working with migrant children requires different approaches and a larger toolkit. It cannot be expected of educators that they increase their competency and find new and exciting resources and methods without receiving enough support and time to do so in return.

In terms of implementing culture-based approaches, differences between stakeholders in the four countries were clearest on the topics of perceived benefits. Respondents in Greece highlighted the potential of personal development, such as strengthening self-esteem. Respondents in Norway, Italy and to a lesser extent Slovenia, emphasized pedagogical aims, such as students' integration, concurring with the research focus of Cummins et al. (2015) and Kalaja and Pitkänen-Huhta (2020). Interestingly, language acquisition aims received relatively low scores in Norway (under 50% of respondents rated this area highly important), which perhaps indicates a lack of awareness about the potential of using art-based approaches, literature and other cultural expressions as a basis

for language development. It is noteworthy in this connection that the perceived need among respondents to gain greater insight into the theoretical foundations of culture-based learning received a low score in the item related to professional development in all countries apart from Greece.

It is clear from the survey that educators in all countries see benefits for both their students and their own teaching practice. As respondents in Norway highlighted, including a variety of cultural expressions from different countries can “add color” to their teaching and help them gain greater insight into different cultures. However, it is also worth noting the possible challenges raised by focusing on students’ diverse cultural backgrounds, as these are rarely highlighted in research on this topic (but see Houghton et al., 2013). Comments from educators in Norway and Italy underline the importance of cultural sensitivity in planning, managing and choosing appropriate material to avoid stereotyping and, in the worst case, ridicule and bullying. This practical perspective points to the potential pitfalls of intercultural education. This sensitivity among educators can be related to Byram’s notion of “critical cultural awareness”, i.e., the “ability to evaluate critically and based on explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p. 63). Understandably, highly diverse cultural settings provide additional challenges for teachers in this respect, not least given the lack of suitable teaching material. As analyses of textbooks used in Norwegian primary schools have shown, insensitive and stereotypical portrayals of cultural groups, for example representations of indigenous cultures, are all too common in teaching material (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017).

Concluding remarks

This chapter has reported on approaches to migrant education in four European countries who have participated in the OpenEYE ERSMUS project and on educators’ views regarding the integration of migrant children in primary education. The findings provide a small contribution to the under-researched field concerning the ongoing work with

including migrant children's language and culture in their new education setting. On the one hand, the findings highlight a high degree of awareness among educators about the need to adapt teaching methods and material to meet the needs of migrant children. On the other hand, the results also show the need for appropriate continuing education opportunities for educators working with migrant children, especially concerning multilingualism and the learning potential of cultural expressions to aid integration and language development. This is highly relevant for the instruction of English as the children's third language. It needs to be nurtured and used both to advance their language repertoire (goal) and build bridges to their first and second language (means). Finally, one of the main positive outcomes of the project described in this chapter has been its interdisciplinary nature, above all the exchange of expertise, experiences and working methods in migrant education between different educational and cultural institutions in four distinct European countries. We call for further empirical research that explores interdisciplinary and culture-based approaches in highly diverse student groups more broadly in ELT as well as formal and informal educational contexts.

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CHAPTER 5

Exploring the Systematic Use of Intercultural Encounters in the English Classroom

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Abstract: This chapter presents a four-week intervention study in an upper secondary class that explores the systematic use and analysis of intercultural encounters in the English classroom. The overall purpose of the study is to provide some examples of activities in the language classroom that can lead to the development of intercultural competence in accordance with common interpretations of the concept of *intercultural competence*. The study thus aims to explore the extent to which teachers and students experienced that systematic analysis of intercultural encounters contributed to developing students' intercultural competence, and to what extent students show progress in analyzing intercultural encounters. The encounters, or critical incidents, to be analyzed were presented in the form of written dialogues, written descriptions of critical incidents, YouTube clips and film excerpts. An important insight from the intervention study is that students can benefit from reflection tools when analyzing intercultural encounters in the classroom, which in turn can promote intercultural competence development as part of teaching practice.

Introduction

This chapter presents a four-week intervention study that explores the systematic use and analysis of intercultural encounters in an upper secondary school class. The encounters are *critical incidents*, typically involving misperceptions that can lead to some form of tension or lack of understanding between people. Among other things, the ability to deal with such intercultural encounters is considered necessary in mediation

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when there are “situations, tensions or even disagreements that need to be faced in order to create the conditions for any understanding and hence any communication” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 122).

The aim of the study is to answer the following two research questions: (1) To what extent do teachers and students experience that the analysis of intercultural encounters contributes to developing students’ intercultural competence, and (2) to what extent do students develop a more systematic approach to analyzing intercultural encounters? The overall purpose of the study is to increase knowledge about intercultural competence and activities that can be used for developing this competence in the classroom. The intervention was conducted at an upper secondary school in an urban area in southeastern Norway in close collaboration with two teachers of English who shared the responsibility for the intervention group. The study uses a quasi-experimental design (Shadish et al., 2002, p. 14) consisting of quantitative pretests and posttests with an accompanying qualitative test as well as a semi-structured interview with the teachers. The intervention involved one intervention group and two control groups.

Background

The Council of Europe identifies *intercultural competence* as one of the general competences that are “always combined with communicative language competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences)” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 29). This confirms that intercultural competence is a central concept in European language policy, which is also reflected in the three national language curricula for English in Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). For example, the *Curriculum in English* (ENGO1-04) for Years 1–10 and the first year of upper secondary school (Vg1) states that “English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a).

Yet even if intercultural competence is a central concept in European language policy (cf. Council of Europe, 2018), there seems to be considerable

uncertainty about what it entails. One reason could be that there are hundreds of definitions, models and similar constructs to choose from (cf. Leung et al., 2014, p. 491), though this is hardly unique for this theoretical concept. A more plausible reason could be that the intercultural approach to teaching languages is relatively new, and it takes time to bring new knowledge about intercultural competence to teachers (cf. Byram, 2014, p. 221). In Norway, the concept started to become an integral part of the national curricula for English in the 1990s (Simensen, 2003, p. 5), but the term *intercultural competence* was not included in these documents. While the term is used in the present three Norwegian national curricula for English, there is still no clear explanation of the concept of intercultural competence other than pointing to “ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” as areas to be understood interculturally (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c).

There is, however, some consensus about the most central components of intercultural competence among many researchers (Deardorff, 2004, 2006), such as empathy and the ability to change perspectives. In this regard, Byram’s (1997) model of “intercultural communicative competence” represented a big leap forward. Regardless of how this particular model has been adopted, adapted or criticized by others since, the basic idea of breaking down intercultural competence into sensible components has stood the test of time. The present study is clearly indebted to the work of both Byram for identifying some key elements of intercultural competence development in education, and others for taking the field of study in different directions (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Dervin, 2016; Risager, 2007). Given the nature of this field of study, the diversity of such approaches should be welcomed, at the same time as having some consensus about basic components of intercultural competence can be an advantage for teachers.

Still, it remains a challenge to identify methods and activities that can enhance intercultural competence development in the English classroom, given that teachers of English are usually not intercultural experts. However, based on well-known aspects of language learning, such as working with fiction, studying target-language countries, and developing language awareness, teachers can find ways of developing intercultural

competence (cf. Brown, 2021; Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; Heggernes, 2021; Hoff, 2019). A useful reminder is Kramsch's (1993) assertion that culture is not "tacked on" to the teaching of basic language skills: "It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them (p. 1). By the same token, the approach to intercultural competence training in this study is that it "should be integrated into English courses in ways that also respect the original language skill goals of the course" (Snow, 2015, p. 286).

The relevance of this study is that it can provide some examples of activities in the language classroom that can lead to the development of intercultural competence in accordance with common interpretations of the concept and the Norwegian national curricula of English. Furthermore, the study represents an approach to intercultural encounters that seems to be more common in general intercultural training than in language training. According to Smith et al. (2003), "interculturalists and language educators have paid insufficient attention to each other's work ...". Since this still seems to be the case, the present study can contribute to bridging the gap between interculturalists and language educators.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this study, *intercultural competence* is defined as "the ability to relate constructively to people who have mindsets and/or communication styles that are different from one's own" (Dypedahl, 2019, p. 102). It is acknowledged that a word such as "constructively" is intrinsically problematic. However, an entirely unproblematic definition is hard to achieve. It is also acknowledged that "*interculturality is a point of view, not a given*" (Dervin, 2016, p. 2, emphasis in original). For example, the *Curriculum in English* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a) used by the students in this study is obviously influenced by educational and political ideology in both Norway and the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, the view on intercultural competence in this study is not in conflict with

what seems to be the view on intercultural competence in the national curricula for English.

As may have been observed, the two conceptualizations of intercultural competence used in the definition above (Dypedahl, 2019), *mindsets* and *communication styles*, can be found in the Norwegian national curricula for English as well, although phrased in slightly different terms: “ways of thinking” and “communication patterns” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). The focus on “ways of living” is not included in the definition because the understanding of intercultural competence in this study is based on interpersonal communication. Generally speaking, we have to relate to the way other people think and communicate in order for us to understand the intended meaning of a message, but we do not necessarily have to relate to their way of life beyond its potential influence on their particular mindset. Therefore, though intercultural understanding of ways of living is highly relevant for us to be able to relate to different contexts, this study focuses on mindsets and communication styles.

In order to operationalize the development of intercultural skills and assess them, intercultural competence can be divided into components of intercultural competence. These components are outlined in the model in Figure 1 below (Dypedahl, 2018), which is a further elaboration on Deardorff (2006).

The learning cycle is a process model, which underscores the assertion that intercultural competence development is an everlasting process. The upper box includes certain attitudes that are viewed as both premises for and outcomes of intercultural competence development, such as willingness to understand. Furthermore, intercultural competence is here considered to be closely related to the concept of *communicative competence* (cf. Council of Europe, 2018, p. 19; Sercu, 2004, p. 75). Therefore, linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences are considered to be both premises for and an integral part of intercultural competence development.

In the box to the right, “knowledge” includes knowledge about the concept of culture and knowledge of intercultural communication as a field of study, whereas “skills” include components that are considered

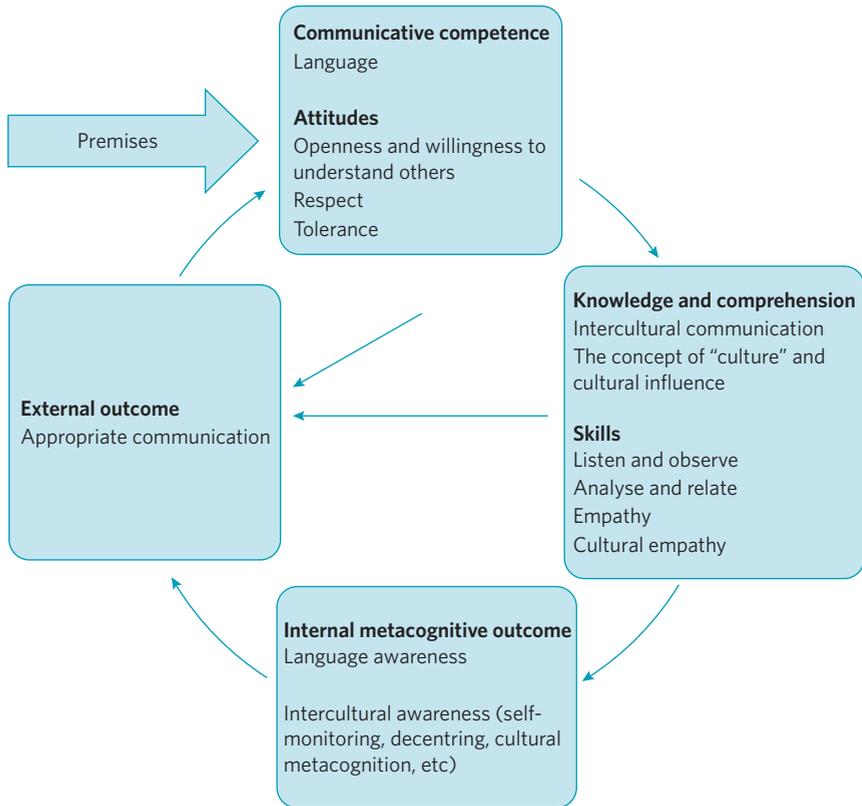


Figure 1. Learning Cycle of Intercultural Competence

central aspects of intercultural competence (cf. Deardorff, 2004) and cultural empathy, which refers to the ability to see the world from different contexts and societies.

The lower box focuses on metacognition, or a high level of consciousness relating to the concepts of *language awareness* and *intercultural awareness*. In this model, the latter term is used to refer to self-monitoring and decentering (analyzing situations from perspectives other than one's own). *Cultural metacognition* refers to "heightened sensitivity to the fact that individuals' motivations and behaviors are invariably shaped by the cultural contexts in which they are embedded" (Chua et al., 2012, p. 2) and "the ability to deploy cultural knowledge flexibly" (Klafehn et al., 2008, p. 320). This can include the adaption of other people's cultural references, which is one good reason for including studies of other societies in language studies.

The arrow pointing directly from the upper box to the external outcome indicates that people with communicative competence may of course communicate constructively without possessing any intercultural competence. Similarly, the arrow pointing from the box on the right to the external outcome indicates that it is possible to communicate constructively without having a high level of consciousness. (See the “Participants and methods” section below for how this model is applied in the student test.)

The use of intercultural encounters, employed in this study as a critical incident technique, can be attributed to Flanagan (1954). While the technique was not developed for intercultural training, it is suited for this purpose. Some recent studies from Norway explore the use of critical incidents to make healthcare students and healthcare professionals critically reflect on their intercultural encounters (Debesay et al., 2022; Horntvedt & Fougner, 2015).

Internationally, the inclusion of the critical incident technique in general intercultural training is very likely to be influenced by cross-cultural management (CCM) and international business research, which often rests on Geert Hofstede’s *dimensional approach to culture* (Kirkman et al., 2006). Hofstede’s dimensional approach means that different nationalities are placed along dimensions according to average scores for values, such as the individualism-collectivism continuum (cf. Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, pp. 73–114). The historical roots of dimensions or continuum scales in intercultural communication research are studies such as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Hall (1959), which along with Hofstede’s studies can be classified as a functionalist research tradition that “has tried to *predict* how culture would influence communication” (Dahl, 2006, p. 9). It is furthermore associated with an essentialist perspective on culture, which according to Holliday (2011) “presents people’s individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are” (p. 4). For example, if an essentialist understanding of culture is used when analyzing critical incidents, accompanied by closed-end questions indicating that there are key answers to human behavior, it may encourage a static and deterministic understanding of culture. In other words,

the risk is that culture is considered an active “agent” in communication between people, whereas human agency is restricted or disregarded. (Bandura, 2006; Nathan, 2015). As Nynäs (2006) writes, “One important question in intercultural communication theory is how we should conceive the relationship between culture and individual” (p. 25).

In accordance with the Council of Europe’s educational policy, this study considers “the language user/learner as a ‘social agent,’ acting in the social world and exerting agency in the learning process” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 26). The perspective on culture is intended to be dynamic and focused on human agency, which means that human action is not considered to be determined by culture. At the same time, it is acknowledged that individuals both produce and are influenced by social structures (Giddens, 1984). A person’s life experience and cultural background will quite naturally influence their mindsets and behavior, but cultural background is complex. First of all, “cultural groups are always internally heterogeneous and embrace a range of diverse practices and norms that are often disputed, change over time and are enacted by individuals in personalised ways” (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 19). Moreover, *cultural background* is here understood as the sum of an individual’s multiple affiliations or group memberships, such as nationality, neighborhood, education, family, friends, ethnicity, religion, and gender.

Considering this emphasis on human agency, it may seem like a paradox that a technique associated with functionalism and essentialism is employed. However, the assumption is that the critical incident technique and the dimensional approach are just as well suited for a non-functional and non-essentialist approach to culture. The concepts of *mindset* and *communication style* are no less relevant today, and it is assumed that the exploration of these concepts can help giving students deeper insights. More recent studies also investigate the same concepts. Park et al. (2012), for example, find that “proportionally, there is much more variation across individuals than across cultures in direct communication style” (p. 184). Another study looks at the extent to which the power distance in face-to-face social relationship between teachers and college students in Thailand is affected by having Facebook interactions or not (Suwinyattichaiyorn et al., 2019). The conclusion in that study is that the individualistic nature

of social media seems to affect the level of hierarchical or non-hierarchical social relations in face-to-face communication.

Nevertheless, two measures have been taken to avoid a functionalist and essentialist approach to culture. Only open-ended questions are used when students are asked to analyze an intercultural encounter. Tran et al. (2020) conclude that the use of critical incidents with open-ended tasks is an effective method for promoting learners' awareness of intercultural communication. The other measure taken is using dimensions or continuum scales only for reflection on differences at the individual level (Dypedahl, 2020). The present study therefore does not take a dimensional approach to culture, but rather a dimensional approach to mindsets and communication styles at the individual level. Accordingly, it is also a conscious choice that many of the intercultural encounters used in the study do not involve people with different nationalities or include information about nationality.

The intervention was conducted as a peer-to-peer collaboration. This places the study within the rich concept of *praxis*, which “positions theory and research in a relation with practice such that they mutually inform one another” (Michell & Davison, 2020, p. 24). In this study, the role of the researcher was to support processes of intercultural competence development in close co-operation with the teachers. The choice is based on the premise that “education praxis can only be changed from within” by insider-practitioners (Kemmis, 2010, p. 25; 2012, p. 893). Although exploring peer-to-peer collaboration was not a primary aim of this study, it was still a very valuable aspect of the intervention. According to Michell and Davison, “[i]t is these social relations surrounding the tools, and not the tools in themselves, that are transformational for action and cognition” (Michell & Davison, 2020, p. 30).

Participants and methods

Participants

The study involved one intervention group, or experimental group, and two control groups, in addition to two upper-secondary teachers who shared responsibility for teaching English in the intervention group. The

participants in the intervention group and the two control groups were first-year students in upper secondary school (Vg1). The intervention group, comprised of 27 participants, was a regular general studies class (Vg1), which means that they had five hours of English a week. Of the participants, 19 identified as female and eight as male. The first control group, comprised of 23 respondents (17 female and six male), was an Art, Design and Architecture class whose members all took the same general studies English course. They also worked with the same texts during this period, but without having had any specific intercultural training. One of the teachers in the study was the English teacher of this class, but she specifically did not introduce the critical incident technique or the dimensional approach to mindsets and communication styles during the intervention period. The second control group was a regular general studies class, comprised of 17 respondents (15 female and two male), who neither had any specific intercultural training nor worked with the same texts as the experimental group did during the intervention. Further, while none of the teachers in the study taught English in this class, one of them taught a different subject.

The choice of participants was purposive in the sense that the intended study population was comprised of students in the first year of upper secondary school using the most recent *Curriculum in English* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019a). However, beyond this limitation the participants were chosen by convenience sampling. The researcher had some knowledge of the school and one of the teachers in advance. The students were also chosen by convenience sampling, since at least one of the two teacher participants was involved in each of these classes.

Data collection instruments

Data were collected using a pre- and posttest for students in Microsoft Forms and one interview with the two teachers involved in the study. The pre- and posttest included a questionnaire containing 21 items for self-assessment and an intercultural encounter in the form of a dialogue for analysis (see Appendix 1 at https://web01.usn.no/~mdy/Appendix_1).

Using the model in Figure 1 as a starting point, the questionnaire was organized into seven parts, with three items covering each of the seven components below:

1. Tolerance of and respect for differences
2. Behavioral flexibility
3. Knowledge discovery (what to observe)
4. Communicative awareness (analyze and relate)
5. Empathy
6. Internal outcome: Metacognitive intercultural awareness (self-regulation and decentering)
7. “External” outcome: Strategies for behavior

Question 12 in the questionnaire, for example, is related to component 5 and reads: When people misunderstand me or I misunderstand them, I try to learn from it (see Appendix 1). The seventh component above has the word “External” in quotation marks because “External outcome” in the model in Figure 1 refers to appropriate or constructive communication in real life that can be difficult to self-regulate. Therefore, the internal outcome is divided into three items reflecting on self-regulation (items 17–18) and three items reflecting on the development of strategies for behavior (19–21), which is in turn indirectly linked to external outcome. Item 19, for example, reads: “In conversations with people who have a different cultural background from me, I am willing to change the way I communicate to make sure we have the same understanding of what is being said” (Appendix 1).

Responses were given on a four-point Likert scale going from 0 = “never” to 3 = “always” (see Appendix 1). Since this was the first time the questionnaire was used, the students could also suggest improvements or give feedback on how each question was asked. This feedback will be used to revise the questionnaire for future studies.

All the groups had an identical pre- and posttest. With regard to the self-assessment questionnaire, the purpose of the tests was to investigate whether the systematic use of intercultural encounters affected the self-assessment of intercultural competence in the intervention group

and compare it to the two control groups. By the same token, the purpose of letting all the students analyze the same intercultural encounter both before and after the intervention was to compare the extent to which the intervention group improved their analysis with the control groups. In addition, the intervention group took an identical delayed posttest in June, four months after the intervention. The purpose of this was to see if any possible impact of the intervention would have a long-term effect.

The interview was a semi-structured, 90-minute interview with both teachers present and which was conducted in Norwegian one month after the intervention. It was recorded and then transcribed. The interview took the form of a conversation and included a discussion of the following questions: How do you understand the concept of intercultural competence, and how can this competence be developed? To what extent has this project changed the way you understand the concept and how the competence can be developed? Have you found the critical incident technique and the dimensional approach useful, and if so, in what way? Have you found that these methods have encouraged an instrumental and stereotypical approach to intercultural competence development? The questions were integrated in the conversation and not necessarily phrased exactly as rendered above. The interview also included a discussion of the intercultural encounters and films included in the intervention study.

Intervention procedure

Before the intervention period, the teachers were asked to read a book chapter on intercultural competence (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2020), including the definition of intercultural competence above and the model of intercultural competence used in the study, in addition to a chapter on reflection tools and continuum scales (Dypedahl, 2020). (These chapters are available as Appendix 2 at https://web01.usn.no/~mdy/Appendix_2 and Appendix 3 at https://web01.usn.no/~mdy/Appendix_3). The approach to intercultural competence in these chapters was not presented as a key to how intercultural competence should be understood by the teachers, but rather as a suggested theoretical framework for the intervention. The teachers also received some suggested intercultural encounters for

analysis. The package also included one YouTube clip along with a number of dialogues, brief cases and/or descriptions of encounters.

The four-week intervention was conducted from January 25 to February 19, 2021. The original plan was that one out of five weekly sessions would include an analysis of an intercultural encounter, but this was extended to several sessions each week. Since one of the teachers was also the Social Science teacher for this group (three hours a week), and cross-curricular work is welcomed, eight sessions a week were in effect available for work with intercultural encounters and related discussions. The analysis would make use of reflection tools such as dimension or continuum scales relating to direct/indirect communication, low/high context communication, individualism/group orientation, task/people orientation and hierarchical/non-hierarchical orientation (see Appendix 3 for more information).

The selection of intercultural encounters to be discussed in the classroom was made by the teachers and not the researcher. For example, some of the proposed cases were not chosen because they did not represent contexts or situations that the students could easily relate to. The first case the teachers chose to work with was an encounter involving an Indian girl visiting Canada, which could be related to politeness rules as well as direct and indirect communication. Furthermore, a dialogue in Asia that could be related to a hierarchical/non-hierarchical mindset dimension was used, as well as another dialogue that could be related both to a direct/indirect communication style dimension and a possible difference related to task and group orientation. The class also analyzed the suggested YouTube clip, which could also be related to task and people orientation.

In addition, the teachers decided to use the critical incident technique and dimensional approach on one text and two films during this four-week period, which in effect made the project much more integrated with the course. The text was an excerpt from Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*: "When Rich Came to Sunday Dinner". The films were *Outsourced*, a romantic comedy in which an American salesman is sent to India to train his replacement, and *Ali's Wedding*, which is a romantic comedy in which the son of an Iranian-born cleric in Australia must follow through with an arranged marriage, even though he is in love with an Australian girl

from a family with a Lebanese background. In each case, the researcher suggested encounters or scenes that could be analyzed.

For all the encounters, the role of the researcher was to suggest reflection tools to use for analysis. The teachers were also presented with a possible procedure for working with the encounters:

- Describe the situation.
- Describe what each of the persons involved says and does.
- What seem to be the expectations of the people involved in the situation?
- What seems to be the misunderstanding or tension in this situation?
- Could the reason be related to a difference in communication styles/patterns or mindsets (value differences / ways of thinking)?
- How would you describe the actions of the people involved based on your own background and from your own perspective?
- Take the perspective of each of the persons involved and try to describe the situation from their point of view. How might they reason in this situation, and why do you think they communicate as they do?
- Can you relate this incident to anything you have experienced yourself?
- What have you learned from this, and how can you apply your understanding of this incident to other situations?

Data analysis

The students are not identified at the individual level in the tests, so for each item it is the average score for the entire class that is shown in the “Findings” section. Slightly fewer students took the posttest (23 in intervention group, 22 in the first control group and 13 in the second control group, and 22 in the intervention group took the delayed posttest). Moreover, while there is also the occasional blank answer, the average score for each item is in any case based on the number of students who actually responded to each item in each test. For each group there is an

average score before and after the intervention. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests are run on the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to compare pre- and post-test scores of intervention and control groups and determine whether there are statistically significant differences between ranks (Corder & Foreman, 1972, p. 41).

The interpretation of the interview is based on how the researcher experienced the interview and a content analysis of the transcription. The transcript has been manually coded and organized into units according to the topics or questions outlined above, all of which represent the key research issues. The data have then been examined for insights relevant to the key research issues (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 383). The few quotes that have been selected are generally representative for both teachers, so they have not been identified as for example respondents 1 and 2. With regard to interviewer bias, it is acknowledged that the researcher might have an effect on the conversation, which can in turn affect the outcome of the study.

Validity, reliability and ethics

Since the intervention took place in the school during regular classes with in-person teaching, ecological validity should also be ensured (Neuendorf, p. 115). The combination of the information distributed to the teachers and the test given to the students (Appendices 1, 2 and 3), and the information in this chapter contributes to the overall transparency of the study. In terms of the study's validity, established theory supported every stage of the intervention stages, and the participants in the study are representative of upper secondary students at this level (Krippendorff, p. 334).

The study's reliability has been evaluated by letting a colleague with knowledge of intercultural competence development go through the data and interpretations and by letting the two teachers involved in the study evaluate the extent to which the researcher's interpretations represent their own interpretations and views. However, both reliability and validity could have been improved by repeating similar interventions in more classes. Obviously, since both the intervention group and the control groups come from a single school, it is possible that a more widely distributed sample would have produced slightly different results.

The participants in this study have given their written consent, and the collection of data has been approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. Furthermore, the ethical aspect of the intervention has been taken into consideration by making the same methods available to the control groups and other classes after the intervention period.

Findings

The results for the pretests and posttests are divided into the results for the multiple-choice self-assessment test and the results for the students' analysis of the intercultural encounter before and after the intervention. The results for the self-assessment test before and after the intervention are illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4 below. For each group (intervention group, control group 1 and control group 2), they show the average score (0 to 3) for each of the 21 questions in the self-assessment test. The blue line shows the results in the pretest, and the orange line shows the results in the posttest. The grey line in Figure 2 illustrates the intervention group's delayed posttest.

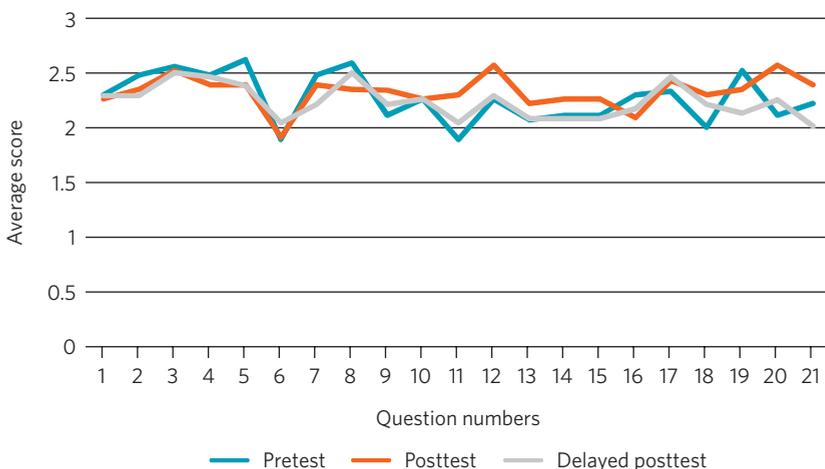


Figure 2. Average Intercultural Competence Score for Intervention Group

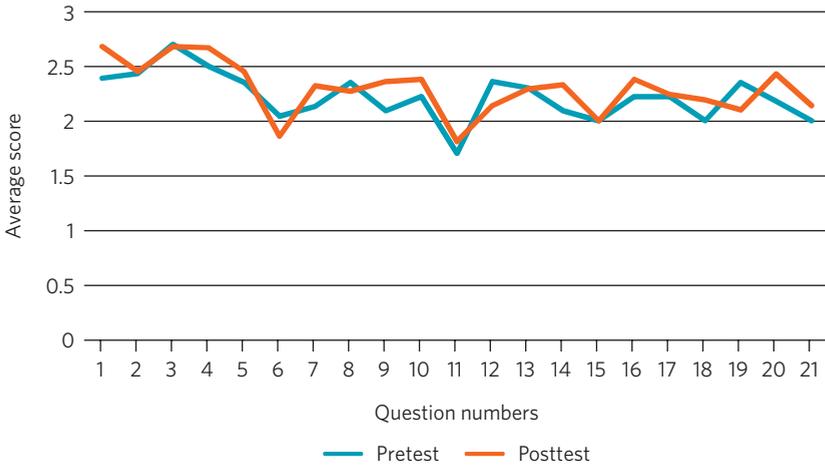


Figure 3. Average Intercultural Competence Score for Control Group 1

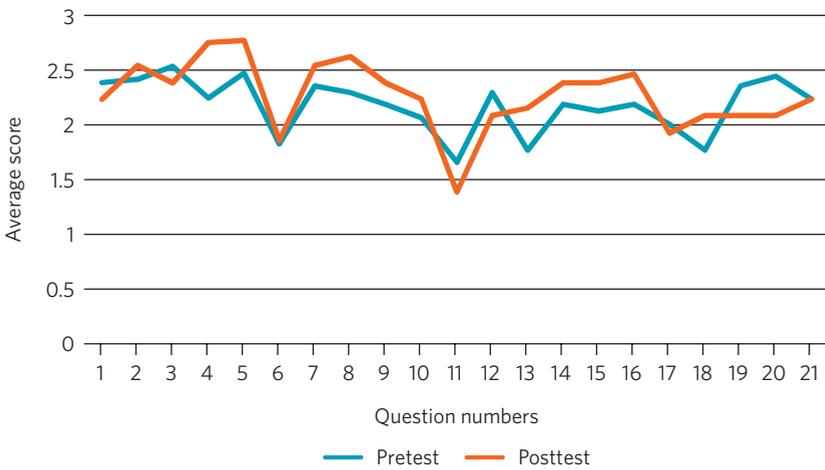


Figure 4. Average Intercultural Competence Score for Control Group 2

All the groups responded quite consistently to the questions in both the pretests and posttests, and the Wilcoxon test shows no statistical significance in the difference between the pretest and the posttest for any of the groups (the p-value is greater than 0.05). For the intervention group, for example, Wilcoxon signed-ranks test indicated that post-test ranks were not significantly higher than pre-test ranks ($Z = 34, p > 0.28$). Similarly, related-samples Wilcoxon signed rank tests between pre- and post-scores

of control group 1 ($Z = 157, p \geq 0.05$) and control group 2 ($Z = 146, p > 0.13$) yielded insignificant statistical results.

Compared to the self-assessment part of the test, the results for the analysis of the intercultural encounter are quite different. This is particularly evident in the answers to the following question: “What could be the reason they end up not co-operating, such as the words they use, communication style or attitude?” (see Appendix 1). In the pretest, the typical response regarding the cause of the misunderstanding is that the question was understood differently. Two of the students in the intervention group do mention communication style, but without specifying what type of communication style. Since the question clearly hints at communication style, these two concepts are also mentioned by students in control groups, although not many. The same types of responses are repeated by the control groups in the posttests.

In the posttest for the intervention group, however, 13 out of 23 mention communication style or attitude, and six of these specifically refer to direct and indirect communication styles. Of the respondents that did not specifically focus on communication style or attitude, one student points to the lack of empathy.

In the delayed posttest for the intervention group, many of the respondents maintain the same level of analysis. Communication style or attitude is mentioned by 12 of the 24 respondents, and four of these students specifically refer to direct or indirect communication. Many of the other students who use the term *communication style* also seem to have an idea of what it means, as seen in statements such as “one of them is very outgoing ... and the other is more reserved”. Of the students that do not specifically refer to communication style or attitude, one student writes that the people in the intercultural encounter did not take the other person’s “perspective into consideration”.

The interview with the teachers confirms the impression that reflection tools were being used in the analysis of intercultural encounters by many of the students in the intervention group. One of the teachers states that the reflection tools “are very important because they improve the understanding of the students” (my translation), a point on which both teachers agree. However, they also point out that the method needs to be practiced

over time. The teachers find this age group very receptive to learning new terms and concepts that they can use in discussions, and they regard it as an extra asset that can give discussions more direction. One of the teachers says that the dimensional approach «provides a very concrete starting point for the discussion» (my translation), making it possible to ask students where the people in an intercultural encounter may be on a certain scale and make them reflect on possible reasons for miscommunication. Considering that the project lasted several weeks, one of the teachers also says that she thinks “it is a very interesting way of working, not least with regard to deep learning” (my translation).

The teachers share a very diverse approach to the concept of intercultural competence and the concept of culture. As one of the teacher states, *culture* “is everything that contributes to your identity; it is in a way a combination of nationality and everything you learn from people around you, whether it be in school or your family ...”.

The teachers say that they have become more aware of terms and concepts in this process, and how they can be used. They point out that intercultural awareness, or similar concepts, have been on the agenda in their school and in the national educational system for many years. Discussing these issues is by no means new. However, having reflection tools does make it possible for them to work more systematically with teaching materials. As one of the teachers says, “It provides new opportunities” (my translation). For example, it is mentioned that this has come into use when working with the Netflix comedy series *Emily in Paris*, enabling students to more systematically analyze human behavior as well as laugh at people generally classified as “people like us” instead of laughing at “other people” from an ethnocentric point of view.

In the interview, one issue was the danger of stereotyping when students analyze intercultural encounters. However, the discussions were described by teachers as being very nuanced. According to one of the teachers, students leave the impression that “they are more open, and they are more aware of not stereotyping, because they are concerned about diversity with regard to sexual identity, cultural identity, ethnicity, etc.”. This awareness is for example evident when the students comment on how people are portrayed in *Emily in Paris*. Moreover, one of

the teachers also mentions that they discuss individual differences versus cultural background in class.

Another issue that came up in the interview is the importance of different identities being represented in teaching materials. *Ali's Wedding* is an example of a film that portrays people with other cultural backgrounds than the average American movie. However, some students who had watched the film and could to some extent identify with the characters also had concerns about the risk of stereotyping because it is a comedy. These are challenges that seem to be discussed in a very constructive way at this school and which will determine if and how to use this film as teaching material in the future.

Discussion

Generally, the findings in this study are encouraging with regard to the systematic use of intercultural encounters and a dimensional approach to mindsets and communication styles. In comparison to the pretest, the intervention group's use of reflection tools when analyzing the intercultural encounter in the posttest and the delayed posttest shows progress. Most importantly, the feedback from very competent and experienced teachers was very positive. The possible effect of the critical incident technique is confirmed by Tran et al. (2020), but they have found a stronger effect on students with low and moderate levels of initial intercultural awareness than students with a high level of initial awareness. This is an interesting observation that this study has not investigated.

There may be several reasons for the lack of any statistically significant progress evident in the intervention group's self-assessment test after the invention. It could be that the questions are not suitable for testing purposes, or the questions themselves might need improvement. The students' feedback indicates that many of the questions should include examples. It could also be that these groups regard their own competence level to be quite high regardless of any intervention. All of these students are part of a transcultural society and attend a school that focuses on diversity, and the awareness of stereotyping pointed out above shows a high level of maturity.

Still, this study demonstrates that competent teachers and a systematic use of intercultural encounters in the classroom can enhance students' intercultural competence development. The critical incident technique has, as one of the teachers expressed it, given the teachers "one more tool in the toolbox" (my translation). Since the analysis of intercultural encounters in this study further relied on a dimensional approach to mindsets and communication styles, there is also reason to see this aspect of the study as promising.

Among the most interesting aspects of the intervention discussed in the interview was the mature approach to stereotyping among students and their ability to discuss cultural differences and similarities in a very nuanced way. It can be challenging to maintain that communication occurs between individuals with their unique personalities and identities while at the same time maintaining that groups of people undoubtedly develop certain common tendencies with regard to how they think and behave. It is necessary to recognize tendencies without essentializing them. According to Scott and Bhaskar (2010), such tendencies "do not in any sense describe the real nature of human beings in any absolute way, though they may contribute to their social sedimentation" (p. 47).

Concluding remarks¹

There are obvious limitations in a study with a relatively short intervention period and relatively few participants, which makes it necessary to be cautious about conclusions or implications for practice at this stage. Nevertheless, there are valuable findings in this study that are very encouraging with regard to introducing the systematic use of intercultural encounters and reflection tools in other classrooms. The most important insights are that students can make good use of reflection tools when analyzing intercultural encounters in the classroom, and this tool is perceived as a good tool to have in teachers' "toolbox". Peer-to-peer collaboration between teachers and researchers also seems very well suited for

¹ I am extremely grateful to May Britt Kleppe Baadstø and Siri Hundstadbråten for making this intervention study possible.

knowledge development. The teachers in this peer-to-peer collaboration have asked for permission to use the self-assessment part of the questionnaire for administering to future students, and one of the teachers has on a later occasion – without being specifically asked to do so – commented that this intervention has had a positive effect on her own approach to promoting intercultural competence development in her teaching practice.

Under the same circumstances as this intervention study, other teachers would most likely be able to experience that this is a method that can both be integrated in other activities in English courses and add something to the development of intercultural competence. However, further investigation is needed to learn more about the use of critical incident technique in language classrooms. A bigger sample of students is necessary to draw more solid conclusions, and the development of individual students could be explored rather than merely obtaining average results for entire groups. Furthermore, other forms of data collection, such as interviewing students, could be considered to get more generalizable and more in-depth insights.

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Developing Awareness of ELF in English Language Education

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Abstract: Language educators in today's classrooms face the complex responsibility of teaching English to prepare students for a variety of requirements in the field of education and work. At the same time, they need to empower students to make use of their English resources to communicate as effectively as possible with speakers in local and global contexts where English is used as a contact language, i.e., *English as a lingua franca* (ELF), by people who do not speak and understand each other's primary languages. The concept of ELF is regarded in diverse ways in various educational settings, and often it is described negatively in comparison with the norms of native-speaker English. However, this deficiency orientation is not conducive to the development of confident language users, which is an aim clearly outlined in the revised national English subject curriculum in Norway. This chapter proposes a post-deficiency approach to the teaching and learning of English, calling for a change of attitude and arguing for the inclusion of ELF discourse in learning resources, heightened genre awareness, and the development of contextually appropriate pragmatic strategies.

Introduction

Teachers in today's classrooms face the complex responsibility of teaching English to prepare students for a variety of requirements in the field of education and work. At the same time, they need to empower students to make use of their English resources to communicate as effectively as possible with speakers in local and global contexts where English is used as a contact language, i.e., *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF), by people who do not speak and understand each other's primary languages. The

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fact that English is used extensively across the world by speakers who have learnt and are learning English as an additional language is by now common knowledge. The ways in which this use of English is regarded in various settings, on the other hand, are highly diverse. We know from our Norwegian context that a speaker who manages to produce well-constructed sentences with appropriate English words, but who articulates these with a distinctly Norwegian intonation, is very likely to be criticised and sometimes even ridiculed. This kind of *deficiency orientation* to the use of English which does not fully conform to an ideal version of the language is not conducive to the development of confident English users, which is an expressed aim in the revised national English subject curriculum.

With the ultimate ambition to move English language teaching (ELT) forward in our Norwegian context, it is tempting to propose a new concept to be developed in English language education: a *post-deficiency approach*. Rather than simply choosing a positive antonym to “deficiency”, we seem to need a stronger and more determined alternative in order to prepare the ground for a new emancipatory way of teaching English. While this is related to a similar formulation in Dewey (2012), his “post-normative approach”, the concept I am launching here is intended to answer more closely to the need for an *attitudinal* change as a desired outcome of a process of awareness-raising as regards the use of English in a multilingual and multicultural world.

Developing an awareness of both what ELF is and its position in ELT seems to be a felicitous place to start. This chapter discusses language-pedagogical theories and recent ELF research with a view to framing useful steps in a post-deficiency approach to English language education. In other words, it entails a pedagogical-pragmatic synthesis of insights from recent language-pedagogical research. In the following, I shall discuss some of the most central concepts in the ELF literature, connecting these with a close reading of the current English subject curriculum (which came into force in 2020) and suggesting some new directions for English teacher education. Salient components are the development of pragmatic communication strategies and genre awareness, which are needed to ensure the intended perlocutionary effect of mutual understanding in

ELF interaction (Austin, 1962). Furthermore, the development of critical language awareness is essential, as is an awareness of language teaching and learning, language itself, and language teachers and learners as complex systems (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

As a first step, the construct *ELF* needs to be defined. There are many conceptualisations in operation at the moment that might even obstruct its integration in ELT. With a focus on the development of ELF awareness in language education locally, a review of Rindal (2014, 2020) sheds some light on the way English is currently conceptualised as a language and school subject in Norway. According to Rindal (2020), English is “in transition”, both as a result of the global status of the language today and its use by many learner-users in interest-driven, out-of-class activities mediated by English.

ELF - *English as a Lingua Franca*

As a sociocultural and sociolinguistic phenomenon, ELF has for the last couple of decades inspired a considerable number of scholars. From the start, attempts were made to define specific features that characterise versions of English used among non-native speakers without compromising intelligibility. The most salient early contribution was made by Jenkins (2000), who proposed a “Lingua Franca Core”, a set of phonological characteristics that were required for mutual understanding in ELF encounters. The list of suggested core features included elements that were inaccurate from the point of view of Standard English norms. This was partly the reason why many teachers refused to take the idea of ELF seriously, thinking it would force them to teach what they were socialised into considering as incorrect English.

In her historical overview of ELF research, Jenkins (2015) recognised three main phases. The first phase was characterised by attempts to define salient linguistic features of ELF. In the second phase, scholars realised that the most central characteristic of ELF communication was its variability and fluidity. Depending on where in the world ELF interaction is taking place, its realisation will be different from another place, partly due to the interlocutors’ linguacultural backgrounds and

levels of proficiency, the purpose of the interaction, various processing constraints, and affordances (Canagarajah, 2018). The essentially hybrid quality of ELF use meant giving up the idea of codifying ELF as a distinct variety of English. In the present phase, Jenkins has repositioned ELF as a *multilingua franca* (Jenkins, 2015). This refers to the use of English in multilingual settings, where English “is known to everyone present, and is therefore *always potentially* ‘in the mix’, regardless of whether or not, and how much, it is actually used” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 74 – italics in the original). Based on this conceptualisation, instead of labelling someone as an “ELF user”, Jenkins suggested using terms like *multilingual ELF user* and *monolingual ELF user*.

Other definitions of ELF have been suggested in the literature. Frequently quoted is Seidlhofer’s (2011) “*any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option*” (p. 7, italics in the original). Widdowson (2018) gave the following definition: “essentially an appropriate use of the resources of English for a whole range of globalised purposes”, I find this definition particularly useful in that it safeguards against any essentialist view of ELF as *sui generis* different from so-called Standard English (henceforth abbreviated SE). Depending on the performance requirements pertaining to various communicative tasks, appropriate use of English resources may sometimes call for adherence to the conventions of formal English discourse, especially in high-stakes assessment situations (Kohn, 2011, 2018).

English as a lingua franca has indeed spread extensively across the globe. In empirical and conceptual studies of ELF, some descriptive terms invariably turn up. ELF communication is characterised as *flexible, hybrid, open, fluid, situated*, and *contingent*, to name a few of the most frequently occurring labels (Canagarajah, 2018; Ishikawa, 2017; Kimura & Canagarajah, 2018; Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Rindal, 2020). As we have seen, ELF is not a geographically defined variety of English; it is rather a way speakers make creative use of English elements in their linguistic repertoires.

In addition to retrieving and activating English resources, speakers enact their *strategic competence*, recruiting various pragmatic strategies

and accommodating to what they perceive as their interlocutors' and their own needs (Cogo & House, 2018; De Bartolo, 2014; Jenkins, 2014; Oh, 2001). It makes sense here to offer a brief overview of some of these interactional modifications and elaborative discourse practices, since teachers need to become aware of the central role these play in ELF communication.

According to Jenkins (2014), the main accommodative processes in ELF interactions are *convergence* and *divergence*. This means that speakers try to adapt their speech to make it more or less like their interlocutors'. If they are inclined to ensure communicative efficiency, they will choose convergence; if they wish to dissociate themselves from their interlocutor, divergence is likely to be their choice. An interesting example of what is called "accommodative dovetailing" is when a speaker repeats an incorrect form used by their speech partner, and then the first speaker uses it again. It thus becomes an appropriate part of the interaction despite its non-standard quality.

Negotiation of meaning is another typical pragmatic strategy in ELF communication. Speakers repair their own utterances; they reformulate them, repeat their own, echo their partner's last utterance, or they ask for clarification. They make use of supportive backchannels like *mhm*, *yeah*, *right*, *ok*, and sometimes co-construct or complete each other's utterances. The interactants' cooperative mindset often results in pre-emptive choices; foreseeing potential problems, they adapt their speech proactively. If misunderstandings do occur, sometimes a "let it pass" type of reaction is preferred if basic comprehension has already been secured. Finally, speakers may deploy their multilingual resources by translanguaging or even choosing words from a third language.

The reason why these pragmatic strategies have been included here is that although pragmatic processes such as accommodation and negotiation of meaning are often mentioned in the ELF literature as central communicative strategies, they are often left unspecified. In order to develop a deeper awareness of ELF, teachers need to better understand the *relational* qualities of ELF interactions, not just the nature and structure of the linguistic features employed.

Teachers' awareness of ELF

Teachers of English need to be aware of ELF as a sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and, consequently, language-pedagogical phenomenon. The construct *ELF awareness* has been proposed as a framework for teachers who wish to integrate ELF in their ELT practices (Llurda et al, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018; Sifakis, 2019). Three components are defined as constituents of ELF awareness: (1) awareness of language and language use, (2) awareness of instructional practice, and (3) awareness of learning. These components relate to the basic elements in language pedagogy: content (*what*), methodology (*how*), and learning itself (*who* and *why*). With a view to moving ELT forward in Norway, it is important to take account of how English is understood in our educational context, both as a language and as a school subject. While many studies have addressed various aspects of English didactics in Norway, there are two contributions that call for special attention as far as the inclusion of ELF is concerned, and these have been made by Rindal (2014) and (2020).

Research about English and ELT in Norway

In 2014, Rindal offered predictions about ontological and epistemological perspectives that would influence ELT in Norway towards 2030. We are now only eight years away from this horizon. Rindal chose to approach the question about the status of English both as a language and a school subject from two angles; from the way ELT practices had developed historically and their relation to linguistic theory, on the one hand, and the development of English as a global medium of communication, on the other. The researcher examined the way beliefs about English played out in the national subject curriculum at the time. Her article also included a discussion of adolescent learners and their English language practices. Reference was made to “English as an international language”, and speakers’ “ability to vary language according to purpose and other participants in a linguistic interaction” was seen as an example of a sociolinguistic skill (p. 15). Rindal foresaw that hybrid and variable features in learners’ pronunciation “could be interpreted more frequently as communicative competence than as limited L2 proficiency” (p. 15). This is an illustrative

example of an emerging post-deficiency orientation. Her prediction is particularly interesting from the point of view of discussions about the relationship between Standard English and its use as a lingua franca. Rindal ends her article with the following statement: “In 2030, English will still be a personal language to Norwegians, but it will also be acknowledged as such” (p. 16). It is my intention to demonstrate how recent research into ELF interaction coupled with socio-constructivist theory and fresh considerations of language learner agency offer valuable contributions to moving ELT in this direction (Kohn, 2018; Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Mercer, 2011; Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004).

Rindal (2020) revisited the topic in a chapter called “English in Norway: A Language and a School Subject in Transition”, whose aim was to “present theories about the global status of the English language and discuss whether English is a second or foreign language in Norway and in English as a school subject” (p. 23). In this chapter, Rindal devotes a section to ELF, which she sees as an “explicit alternative to native-speaker focus” (p. 34). There are a couple of potentially problematic phrases in the text, for instance, reference to “the new Englishes that are formed” in connection with the “fluidity and hybridity of language” recognised by ELF scholars, and the statement that “[l]ingua franca English is typically characterised by linguistic properties and norms that are co-constructed and established in an ad hoc manner” (p. 35). It is worth repeating that ELF can’t be constructed as “an English” in the sense of a variety, and it is not immediately obvious how norm construction is relevant to ELF interaction, unless “norms” is taken to mean “emerging patterns”. Finally, the comment that teaching practices influenced by an ELF perspective will “include avoiding native-speaker models” (p. 35) is reminiscent of a type of dichotomous discourse that does not really contribute to a post-deficiency approach to English language teaching. There should be room for both native-speaker models and ELF-aware teaching in the English classroom. What is required is an attitude of openness to complexity and diversity (Larsen-Freeman, 2019).

English in the renewed national curriculum

Both of Rindal’s studies were written before the current English subject curriculum came into effect. To follow up these two sources, a close

reading of the current English curriculum will therefore be an appropriate next step.

The term *English as a lingua franca* is not used explicitly in the curriculum. However, the way English is described and the elements presented as constitutive of English competence and proficiency align with characteristics of ELF communication. Other conclusions can of course be drawn based on the curriculum discourse, but my main project here is looking for an ideological and implementational space for ELF integration in ELT (Hornberger, 2009; Johnson, 2010).

The structure of the English subject curriculum includes sections about the subject's relevance and central values, core elements, role in obligatory interdisciplinary topics, and presentations of the basic skills as they pertain to English. Passages and formulations can be found that directly align with descriptions of ELF use. Familiarity with these elements will be of importance for teacher educators whose ambition is to facilitate the integration of teachers' ELF awareness in ELT practices.

In the presentation of the relevance and central values of the English subject, the overall mission is to “give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background”.¹

Similarly, in the section expressing what English can contribute to the mandatory interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and Citizenship*, the global use of English and considerations of people's linguacultural backgrounds are made explicit: “By learning English, the pupils can experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world, regardless of linguistic or cultural background”. In connection with the development of basic skills in English: (a) “Developing oral skills in English means using the spoken language gradually more accurately and with more nuances in order to communicate on different topics in formal and informal situations with a variety of receivers with varying linguistic backgrounds”, (b) “Writing in English means being able to express ideas and opinions in an understandable and appropriate manner in various types of text ...”, and (c) “The development of digital skills

¹ All direct quotations from the curriculum are taken from the official English translation accessible from this link: <https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04?lang=eng>

in English progresses from exploring the language to interacting with others, creating texts and acquiring knowledge by obtaining, exploring and critically assessing information from different English-language sources”.

According to Baker (2015), “learning another language is fundamentally an intercultural process” (p. 174). In Baker (2018), the author favours the construct *transcultural communication*, but in the same way that Jenkins (2015) reconceptualised *ELF* as a *multilingua franca* (EMF) based on increasing empirical evidence and awareness of multilingualism as a basic premise, both authors have decided to keep the well-established terms, *intercultural communication* and *ELF*, respectively, to ensure transparency and coherence in the fields of research. In the curriculum, the following statements target intercultural competence: “English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of ... ways of thinking and communication patterns” (under *Relevance and central values*), “Working with texts in English helps to develop the pupils’ knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity”, and “By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. The development of intercultural competence will enable students to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (under the core element *Working with texts in English*). In some statements, cultural awareness is coupled with aspects of identity development and motivational perspectives, such as a positive self-image. I shall come back to issues relating to the affective dimension of language learning below when briefly exploring learner agency. A deeper examination of more specific *linguistic* ideologies will also be discussed below in connection with the language-pedagogical potential represented by Kohn’s (2018) socio-constructive “MY English condition”.

Before concluding this section about an ELF-related perspective on the current curriculum, the role of strategic use of pragmatic productive and interpretive processes must be addressed. While repeated use of the term *communication patterns* is a case in point, the following statement is even more explicit: “The pupils shall employ suitable strategies to communicate, both orally and in writing, in different situations and by using different types of media and sources” (under the core element *Communication*)

and “adapting the language to the purpose, the receiver and the situation and choosing suitable strategies” (under *Oral skills*). In addition, the focus on contingent receiver-situation-purpose is highlighted in seven competence aims from year 7 through upper secondary school. These formulations represent implementational spaces for ELF integration.

“MY English” – A socio-constructive perspective on English language development

A post-deficiency approach to language development implies that learner-users are positioned as agents in their own learning process. Kohn (2011) adopts a social constructivist perspective on ELF. The dynamic and developmental character of language learning, or *acquisition*, is highlighted. He defines socio-constructivism as follows: “According to this model, all perception, learning, action and communication is the result of individual processes of cognitive (and emotional) construction, overlaid and shaped by collaboration in social groups” (p. 79). Social constructivism provides a methodological framework by offering a “unified basis for investigating the entire heterogenous range of non-native speaker manifestations of English, including ELF manifestations by speakers with an EFL background” (p. 79).

In ELF research, many scholars’ problematisation of the concept *Standard English* (SE) plays an important part. In Kohn’s case, however, the notion of SE is discussed and *reconceptualized*. Rather than focusing on SE as an object of linguistic description, Kohn takes an internalised view and argues for SE as a cognitive, emotional and social construct in a speaker’s linguistic repertoire. Meanings are constructed by the language learner-user. This conclusion based on socio-constructivism is supported by the status of English as a usable global language. Its widespread and fluid use has an effect on users wherever they are, in turn affecting them and the shape of the language over time.

Kohn (2018) wishes to pedagogically reconcile ELF and ELT, aiming for “non-native speaker emancipation” (p. 1). It is true that many ELF scholars uphold a strict ideological division between native and non-native speakers of English and the nature of their language proficiency.

Whether or not they are native speakers of the language, trying to develop native-speaker competence, or simply trying to do their best by means of English resources within their reach, they use English as a lingua franca. The main point for people out there is communicating their messages as effectively as possible with their intended perlocutionary effect of making their interlocutor understand their utterances.

The question of language “ownership” frequently turns up in ELF research discourse. In most cases, scholars keep repeating that Brits and Americans, i.e., original inner-circle language users, can no longer be seen as the owners of English, since the language is more often than not used by non-native speakers of the language in various places around the world. My immediate impulse is a wish to play down the whole idea of ownership. The status of English as a global linguistic resource is an empirical fact; who used to own it, and who owns it now, is less important. What matters essentially is that English is a resource to be activated if people are unable to communicate using their primary language(s).

It must be possible to distinguish between recognising the power differential implied by language-ideological, language/education-political decisions, and gate-keeping assessment practices, stakeholders’ language attitudes, etc. and argue instead in favour of simply accepting English as a collective resource for meaning-making (Ishikawa, 2017). Yes, there are economic and political reasons why this situation has emerged, but it might be more felicitous for us as language-teacher educators to zoom in on the current situation and simply try as hard as we can to help learners develop into confident users of English. Non-native speakers should not let the fact that their repertoire is less developed paradigmatically and syntagmatically discourage them from participating in ELF interaction.

From a socio-constructive perspective, a different sense of ownership emerges: Ownership of English is “not a matter of choice but of biological-cognitive design: it is only by construction that people can develop and use their *own* English; and this includes choosing their own target language orientation by construction as well” (p. 90). If language identity and language learner agency enter into our discussion, the question of ownership, or at least the right to consider English as an important part of one’s linguistic repertoire, needs to be acknowledged.

Kohn (2018) argues for his use of the socio-constructivist concept of “MY English” in his discussion of ELF development. Speakers’ “MY English” profiles include their “linguistic-communicative-communal repertoires and requirements of performance, individual and social identity orientations, and confidence in their ELF creativity” (p. 1). Learning English entails giving English an “internal reality by constructing, actually creating, our own version, MY English, in our minds, hearts and behaviour” (Kohn, 2011, p. 80). A linguistic repertoire must necessarily be built for language users to enact appropriate choices in particular situations. A corollary of this way of thinking is that learners need to be exposed to greater variation when it comes to linguistic input; ELF communication should be included as English text to be explored and discussed in the English classroom. A side effect of this proposed expansion is implicitly also an opportunity to target multilingualism as a resource in language teaching and learning.

Following socio-constructivist thinking, then, speakers can’t do anything but enact their own particular version of English, “i.e., the version of English they have managed to *make their own* – be this as (a) a consolidated, stable and highly differentiated *native language*, (b) a consolidated and stable but somewhat restricted *second language*, or as (c) a reduced and unstable *learner’s language* (Kohn, 2011). It is worth pointing out that from a developmental and complexity-theoretical perspective, the notion of a “stable” language needs to be interpreted in a non-teleological sense, i.e., as a temporary and contingent state (Larsen-Freeman, 2019).

The requirement of correctness

The requirement of correctness has had a strong position in language teaching and learning for a long time and is a relevant factor in connection with a deficiency orientation to language learning and use. Errors tend to be assessed as deviations from a standard norm. Selinker (1972) introduced the concept *interlanguage* to refer to the status of a learner’s language competence in a teleological sense. The ideal end state would be near-native-speaker proficiency. This idea does not sit well within a complexity-theoretical perspective. First of all, there can be no end state in language

development; variability and change over time is a given (and that is why even the word *acquisition* carries certain problematic connotations).

What we have said about correctness requirements so far relates to an external view of language, or the code of English. If we adopt a socio-constructivist perspective, however, there is an internal side to this phenomenon as well. Speaker-learners need to have taken in correct forms and constructed a kind of mental representation of them to be able to retrieve these forms when called to do so. This is not a simple matter of mimetic representation of form in the input; already integrated cognitive and affective features also play a part, as do factors in the immediate situation of use. Even if the context is rich in affordances, processing conditions need to be favourable too. For instance, given the expediency of a communicative event, if speakers are allowed little time to muster their linguistic resources, one effect might be that their working memory capacity will be limited by stress and thereby constrained. Basic lexical access might become their primary need and the *grammaring* of those lexical elements a secondary priority. In this case, correctness from an external perspective is not achieved; it may, however, be that the information shared is enough for effective communication to be taking place.

Based on his discussion of correctness from an external and then a speaker/learner-internal perspective built on a socio-constructive theoretical orientation, Kohn forcefully states that “all *descriptive-linguistic* arguments levelled against the *pedagogic* deployment of the notions of Standard English and native-speaker English are based on a conceptual misunderstanding and simply miss their target” (p. 84). What is at stake is the diversity of speakers’ situated communicative needs and requirements.

Performance requirements

Communication and community-oriented requirements of performance affect the learner-user’s choice of linguistic means of expression. Performance requirements for EFL (English as a foreign language) learners have more to do with educational aims than with communicative needs in real life. At school, compliance with norms of correctness in accordance with SE often play a central role. However, the ideal goal for

a learner-user is attaining a capability to meet a variety of requirements and needs. It would be beneficial if they could avoid experiencing that the felt gap between the requirements at school and in real life leaves them tongue-tied in ELF encounters. Also, it would be positive if learners could develop a strategic awareness of what requirements are at play in different situations. In the section on pedagogical implications below, a genre-based approach to developing English communicative capability is recommended.

A final aspect of the development of “MY English” is about learners’ sense of identification with and participation in certain speech communities. This is where Rindal (2014) has an interesting perspective. Even though her secondary-school participants were aware of attitudes to and connotations pertaining to British and American English, some of her informants took an agentive stand against trying to sound like a Brit or an American. They did not wish to send signals with which they were not comfortable. The main point here is that rather than being less proficient from the point of view of “correct” intonation as one aspect of communicative competence, they were being strategic about the way they constructed their identities as learner-users of English. A post-deficiency approach to language learning aligns well with this observation.

Learner-users’ requirement profiles

Speakers’ requirement profiles are not fixed and stable; on the contrary, they are sensitive to situational factors. An advantage that multilinguals are said to have as part of their more developed metalinguistic awareness is a heightened sensitivity to other people’s communicative needs (Cenoz, 2003). Again, this is the area of pragmatic strategies, accommodation and negotiation of meaning and curricular aims to do with adaptation to interlocutors, purpose and situation. Comprehensibility, or intelligibility, is necessarily high on the list of priorities for the interactants; it is their intended perlocutionary effect (Austin, 1962). Speakers’ requirement profiles play out differently at various points of time. In an educational context, they will be future-oriented as well as contingent. Schools are responsible for taking a long-term view and preparing students for

further studies, high-stakes examinations, a competitive employment market, etc. Again, what is important is an awareness of the complexity of language teaching and learning and being aware of pronounced *attitudes* that may either build or tear down confidence and a sense of achievement along the way.

Attitudes

Language use and language learning are closely connected to identity development. Notions like self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and confidence are relevant both from the point of view of identity development and affect; so is the opposite notion, deficiency. The English curriculum is explicit: “Through working with the subject the pupils shall become confident users of English, so they can use English to learn, communicate and connect with others” (under *Relevance and central values*). If the main point in a communication event is understanding and being understood by one’s interlocutor(s), whether one’s version of English is native-like or not is beside the point. An interesting distinction proposed by Cameron (2001), *precision* vs. *accuracy*, may be helpful in this regard:

Precision in language use involves learners selecting and adapting their language resources to say or write exactly what they mean; accuracy, the term more often used in the literature, refers to using the language correctly relative to the target form. Precision is thus user-oriented, whereas accuracy is language-oriented. Often, of course, precision requires accuracy, but it always requires more than that; it requires learners to access and use the language that will best express their personal meanings, and may further require negotiation with others to ensure that they understand the meanings as intended. (p. 194)

Precision has to do with getting one’s intended meaning across, whereas accuracy relates to aspects of the language itself, whether what is produced is correct or not in relation to standard norms. Precision is thus a pragmatic notion involving strategic deployment of the linguistic elements one has access to, i.e., the linguistic repertoire one has built around elements associated with English. However, having an awareness of the listener’s needs is also relevant for the desired perlocutionary effect to

ensue. If the speaker could be freed from comparing their proficiency to anybody else's, it would be a lot easier to simply and confidently have a go with whatever resources one has constructed. The whole question about successful performance has to do with more factors than linguistic resources.

Finally, in connection with the cross-disciplinary topic *Health and Life Skills*, the curriculum says, "The ability to handle situations that require linguistic and cultural competence can give pupils a sense of achievement and help them develop a positive self-image and a secure identity". These references to motivation ("positive self-image") and identity discourse ("secure identity", and "confidence" in the extract above) tie in with notions of agency as well, which is the content of the next section.

Language learner agency

Like other useful educational constructs, *agency* has been defined in various ways. My preference is to follow Larsen-Freeman (2019) in her use of a definition relevant for language education: "agency is the capacity to act in the world", with particular reference to "optimizing conditions for one's own learning", and "choosing to deploy one's semiotic resources to position oneself as one would wish in a multilingual world" (p. 62). Mercer (2011) recognises three main components of learner agency: motivation, affect, and self-regulation. Of these three, we have already touched on the importance of learners' self-belief and their affective engagement with language use. Contributing to a positive attitude towards language learning is also the teacher's responsibility. Teachers' validation of students' extramural use of English, which is driven by interest, is a move in this direction (Brevik, 2019).

According to Larsen-Freeman (2019), language learners have often been positioned as non-agentive in the research literature. The way learner-users have been portrayed in this chapter rather points in the opposite direction, one in line with a post-deficiency orientation. Learner-users who take an active part in ELF interaction achieve agency by making creative use of their linguistic resources.

In the curriculum, the following statements connect with learner agency: “The teaching shall give the pupils the opportunity to express themselves and interact in authentic and practical situations” (under the core element *Communication*) and “Learning the pronunciation of phonemes, and learning vocabulary, word structure, syntax and text composition gives the pupils choices and possibilities in their communication and interaction”. Key concepts here are *choices* and *possibilities*. The idea of having a choice is closely connected to agency. The content traditionally associated with linguistic theories, i.e., grammar, lexis, morphology, phonology, and text, is to be learnt in order to provide the students with a repertoire for communication and interaction, actions we know are essentially translingual and transcultural. It is up to the teachers to supply the students with possibilities in the form of rich contextual affordances.

As we saw, Rindal (2014) noted that her secondary-school learners made conscious decisions about the kind of English they would like to use. Many of her informants did not choose a native-speaker target model. Rather, they had clear ideas about impressions British and American oral varieties left on them. They seemed content to choose their own versions, or *their* “MY English” constructions (Kohn’s term, 2011, 2018). The thought-provoking effect of this insight was a need to reconsider the highly strategic choice of a non-normative target *not* as a sign of deficient proficiency, but rather as a sign of agentic emancipation. Needless to say, this realisation calls for a shift in the *assessment* of language proficiency. Due to space limitations, this path can’t be followed here.

Pedagogical implications for English language education

Norwegian pupils are already aware of ELF communication; they are learner-users themselves, and so are Norwegian teachers. However, it is time we take a closer look at possible consequences these insights might have on the way English can be taught in the classroom. In addition to exploring various ways of teaching normative elements of Standard English, other performance factors need to be addressed, particularly the

strategic use of pragmatic strategies to ensure effective communication in local and global ELF encounters.

Even very young learners, in travels abroad or encounters with friends and family who do not speak Norwegian, and increasingly in their lives online and through social media, English is the chosen medium of communication. Out-of-class use of English is commonly referred to as “Extramural English” (Sundqvist, 2009; Sundqvist & Sylvé, 2016). It is now common knowledge that students’ proficiency in English derives from their extramural use in addition to, or perhaps even to a higher degree than, what they learn in the classroom. The challenge for teachers today is to acknowledge the language learning potential of these out-of-class encounters, show their interest for students’ active language use, and attempt to bridge the gap so that they and students can benefit from a rich variety of input (Brevik, 2019; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008). The question is to what degree English teachers are able and willing to include students’ holistic language experience in their ELT classes.

This chapter is a conceptual exploration, not an empirical study of ELF interaction; nor is it an examination of Norwegian pre- and in-service teachers’ ELF awareness. However, as a result of my participation in ENRICH (*English as Lingua Franca Practices in Multilingual Classrooms*),² an international Erasmus + project whose expressed aim was to develop a continuous professional education (CPD) online course for teachers, I had access to Norwegian participants’ reflections on the degree to which they feel they can integrate and enact ELF-aware teaching in their classrooms. There is room for three illustrative quotes:

There is always room for ELF-aware teaching and learning; the most important factor, in this case, is to have an ELF-aware teacher with proper training and openness to ELF. [84_NO_E1]

The vision of ELT remains as limited as always, as it prohibits learners in too many ways from owning (and thereby living) the language. I see the work I have ahead of me as full of possibilities, for intergrating English on a more

² www.enrichproject.eu

cross-curricular basis, for expanding the parameters of what English actually IS, and help the students learn how to learn this way. [83_NO_E1]

I don't find enough of a balance between foreign-language thinking and ELF-aware thinking. The one thing that gives me hope is the new national curriculum plan for Norway which has come out this year (LK2020), which offers an umbrella introduction of threading values, critical thinking, reflective skills, enhanced learning, among others, with the focus being on the practical, the inclusive and the universal. This to me falls right in line with ELF awareness, and I look forward to adjusting myself to this new instructional context. [83_NO_E1]

In general, issues the teachers have included in their reflections are teacher agency, attitudes to ELF, SE and native-speaker aims, washback effects from tests in instructional materials, collegial collaboration, and self-reflection. What strikes me is the optimism emanating from all three of the statements quoted here.

At the risk of adding yet another acronym to the list associated with English, I am tempted to suggest *EVP* for “English for a Variety of Purposes”. Although several pedagogical implications have already been mentioned in passing, my main point is that English language education would benefit from including (1) samples of ELF interaction for exploration and reflection, preferably examples of age-appropriate communication, with particular attention to strategic features, (2) initiatives for bridging the gap between the use of English at school and extramurally, and (3) a genre-based approach to teaching. Applying the *Teaching and Learning Cycle* (Rose & Martin, 2012) in tasks for students is worth trying out. The cycle starts by interpreting the task and then building the field, i.e., activating prior knowledge, supplying linguistic resources, and discussing what type of text best suits the task. Next, a model text is provided which students and teachers deconstruct together, exploring central linguistic and text-structural features. A further step is the teacher's and students' joint construction of a text that matches the purpose of the task, all the while languaging about the emerging text and jointly discussing success criteria. Finally, the students construct their own individual texts, getting feedback in the process from their teacher and peers.

This way of working means doing grammar in context and not as abstract, decontextualized units. It enables students to realise what performance requirements are central in various situations and for various tasks.

According to Kohn (2011), knowledge about ELF includes the following dimensions, which have all been addressed in this chapter:

- situations in which speakers use their English for real-life communication purposes
- social, cognitive and emotional processing conditions that cause success or failure
- strategies to deal with challenges and to reach certain communicative, self-expressive and communal goals
- non-native speaker attitudes and preferences “on ELF”

(p. 86)

Knowledge about these dimensions of ELF is the foundation for the development of communicative language awareness and intercultural sensibility that lead to a deeper understanding of ELF manifestations and English language use more generally.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to describe how enhanced ELF awareness can be developed in teacher education, and how cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of language learning need to be recognised by English teachers. What is called for is a socio-constructivist re-conceptualisation of language learning so that a deficiency orientation to language pedagogy can be replaced by a post-deficiency approach.

My primary aim when writing this chapter has been to familiarise the practitioners among educational stakeholders in Norway, students, teachers, and English teacher educators, with insights we can all gain from current research into English as a lingua franca. Relevant aspects range from the study of various ways people use their English resources in effective interaction with other language users, the relationship between ELF communication, Standard English and native-speaker competence,

the use of accommodation and negotiation skills and other pragmatic communicative strategies, language learner agency and identity development, and the connection between ELF and intercultural awareness. One limitation, which may at this point actually constitute a call for further research, is the absence of a discussion of implications for assessing students' performance in English. Also, including empirical material based on age-relevant ELF interaction would have added value to my study.

Let me conclude by reiterating that in order to become a resource, an English repertoire must have been and continue to be developed (with no end state in view), thereby allowing Standard English features to be taught when called for through various genre requirements, but at the same time being open to “non-standard” and creative ways of deploying English resources in the service of effective interaction between people in real communicative events. The adherence to rules of standard norms will then be replaced by a pedagogy of authentic communicative language teaching (CLT), not a CLT approach defined exclusively by native-speaker norms (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018). The communicative needs of real people all over the world would then trump the purism of traditional nationalist and essentialist views of language ownership.

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CHAPTER 7

Intercultural English Teaching in Norway for the 21st century

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Abstract: This chapter asks in what ways recent international developments around the notion of interculturality might enrich English language teaching (ELT) in Norway in tandem with the country's Core Curriculum and English curriculum. To understand the recent trends in intercultural research and their relevance to ELT, an historical background on the teaching of cultural content in the subject of English is provided. The role of interculturality in the Norwegian Core Curriculum and English curriculum is first considered through a textual analysis, then compared and contrasted to the curricula of 1974 and 2006. Next, issues currently under debate and further exploration in the field of interculturality are outlined, focusing particularly on static and dynamic perceptions of culture. Finally, implications for ELT are discussed and activities inspired by an intercultural pedagogy are suggested. In alignment with the focus on multimodal texts in the English subject curriculum and building on research into the affordances of picturebooks for language and intercultural learning, the author proposes that critical analysis of picturebooks and factual texts about topical issues can address the issues under debate. Through such activities, teachers can provide English language students with opportunities to engage the critical perspectives and symbolic competence required to navigate in the 21st century.

Introduction

In 1982, I turned ten and started to learn English in school. I looked forward to learning a new language, and I can still recall the excitement of opening my textbook *Hands Up* (Ashton et al., 1972). I could not wait to get to know Ann from England, Mack from Scotland, Pat from America,

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and Sam from Africa (no specific country mentioned). The English subject curriculum at the time focused primarily on language learning, with an inserted progress-based list of vocabulary and grammar, and the main teaching tool was the textbook (Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, 1974, pp. 147, 170). The cultural content included knowledge about Great Britain, the USA, and the role of English in international communication.

Today, global perspectives are called for to meet the challenges the world is facing, something which is reflected in the Norwegian curriculum (Risager, 2021, p. xi). Lorentzen (2017) posits that the national curriculum of 1974 broke new ground in terms of global perspectives. Culture, religion, and ethnicity could no longer be seen merely through Norwegian eyes (Lorentzen, 2017), a first step towards recognizing the need for intercultural competence. Nearly thirty years later, international developments around the notion of interculturality are discernible in the revised English curriculum of LK20 and the textbook has lost its hegemony in favour of an open approach to texts (Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, 1974; Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019). Two novel inclusions in the revised English subject curriculum are “intercultural competence” and “picture books” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019, pp. 3–6). Students should learn English and develop intercultural competence in their encounters with texts, which may include for example oral, written, digital, artistic, and multi-modal texts (p. 3). The only textual types that are specified here include literature for grades 1–10, picturebooks¹ for grades 1–4 and factual texts for grades 5–10 (pp. 3–6).

This chapter asks: In what ways might recent international developments around the notion of interculturality enrich English language teaching (ELT) in Norway in tandem with the Core Curriculum and English curriculum? It builds on the trial lecture for my PhD on intercultural learning through picturebooks in the English language classroom

¹ In accordance with the conventions of picturebook research (for example Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006), picturebooks is written as one word to underline the close connection between pictures and words.

(Heggernes, 2021). To understand the recent trends in intercultural research and their relevance to ELT, the first part of the chapter provides an historical background on the teaching of cultural content in the subject of English. I focus particularly on the static-dynamic dichotomy of perceptions of culture. Furthermore, I consider the role of interculturality in the Norwegian Core Curriculum and English curriculum through a textual analysis, comparing and contrasting it with the curricula of 1974 and 2006 (Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, 1974; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013, 2019). Next, I will outline issues under debate and further exploration in the field. Finally, I will discuss implications for ELT through suggesting activities inspired by an intercultural pedagogy (Heggernes, 2021). In alignment with the focus on multimodal texts in LK20 and building on my research into the affordances of picturebooks for language and intercultural learning (Heggernes, 2021), I propose that critical analysis of picturebooks and factual texts about topical issues can address the issues under debate and foster intercultural and democratic skills.

Before I proceed, I will define some important terms. *Interculturality* is used as an “umbrella term for all intercultural interaction, including intercultural education”. Intercultural education aims to foster intercultural competence, or intercultural communicative competence, or intercultural awareness, the differences between which will not be discussed here (Allolio-Näcke, 2014). Interculturality is also a term used by some of the more critical scholars in the field (e.g. Dervin & Simpson, 2020).

In the field of education, a definition of intercultural learning is required, and my definition builds on Deardorff (2019), Byram (1997) and Dypedahl (2019). Intercultural learning can be defined as “the process of developing the attitudes, skills and knowledge required for constructive communication and behaviour when interacting across difference” (Heggernes, 2021), for example differences in age, occupation, political affiliation, or national belonging. I argue that critical engagement with multimodal texts can enrich ELT in Norway and promote intercultural learning.

Historical background

According to Risager (1989), the teaching of cultural topics in foreign language teaching (FLT) in the 1980s had three areas of focus. In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the 1980s, the first of these included the cognitive development of the student, who was to learn factual knowledge about English-speaking countries. This focus is evident as far back as the English subject curriculum from 1974; interestingly, it is still discernible in the quote from a teacher I interviewed in 2017 in connection with the pilot study for my PhD (see Heggernes, 2021): “As regards culture in the subject of English, I believe that one should offer students a taste of social conditions, geography, art, and literature from English-speaking countries”. The teacher’s perception also aligns with LKo6, the curriculum at the time (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013), and is discernible in textbooks from this period (Lund, 2012, pp. 47–48). The second focus involved skills for appropriate communication with native speakers, such as knowing how to use courteous phrases and understand differences in communicative styles between one’s own context and that of the target language. The third focus was on developing “attitudes towards other countries and cultures” (Lund, 2007, p. 31). According to Lund (2007), this attitudinal component, which entailed fostering empathy, tolerance, and respect for other cultures, was introduced in the Norwegian English subject curriculum in 1997, L97 (Lund, 2007, p. 32).

Accordingly, there has been a development of culture teaching in FLT/ELT from conveying facts about the geography and what is frequently referred to as “Big C” culture, namely the best of what a culture has to offer in the arts and literature, to knowledge of “small c” culture, including the everyday habits, norms, and traditions of native speakers (Risager, 2018, p. 40). The goal was to be able to communicate appropriately and effectively, gain knowledge about other cultures, and show tolerance and respect in order to mediate between differing cultural perspectives. In this manner one may gain a shared understanding, in alignment with Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Today, the cultural content of the subject of English in Norway has changed significantly, as it has been

influenced by international developments in connection with the notion of interculturality.

Different approaches to interculturality

In the following section, the notion of interculture will be explored, intersecting with some of the debates in the field of interculturality today. While *inter* simply means between, *culture* is less easily defined, and there is no unified definition. Some scholars even claim that culture is “no longer a useful concept” (Dervin, 2016, p. 13; Holliday, 2010). This argument is countered by Byram and Wagner, who claim that “as a part of common parlance and language teachers’ vocabulary, culture is arguably a pedagogically useful concept” (2018, p. 142). They maintain that in a language-learning context, it is necessary to simplify “before adding complexity” (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 142).

A simple definition of culture is that it relates to the shared products, perspectives, and practices of a group (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). This definition could obviously be problematized, but before “adding complexity”, teachers could ask their students to think about and discuss what those products, perspectives, and practices might be for themselves and others. In my introductory class to interculturality with student teachers in Norway, I often ask them to close their eyes and think of the word *school*. When they describe what they see, they often mention either material objects such as buildings, desks, chairs, and blackboards, or emotional connotations, such as happy pupils. Then I show them a picture from a British school where pupils are wearing uniforms and ask them if this picture corresponds to their vision of a school. In most groups, the answer is “no”. I repeat the same question using a picture from Afghanistan, where children are seated on the floor of a tent with their teacher in front of them. Again, the answer is “no”, unless the group contains students with a background from this region. This exercise allows us to have a discussion of how the same word may have different connotations depending on your background. Exchanging *school* with another cultural product, for instance *bread*, may reveal that people living in the same place can have different perceptions of a

presumably shared cultural product. Yet, many people will say that they feel a sense of belonging to a particular culture, whether that be a national culture or a co-culture, one related to for example shared interests, work, and/or religion.

Nevertheless, in what is an increasingly globalized, hyperconnected world, the concept of culture cannot be easily pinned down. For example, the discussions of what a national culture is never lead to clear answers; instead, they tend to create insiders and outsiders, which is the exact opposite of the aim of intercultural education. Indeed, in the 21st century, culture is a dynamic and fluid phenomenon (Holliday, 2010). Commenting on the question of cultural belonging, another teacher I interviewed for my pilot study (Heggernes, 2021) stated:

I'm Norwegian, but I've been living for a long time in Groruddalen,² and I used to have an African partner. Also, I've some friends from Sri Lanka, and from different countries in Africa, and my sister lives in Switzerland. I feel I can roam freely. I'm not so tied to any one culture. I believe that values are more important.

Values are an innate part of culture, and culture is tied to notions of identity; moreover, people's identities are multiple in nature. The question is whether there is a stable core, which is an ontological question related to the nature of reality. Considering culture through a theoretical lens, one may ask if culture even exists? A second question is: Are identities stable entities or constructed ones, being essentially representations that may change depending on the context or interaction in which one finds oneself (Dervin, 2016, pp. 14–15)?

Dervin (2016) distinguishes between solid and liquid approaches to interculturality, which he relates to a static or dynamic perception of culture. According to Holliday (2020), this is linked to the differing paradigms of postpositivism and the conviction that truth, or in this context, culture, exists, and the postmodern paradigm, where the existence of a clear truth is rejected. It follows that descriptions of culture are always ideological and hence variable. Dervin (2016) adds the Janusian approach

² A multicultural area of Oslo.

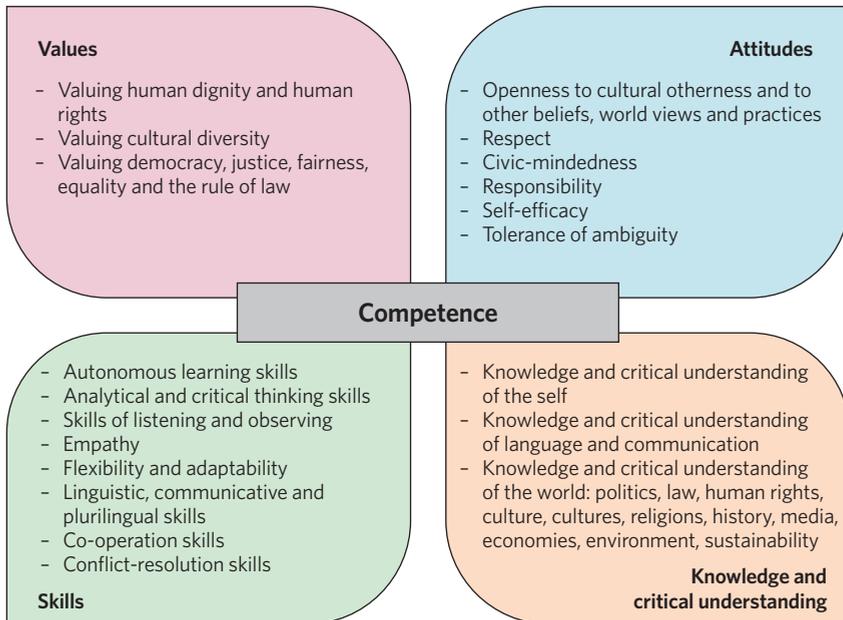
in the middle, as exemplified by Byram's (1997) model, which has had a huge influence internationally on teaching, curriculum development, and research. The Janusian approach aligns with Holiday's description of the neo-essentialist approach to the intercultural. While these approaches claim that they pay attention to cultural diversity, they still tend to link culture to nations, as indicated by the prefix "inter" in "intercultural", which assumes "two" (for example having "interaction" between representatives of two nation-states). A more apt way of describing communication in the 21st century could be through using the prefix "trans", meaning "across" or "through", which has been suggested by e.g. Risager (2018) and Welsch (1999) and which focalizes the dynamic aspects of communication. Yet others, e.g., Osler and Starkey (2018), prefer to use the term "critical cosmopolitan", to represent the global fusion of cultures that are to be navigated by world citizens.

In terms of teaching practices, the terminological disputes prefigured by essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to culture are still relevant because the tradition of having the cultural teaching of EFL present facts about English-speaking countries is so strong (Fenner, 2018, p. 218). A static approach to culture can also be discerned in textbooks, and Brown and Habegger-Conti's (2017) study of English textbooks, published in Norway before 2009, shows how this can lead to stereotyped visual representations of indigenous peoples. To the best of my knowledge, however, no one in the intercultural field self-identifies as being willing to take an essentialist approach. Rather, there is a consensus that culture is dynamic. A valuable outcome of this debate and other debates in the field is, however, the continued efforts of theory building and the creation of more nuanced models of interculturality that are reflective of 21st century realities.

The Council of Europe's work informs teaching, assessment, and policy development across Europe. In 2018, a new *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC) was launched by the Council of Europe (2018), aimed at teachers and education policymakers and developed by an expert group alongside teachers, teacher educators and school administrators. The RFCDC is the result of the work of an expert group which has critically analysed 101 models and frameworks

“of democratic competence, civic competence and intercultural competence” (Barrett & Byram, 2020, p. 79). It includes a model of the competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe, 2018, ch. 6). The model shown in Table 1 signals a shift in focus, highlighting democratic competences of which intercultural competence is “an essential component ... when citizens live in culturally diverse democratic societies” (Barrett & Byram, 2020, p. 78). Both of these overlapping competences are salient in the Norwegian Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

Table 1. The Competences Required for Democratic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe, 2018)



The publication of the RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018) has not succeeded in silencing the debate in the field over essentialist and non-essentialist approaches.³ Rather than creating dichotomies, however, I believe that it is more useful to consider a continuum between static and dynamic approaches to culture, and maintaining a critical, honest, and

³ Those who are interested in following the debate can read Simpson and Dervin's (2019) criticism of the Reference Framework, and Barrett and Byram's rebuttal (2020).

humble dialogue concerning how we sometimes draw on both essentialist and non-essentialist frames of reference in our teaching and research with respect to intercultural understanding (Greek, 2008; Van Maele & Messelink, 2019). Despite having the best intentions, ideals are not always enacted, and adopting a humble approach to our own position and teaching practices can create fertile ground for dialogue. Consequently, rather than continuing the discussion above, I will consider the role of interculturality in the Norwegian ELT context as well as some of the other issues currently under debate.

The Norwegian context for ELT and new areas of focus

To address the role of interculturality in LK20, I have conducted a textual analysis of Norway's Core Curriculum and English subject curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, 2020). The analysis is informed by discourse analysis, understood broadly as an analysis of discourse in context and its alternative interpretations (Cohen et al., 2017, pp. 686–687). The focus is therefore on words, phrases, and terminology relating to interculturality, including, but not limited to, *culture*, *interculture* and *multiculture*, *perspectives*, *dialogue*, *democracy*, *critical*, *difference*, and *diversity* in addition to expressions related to language use, such as *English* and *world*. I have considered how the language is used in context and in light of the educational discourse and debates in the field of interculturality (as outlined above). To highlight how the changes in LK20 reflect trends in the field of interculturality, I compare LK20 to both the preceding curriculum, LK06, and the curriculum from 1974. The latter is considered to be a suitable historical reference, as it introduced a stronger focus on global perspectives (Lorentzen, 2017).

Norway has a national curriculum consisting of a Core Curriculum that outlines the basic values and principles of all subjects and the subject curricula that include the content and aims of individual subjects. The Core Curriculum is informed by The Education Act, whose opening clause states that education should “open doors to the world and the future” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016, § 1–1).

The influence of the RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018) on the Norwegian Core Curriculum (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) is readily apparent; in the Table of Contents, in addition to *critical thinking skills*, the values *human dignity*, *cultural diversity*, and *democracy* are clearly highlighted. Further, the main text includes a focus on *human rights*, *respect*, *empathy*, *knowledge*, and *critical understanding of the environment*. Yet, there is a tension between what Holliday (2020) might have called a neo-essentialist approach to Norwegian values and the desire to be inclusive in that the Core Curriculum is based on a “shared Norwegian heritage building on Christian and humanistic values that are also present in other religions and respect for human rights” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). Nevertheless, the Core Curriculum advances that differences should be recognized and valued as a resource, that multilingualism is an asset, and that diversity contributes to building a good society (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

Next, even though fostering intercultural learning is an interdisciplinary concern, this section pertains to the English subject curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019) whose structure is outlined in Table 2:

Table 2. The Structure of the English Subject Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

Relevance and central values
Core elements
– Communication
– Language learning
– Working with texts in English
Interdisciplinary topics
– Health and life skills
– Democracy and citizenship
Basic skills
– Oral skills, writing, reading & digital skills
Competence aims and assessment
– Year 2, 4, 7 and 10

Already in 1974, it was the role of education “to contribute to international understanding and peace between peoples and nations” (Ministry

of Education and Church Affairs, 1974, p. 12). Three decades later, LK06 opened up the opportunity for intercultural learning. According to LK06, learning English could, for example, lead to “understanding and respect between people of differing cultural backgrounds ... and strengthen democratic engagement and citizenship” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013). However, the term itself was absent from the curriculum (Heggernes, 2014). Nonetheless, interculturality plays a much more prominent role in LK20. For instance, most of the section on “relevance and central values” of the English subject curriculum relates to intercultural competence, which involves “develop[ing] the pupils’ understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 2). Through “working with text”, students will develop intercultural competence, which will in turn “enable ... them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). It will also help them learn about their own and “others” identities in a multilingual and multicultural context” (p. 3). Furthermore, the concept of democracy and citizenship, which is closely related to intercultural competence in the RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018), is one of the interdisciplinary topics here.

In comparison with LK06, LK20 has a stronger focus on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (see Jenkins et al., 2011). Indeed, the focus in LK06 on knowledge about inner-circle countries (Kachru, 1985) like Great Britain and the USA has been abandoned in favour of exploring “ways of living ... thinking ... and diversity in the English-speaking world” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013; 2019, p. 9). The English-speaking world, however, is not defined, which could elicit discussions about what parts of the world are included. Further, the English subject curriculum recognises that communication in English often takes place between non-native speakers, perhaps even more frequently than between native and non-native speakers. It follows that no specific variety of English is advanced in LK20, in direct contrast to the 1974 curriculum that required Norwegian students to learn British RP, although it could be useful on occasion to listen to other varieties

of English (Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, 1974, p. 149). The inspiration from ELF theory aligns with the focus on multilingualism in LK20; students are to “experience that speak[ing] multiple languages is an asset” (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019, p. 2).

More recent textbooks for ELT in Norway expand the linguistic and cultural contexts presented to pupils. One example is Madsen and Mohammad-Roe’s (2016) *Connect* for 8th grade, which opens with the chapter “A world of English”. First-year lower secondary pupils get to know bilingual Abeo from Nigeria, who has grown up speaking English and Yoruba, and Katja from Finland, who frequently used English words when chatting with friends. These are both intercultural speakers who practice their ICC daily.

Some issues under debate in the field of interculturality

Even if IC has become an established part of LK20, the field itself continues to discuss how to understand, define, and operationalise ICC. For example, in “The Evolution of ICC”, Hoff (2020) discusses “conceptualisations, critiques and consequences for 21st century classroom practice” (p. 55). She highlights five central issues under debate in the field (Hoff, 2020, p. 57). The first issue is related to *culture and identity*, which is connected to the static-dynamic dichotomy accounted for above and the perception that people might feel a sense of belonging to multiple cultures and identities. The second issue revolves around *the aims of intercultural dialogue*: Should intercultural speakers aim to mediate between differing cultural perspectives in order to arrive at a shared understanding, which is a harmonizing approach (Byram, 1997), or should we, as Hoff (2014) suggests, recognize the potential for fruitful intercultural dialogue in conflicts? In pluralistic and fragmented societies, it may not be possible to arrive at “a platform of shared values” (Hoff, 2020, p. 60); rather, we may have to agree to disagree. Hoff argues that accepting to live in what Iversen (2014) refers to as a “community of disagreement” may lead to deep engagement and more honest intercultural dialogues where the participants do not brush disagreements under the carpet. Similar arguments have been

made by Kramersch (1993), who already in the early nineties stated that it was necessary to teach culture as difference, and Lund (2012), who called for a more systematic approach to dealing with cultural differences in ELT textbooks.

Third, the *contexts for communication* must become more varied. Many studies in the intercultural field highlight the intercultural skills required for effective communication when abroad (for example Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018; Jackson, 2011). Citizens of multicultural societies, however, deploy intercultural skills every day both in their immediate surroundings and as parties to a global community online. It is therefore a democratic concern that students learn to critically analyse a variety of communicative settings; physical, digital, and multimodal. How may, for example, the design of a web page or a picturebook affect how cultural content is communicated? The fourth issue, *de-centring of discourses*, is related to the “critical turn” (Dasli & Diaz, 2017). A critical analysis of discourse is required of curricula for intercultural learning. This type of examination can reveal what is said – how, by whom, and why – and who is represented or not. The fifth issue is how to *assess learners’ ICC*, or if this is even advisable. This is because while intercultural knowledge and skills may be unproblematic to assess, is it ethically correct to assess learners’ values and attitudes (Borghetti, 2017)? Due to the limited format of this chapter, I will not probe this issue further. However, in alignment with the international trends in the field of interculturality and the aforementioned policy documents, I propose *citizenship and democratic skills* as a sixth issue. Citizenship and democratic skills can be related to social justice and a call to take action for people to preserve, protect and develop democracy.

All these issues relate in different ways to *symbolic competence*. Kramersch and Whiteside (2015) define symbolic competence as the ability to manipulate language as a symbolic system for effective intercultural communication. The process involves an understanding of how communication is constructed through multi-layered discourses. This knowledge is required to reveal underlying conflicts and imbalanced power relations that may be concealed by the ideal of effective and appropriate communication. With this in mind, ELT teachers can activate students’ symbolic competence through engaging students in critical analysis of discourse.

I propose that a focus on symbolic competence is one answer to how recent international developments related to the notion of interculturality may enrich English teaching in Norway and beyond. Furthermore, questions of representation and power dynamics need to inform teachers' selection of materials and activities for teaching and learning. I see critical analysis of discourse as a democratic skill, one that is vital for our ability to navigate the flow of information to which we are all exposed. Furthermore, I suggest an intercultural pedagogy that takes a holistic approach to EL teaching and learning that “engages students both cognitively and affectively” through a wide range of “challenging readings [and] aesthetic experiences” (Heggernes, 2021, p. 105). Through student-centred approaches, the students are activated, allowed to take advantage of their own experiences and given agency to contribute and engage with one another's ideas in critical dialogue (p. 105). In the following section I will suggest some examples of how an intercultural pedagogy can enrich English teaching in Norway and beyond through addressing the issues under debate as discussed above.

Activities inspired by an intercultural pedagogy

In a visually saturated society, the picturebook is one of the multimodal formats that can add to the variety of contexts for communication called for by Hoff. A picturebook conveys meaning through picture – text interaction. Sometimes, the pictures and words tell the same story; at other times, they extend or challenge one another (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). Critically engaging with picturebooks to make sense of their cultural and symbolic content can include both emergent and advanced readers. Hence, the picturebook is an inclusive format with particular affordances for intercultural learning (Heggernes, 2020).

Davies and Cobb's (2018) *The Day War Came* is a picturebook that could be used to stimulate young learners' respect and empathy with others. It can also teach young people to value human dignity and human rights perspectives as well as critically engage with the democracy in which they live. *The Day War Came* (Davies & Cobb, 2018) relates the story of a child who, after fleeing from war, searches for a school; however,

she is turned away from the school, as there is no chair available for her to sit on. When the other schoolchildren hear this, though, they themselves bring in chairs from home “so all the children here can come to school”.

One of the opening spreads depicts a girl and her classmates sitting at their desks drawing volcanoes. To activate students, the teacher can ask them to look at the picture and tell each other what they see there. In terms of language learning, this allows the students to use familiar vocabulary, such as desks, chairs, drawings, etc., and learn new words, such as “erupting volcanoes”. A follow-up question could be to ask students what in the picture is similar to their own classroom, followed by what differences they see. This question allows all students to draw on their own experiences while learning about those of others. When examining the illustration, pupils may spot the helicopters and in the distance wonder why they are there. Although the illustration resembles many a Western classroom, it is accompanied by the following words: “Then, just after lunch, the war came”.

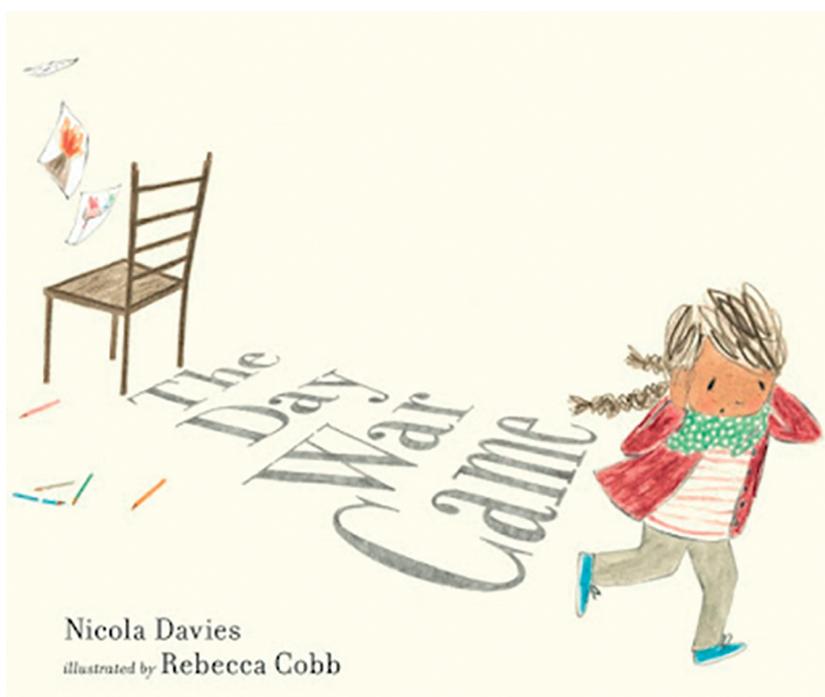


Figure 1. Davies & Cobb (2018), *The Day War Came* (Cover) © Rebecca Cobb

The background for the book is the UK government's refusal to provide sanctuary to 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees from Syria in 2016, including the story of a refugee child who had been refused access to a school, as there was no chair for her (Davies & Cobb, 2018). This sparked a Twitter campaign called “#3000 chairs” where people posted pictures of empty chairs in solidarity with refugee children and inspired the creation of the picturebook.

The story is told in the first person and gives a voice to an underrepresented group, namely child refugees. Including it in ELT can be a step towards representing multiple groups of people and perspectives and de-centring the curriculum. It could stimulate discussions on how immigration leads to exposure to different cultural contexts and languages and how that may affect one's cultural perspectives and identities. A particularly interesting point is that in this story the most striking difference is the one between the perspectives of adults and children, rather than between people of different national identities. In *The Day War Came* (Davies & Cobb, 2018), the conflict is resolved, but in real life, conflicts surrounding acceptance of refugees are all too real and may well be a part of students' daily lives. Accordingly, dialogues relating to the story can accommodate experiential learning where students can draw on their own experiences and knowledge. To foster democratic citizenship children could partake in similar campaigns for social justice or start their own.⁴

Students are likely to have differing attitudes to the treatment of refugees, which highlights the need for a dialogic approach. An intercultural dialogue allows students to practice skills of mediation and/or how to live in a community of disagreement (Byram, 1997; Hoff, 2014; Iversen, 2014). Older students may critically analyse how words and pictures are used in different types of texts, which allows a wider range of communicative contexts in intercultural education, addressing the questions of what is said, by whom, how, when, and where. They can, for example, consider whose interests are served by the following arguments raised by

4 The many children who are raising funds in support of Ukrainian refugees, at the time of writing this chapter, show children's capacity to act as democratic citizens in support of social justice.

Conservative MP Karen Bradley from a debate in the British House of Commons on the vote to remove child refugee protections from immigration law (Canary, 2020):

If we want to stop the small boats, if we want to stop the migrants being under the wheel arches of vehicles ... we need to deal with it by making sure there is a safe and legal passage.

If I can quote Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said, “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river, we need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in”.

The students can discuss how the MP chooses words to make the argument that removing protections for child refugees will ultimately protect “migrants” / “people”, and the effect of quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu, including his religious title for added ethos.

Arguably a sensible argument, it is worth considering different perspectives, including who are left out and not given a voice. Another source, Careappointments (Wheeler et al., 2020) relates the experiences of “the lone child refugees ... the unaccompanied children in the EU” who will no longer have the right “to be relocated with close relatives” because the Government has “stripp[ed] out their protections”. A different grammatical subject, “the lone child refugees”, and choice of words tells a different story through appealing to our emotions. The article is accompanied by a picture of Labour peer Lord Dubs, who had successfully campaigned for the amendment declaring that refugee children would still have the right to remain in the UK. The knowledge that Lord Dubs fled the Nazis as a child on the *Kindertransport* underlines his ethos and adds to the pathos of the text.

Through a critical analysis of different types of texts relating to a topical issue and how words and pictures are used to affect us, students can develop intercultural and democratic skills. The analysis should also include the sources themselves, including their biases and our own positionality. My choice of texts can be critiqued as they are all created by privileged white, Western, middle-aged/elderly women and men, even if they do represent other perspectives. Did I unconsciously select these texts because I am also white, Western, middle-aged and privileged?

Indeed, it should be recognized that as I focus on a Norwegian context and draw on intercultural theory from European and American scholars, the discussion in this chapter is part of a largely Western discourse. Recognizing one's positionality can contribute to humble, honest and critical dialogue about how this may affect the selection of texts for ELT. These choices influence who is given a voice, who we learn about, and who is given the opportunity to explore both their own and others' identities and cultures in ELT. A lesson learnt from the field of multiculturalism is the importance of allowing people to represent themselves and tell their own stories. In this respect, teachers can make a huge difference in support of equal representation and opportunities for all students. A varied, de-centred, multimodal curricula that includes a diversity of cultures and identities can provide fertile ground for critical intercultural dialogues that educate democratic citizens.

Conclusion

This chapter started with a brief historical overview of the teaching of cultural content in ELT. I delineated the debate around essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to culture to show how static or dynamic approaches to culture impact approaches to cultural content in ELT, primarily focusing on texts. My first years of learning EFL in the 1980s were dominated by textbooks with a static and stereotyped presentation of cultures. Today, children grow up in what is a much more pluralistic society, which requires adopting a more dynamic and critical approach to intercultural education.

Considering the role of interculturality in the Norwegian Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017) and English curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019), in addition to the issues for debate in the field and new models, 21st century world citizens require a wide array of texts that show a variety of contexts in which English is spoken. I propose that we move beyond the static-dynamic dichotomy to entertain critical, honest, and humble dialogue on how we draw on combinations of essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives in our research and teaching to foster

intercultural learning in ELT. This stance is not always a complacent one; on the contrary, it requires a willingness to both take the perspective of the other and reconsider one's own perspective in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It recognizes the potential of fruitful intercultural dialogue when conflicting views arise, as called for by Hoff (2014, 2020). This type of dialogue does not always lead to agreement; instead, it entails living in a community of disagreement (Iversen, 2014). However, it also involves the potential for more honest intercultural dialogue, as one learns to understand other perspectives when acknowledging existing conflicts.

The recent international developments related to the notions of interculturality that have been accounted for in this chapter revolve around questions of representation, power dynamics, and a call for action. I propose that these developments can enrich ELT in Norway and beyond, in tandem with the country's Core Curriculum and English curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, 2019). Through student-centred, experiential and dialogic approaches to intercultural learning, teachers can provide EL students with opportunities to engage in the critical perspectives and symbolic competence required to navigate in the 21st century.

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Promoting 21st Century Skills through Classroom Encounters with English Language Literature in Norway: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

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Abstract: The present chapter explores the affordances of literature as an educational medium in the School of the Future, more specifically in relation to the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Norway. As new educational needs have emerged in response to the demands of the rapidly changing workplace and societies of our contemporary world, the role of literature in today's language classroom may seem somewhat precarious. The chapter therefore considers what 21st century skills like cross-cultural communication, in-depth learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and multiliteracies may entail in a context of literary reading. First, it gives an overview of how notions of 21st century skills and the encounter with English language texts feature in the current Norwegian National Curriculum. Next, the Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR) (Hoff, 2016) is proposed as a viable theoretical framework for developing such skills through reading and working with literary texts in the EFL classroom. Practical implications are considered, and both strengths and limitations of the model are addressed. By concretising the theoretical and practical links between the MIR and the concept of 21st century skills, the chapter expounds upon previous discussions of the model and thereby provides further insight into its relevance as a pedagogical tool. Moreover, the chapter illuminates why literature still can and should play an important part in the present-day teaching and learning of English.

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Introduction¹

A question which has been sought answered by scholars from diverse areas of educational research in the post-modern era, is how the aims and methods of education can be redefined in order to foster pupils' ability to handle the challenges and opportunities of our contemporary world (Hoff, 2019). The societies we live in today are very different from what they were no more than two decades ago, in large part due to fast-paced technological developments as well as processes of globalisation and mobility. These changes have affected our daily lives both at home and at work, perhaps most acutely in terms of how we interact with other people. For example, as an ever-expanding array of digital platforms have facilitated connections which were previously inaccessible (Thorne, 2010), meaning is increasingly communicated through the combination of different semiotic modes (Kress, 2010). Furthermore, intercultural encounters have become a ubiquitous part of our everyday reality, yet such encounters are frequently fraught with tension due to the unpredictable nature of 21st century communication as well as increased levels of racism and extremism in society (Council of Europe, 2010, 2016; Stadler, 2020). In other words, today's interconnected, pluralistic world prompts us to deal with conflict and ambiguity, challenging our ability to handle complex predicaments in an informed as well as ingenious manner. From an educational perspective, these developments make it pertinent to reconsider the types of teaching materials that are brought into the classroom, the topics that are addressed, and the ways in which pupils are encouraged to learn (Burbules, 2009; Eisner, 2004; Ludvigsen et al., 2015).

Against this background, the present chapter discusses the role of literary texts in today's language classroom, specifically in the context of teaching and learning English in Norway. Whilst reading fiction has traditionally been a central activity in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Fenner, 2020a), the academic relevance of this type of text has also been questioned in light of current and future educational needs (Habegger-Conti, 2015). In consideration of such matters,

¹ The introduction builds on ideas first expressed in the opening segment of Part I of my PhD thesis (Hoff, 2019).

the present chapter posits that pedagogical approaches to literature can contribute to promoting so-called “21st century skills” (e.g., Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Chu et al., 2017; Pellegrino, 2017). First, the chapter gives an overview of how notions of 21st century skills and literary reading feature in curricular guidelines. Next, the Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR) (Hoff, 2016) is proposed as a viable pedagogical tool for developing these skills through reading and working with English language literature in an educational context. Whereas links between the MIR and the concept of 21st century skills have previously been alluded to (Hoff, 2019), what this kind of interconnection entails at a theoretical and practical level remains to be concretised and spelled out in more detail. By elaborating on such aspects, the aims of the chapter are to provide new insight into the affordances of the MIR as a pedagogical tool and, more importantly, to illuminate why literature still can and should play an important part in the teaching and learning of English within the School of the Future. The central questions which will be explored are: What do 21st century skills entail in a context of literary reading, and how may MIR-based approaches to literature in Norwegian EFL classrooms potentially contribute to the development of such skills?

Background

21st century skills and English literature in the Norwegian National Curriculum

The term *21st century skills*, which emerged as a popular phrase in media, politics and academia worldwide around the turn of the millennium, refers to a set of skills which have been deemed critically important in order to prepare young individuals for the demands of the rapidly changing workplace and society of the 21st century (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Pellegrino, 2017). Accordingly, the theoretical and practical implications of the term have, unsurprisingly, become a key concern for educators. A number of global organisations and networks have set out to specify what these skills are and develop frameworks for their implementation in educational settings. While these frameworks differ across international contexts, they all stress the need for pedagogical approaches which

allow for processes of *in-depth learning*, *cross-cultural communication*, *critical thinking*, *collaboration*, *creativity*, *problem-solving*, and *innovation* as well as the development of a *comprehensive set of literacies* (see Chu et al., 2017). In a Norwegian context, the NOU report *The School of the Future* (Ludvigsen et al., 2015) recommended similar areas of competence which were to be given emphasis across all subjects and levels of education, resulting in the implementation of a new National Curriculum, *The Knowledge Promotion 2020* (LK20), in 2020.

The notion of 21st century skills is reflected both in the Norwegian Core Curriculum, which describes the overarching aims and values of education, and in the subject-specific curricula. According to the Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017), promoting in-depth learning involves giving pupils varied tasks and opportunities to participate in activities of increasing complexity, “so that over time the pupils will be able to master various types of challenges” across familiar as well as unfamiliar contexts (p. 12). In contrast to surface learning, which focuses on the memorisation of facts and procedures (see Sawyer, 2008), in-depth learning requires an inquiry-based approach, which means that pupils must be given opportunities to be creative, inquisitive and innovative (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 7). This type of learning also necessitates critical thinking, which is described in the Core Curriculum as the ability to scrutinise established ideas in order to develop new insights, to assess different sources of knowledge in an analytical manner and to acknowledge that one’s own point of view may be incomplete or even inaccurate (p. 7). Opening up for dialogue in the classroom may be important where the latter issue is concerned, as this alone will prompt pupils to engage with, and develop a stance towards, a variety of opinions and ideas. Indeed, the Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017) presents communication and collaboration as aspects of social learning that can play a crucial role in helping pupils to deal with conflict and disagreement in a constructive manner (p. 11), thus echoing Iversen’s (2014) notion of the classroom as a “community of disagreement.”² Such

2 My translation of the original term “*uenighetsfellesskap*” in Norwegian.

dialogical learning processes are also relevant in relation to the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and Citizenship*, which involves enabling pupils to become active and responsible members of a democratic society (p. 9). In the English subject curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019), this interdisciplinary topic specifically pertains to democratic citizenship in a global perspective, and, accordingly, the intercultural dimension of language learning is portrayed as a key factor. Learning English, it is claimed, involves developing an understanding of the fact that individuals' perspectives are "culture dependent" (p. 3). As such, the curriculum reflects the view that the EFL classroom may be a particularly relevant arena for intercultural learning due to the fact that it "has the experience of otherness at the centre of its concern, [requiring] learners to engage with both familiar and unfamiliar experience through the medium of another language" (Byram, 2021, p. 5; also see Lund, 2020). Moreover, LK20 acknowledges that intercultural understanding is not only integral to pupils' ability to communicate effectively in English with other individuals; it may also contribute to expanding their repertoire for interpreting themselves and people around the world and expand their interest for interacting with others in an attentive and non-prejudiced manner (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). In other words, the intercultural dimension of the English subject is closely linked to the overarching *Bildung* aims of education, which are based on the premise that education is not only as a matter of promoting testable knowledge and skills but also of helping pupils to develop at a personal and cultural level (Fenner, 2020b; Hoff, 2019).

The intercultural dimension of the English subject is further specified in connection with the core element *Working with texts in English*, which entails "reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing" English language texts in order to develop "intercultural competence" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). While the curriculum does not provide an explicit definition of this term, it is linked to the ability to "deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns" and seeing one's own and others' identities in a "multilingual and multicultural context" (p. 3). Accordingly, the curriculum not only reflects a postmodern understanding of culture and identity

as fluid and multifaceted concepts; it also posits that encounters with English language texts may be integral to promoting pupils' ability to handle the complexities which govern intercultural communication processes in our era. Indeed, whereas the ability to participate successfully in intercultural encounters was previously regarded as a matter of negotiating between two disparate cultural points of view (typically associated with nationality and language), this is today becoming increasingly perceived as a more convoluted and challenging undertaking (Holliday, 2011). Such a view is based on the recognition that people's identities may dwell in more than one language and culture, as well as the fact that our membership in a variety of groups and communities prompts us all to move in and out of multiple roles according to situation and context on a daily basis (Council of Europe, 2018; Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; Illmann & Nynäs, 2017).

The notion of multiliteracies, i.e., the ability to interpret and navigate different sign systems and media (The New London Group, 1996), is also highlighted in connection with pupils' intercultural encounter with English language texts. This is, for example, evident through the curriculum's condition that the concept of "text" be understood in a broad sense, encompassing "spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical" forms of cultural expression (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, by noting that texts can combine different meaning-bearing elements such as "writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression" (p. 3), the English subject curriculum draws attention to the concept of multimodality and the fact that texts can convey meaning through other semiotic modes than printed words on a page (see Kress, 2010; Skulstad, 2020b).

It should, however, be noted that many of the 21st century skills which can be identified in LK20 are "not new, just newly important" (Silva, 2009, p. 631). For instance, because the *Bildung* tradition has had considerable impact on educational thought in the Scandinavian countries (Hoff, 2019), notions of self-expression, critical thinking, and intercultural and

democratic citizenship have, in different ways and to varying degrees, also permeated previous curricula for the subject of English (see Fenner, 2020b). Similarly, Norwegian curricular guidelines have been based on a communicative and socio-cultural view of language learning for decades (Skulstad, 2020a), which means that dialogue and collaboration are likely to be familiar modes of interaction in English classrooms across the country. What is new in the recently implemented national curriculum, however, is the central and explicit role these so-called 21st century skills have now been given across all levels and subjects of education.

How, then, does literary reading fit into this picture? In the curriculum which preceded LK20, it was noted that English language literary texts carry a potential to provide “a deeper understanding of others and of oneself” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006/2013, p. 2). Since the encounter between Self and Other³ lies at the core of the concept of intercultural competence (Bohlin, 2013), it can be argued that literature was here singled out as a particularly valuable type of text as regards the development of pupils’ intercultural perspectives. Accordingly, LK20’s predecessor reflected a tenet which was widely accepted in the research on literature and culture pedagogy at the time, namely the idea that FL literature represents “the personal voice of a culture” (Fenner, 2001, p. 16). Echoing Bakhtin’s (2006) concepts of *heteroglossia* and *polyphony*, scholars have in more recent years also acknowledged the multivocality of this type of text (Greek, 2008). Moreover, theoretical research has proposed that readers’ encounters with literary characters whose values and experiences differ from their own give them the opportunity both to identify and empathise with these characters and to relativise their own perspectives (Bredella, 2006; Kramsch, 1993; Matos, 2005). Indeed, building on the premise that literary reading is a dialogical process (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1994), engaging with FL literature can be understood as a unique form of intercultural communication (Hoff, 2016).

3 These are philosophical terms used in *Bildung* theories by e.g., Levinas (2003) and Ricoeur (1992).

Compared to its predecessor, the current English subject curriculum presents the role of literature in more ambiguous terms. Whilst working with *text* is still linked to notions of interculturality in the curricular guidelines (see Dypedahl, 2020), literature is no longer given an elevated status in this connection; it is simply mentioned as one among a wide range of different types of text to which pupils should be exposed (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). A potential practical consequence of this shift is that literature might also be *treated* like any other text in the English classroom, which would mean that its unique qualities as an aesthetic form of cultural expression are not properly acknowledged and explored (cf. Lütge, 2012; Paran, 2010; Pulverness, 2014). Furthermore, research indicates that young individuals are increasingly reluctant to read literature, particularly longer texts, partly due to their perception of this type of text as an outdated and old-fashioned medium (Habegger-Conti, 2015). This view appears to be based on an understanding of literature as a primarily script-based medium. However, it is important to note that the concept of a literary text is today widely recognised to include a range of multimodal media like comics, graphic novels, songs, TV series, films, and even certain types of interactive video games (Abrams & Harpham, 2013; Schalleger, 2015). Indeed, given the explicit references to different types of digital and multimodal texts in LK20, such forms of literature are likely to be given a more prominent position in the contemporary English classroom, perhaps even to the point that some teachers might question the legitimacy of the traditional, script-based literary text in this context.

The author of the present chapter does not adhere to the view that “traditional” literature no longer carries any educational relevance, but acknowledges the pedagogical possibilities associated with expanding one’s idea of what a literary text is and can be. As will be elaborated upon in the following sections, reading and working with literary texts – of all genres, media and modalities – in the English classroom can play a major part in developing pupils’ 21st century skills.

Rationale for the choice of theoretical construct

Whether pupils' encounter with English literature will involve such learning processes as described above is dependent upon *how* they are encouraged to engage with text. An important question for teachers is thus what the concept of 21st century skills entails in a context of literary reading. Whilst there is widespread agreement about the nature and content of these skills at a general level (Chu et al., 2017), it must also be noted that there are local and contextual variations and that stakeholders do not necessarily have a common understanding of what sort of teaching materials and pedagogical approaches the development of such skills requires (see Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). Accordingly, it is highly relevant to examine how 21st century skills and literary reading are interrelated at a theoretical and practical level.

Since the present chapter explores this matter from the perspective of EFL education in Norway, the curricular aims which have been highlighted above provide a contextual framework for the subsequent discussion. Given the fact that LK20 explicitly links the teaching of English language texts to intercultural learning aims, a theoretical construct which takes into account the intercultural dimension of text interpretation was chosen as the object of scrutiny. In this regard, the rationale for selecting the MIR among a number of relevant descriptive and prescriptive reading models (e.g., Burwitz-Melzer, 2007; Porto, 2013; Schat et al., 2021) is that previous research (Hoff, 2019) has pointed to parallels between this model and the concept of 21st century skills, but there is a need to clarify what these correlations encompass and which implications they may have for pedagogical practice.

First presented in Hoff (2016), the MIR depicts text interpretation as a dialogical, critical, and multifaceted undertaking in which literary analysis and the consideration of intercultural issues are two sides of the same coin. Reflecting the continuous interplay between different voices in discourse and society (see Dervin, 2016; Kramsch, 2011; cf. Bakhtin, 2006), the model illustrates how the reading process may operate at three interlinked levels of communication that draw into play the multiple

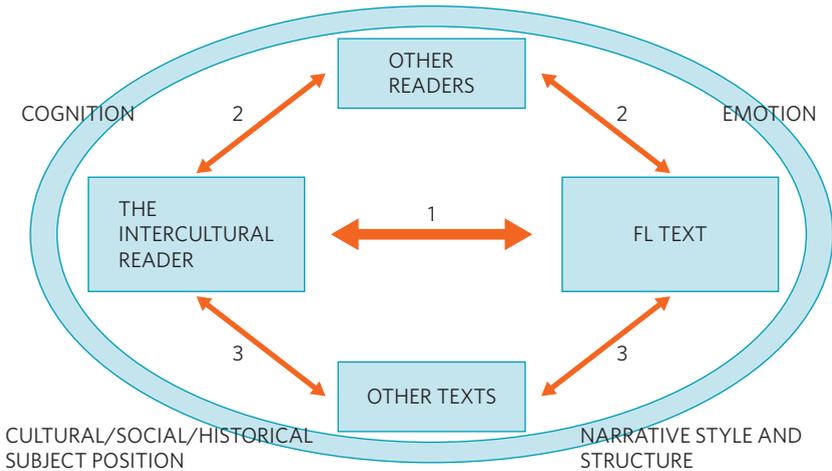


Figure 1. The Model of the Intercultural Reader (adapted from Hoff, 2016)

voices of the narrative FL text itself, other readers and other texts (see Figure 1 above).

Level 1 of the MIR involves the competent intercultural reader's engagement with the literary voices inherent in the FL text, both those that are accessible at the surface of the text, like the protagonist and other characters, and more abstract voices that can only be accessed through a process of analytical interpretation, like the narrator, implied author, and implied reader.⁴ **Level 2** signifies how other *readers* from a variety of contexts may be drawn into the interpretation process. **Level 3** entails a consideration of how the literary text may communicate with other *texts* through aspects of intertextuality, either by way of more or less explicit references or implicitly through similarities in terms of topic, theme, and/or genre.

At all three levels, the reader's **emotion** and **cognition** are involved. The affective dimension may, for instance, be activated when the reader feels empathy for literary characters, when they react to their actions and life choices with shock or disdain, or when they relate certain aspects

4 The "implied author" and the "implied reader" are terms used by Iser (1978) to describe what can be inferred about the author and an ideal reader based upon the way that the literary work is written.

of the plot to their own experiences. The cognitive dimension involves a more distanced approach, in which the reader, through critical analysis, seeks a deeper understanding of the text as well as their own and other readers' responses to the text in addition to its relationship to other texts. The emotion and cognition components are thus closely related to the remaining, overarching components of the model: **narrative style and structure (NSS)** and **cultural/social/historical subject position (C/S/H)**. The former component pertains to the intercultural reader's identification of different compositional elements and their reflection on the *effects* of these elements in terms of how the text positions itself and its readers. Similarly, the intercultural reader considers how, why, and to what extent different cultural, social, and historical subject positions of text(s) and reader(s) may make some interpretations viable or plausible, and others impossible or unlikely (see Hoff, 2016, 2019 for more elaborate descriptions of the MIR).

Exploring the links between the MIR and the concept of 21st century skills

The following section explores how notions of 21st century skills are reflected in the MIR and considers what this interconnection may imply for pedagogical practice. Both potential strengths and limitations of the model as a pedagogical tool are addressed in this respect. While the discussion has a contextual basis in LK20, it also draws on relevant, international research perspectives on intercultural language education and literature studies. Furthermore, for illustrative purposes, it refers to examples of literary texts which are often used in (or would be suitable for) lower and upper secondary EFL classrooms in Norway.

Cross-cultural communication

The first and most readily apparent reason why MIR-based approaches to literature can contribute to promoting 21st century skills is of course the model's overarching focus on cross-cultural communication. Indeed, the model provides a comprehensive framework for exploring how culture

affects the communication between reader(s) and literary text(s) by explicitly incorporating the diverse perspectives of a wide variety of previous as well as contemporary readers and texts from within and across cultures. Due to the interlinked nature of the different levels and components of the MIR, it is not possible to associate this particular 21st century skill, or any of the others for that matter, with one specific aspect of the model. Consequently, the intercultural dimension will remain a relevant concern throughout the subsequent discussion. However, some important characteristics as regards the model's approach to concepts with particular relevance to intercultural communication must be pointed out here at the outset, as these characteristics illustrate how the model aligns with curricular goals pertaining to intercultural competence (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3) as well as state-of-the-art perspectives in intercultural education research.

First of all, the MIR is based on an understanding of culture and identity as multifaceted, dynamic and fluid phenomena (cf. Council of Europe, 2018; Holliday, 2011; Illmann & Nynäs, 2017), which can be seen in the model's representation of both literary texts and readers. The MIR moves beyond an understanding of the literary text as an expression of the singular, personal voice of a culture (cf. Fenner, 2001) by acknowledging the mix of diverse and potentially conflicting voices it may encompass (cf. Bakhtin, 2006; Greek, 2008). A practical consequence of this shift is that pupils must be helped to recognise and navigate the multiple and complex identities of the text. Reading processes of this kind presuppose that pupils are not only prompted to identify the array of literary voices which exist within the text but also to reflect on which C/S/H subject positions they render. The aim for the classroom participants in this regard will be to investigate whether these voices provide a unified or multifaceted representation of the environment(s) depicted in the text.

Moreover, pupils would benefit from being exposed to Level 2 readers and Level 3 texts that represent different, and potentially conflicting, perspectives *within* cultures as well as universal aspects *across* different cultures. The pupils' own C/S/H subject positions can also be addressed and problematised. For instance, pupils who have personally experienced

discrimination or war-related trauma might have a very different reaction to John Boyne's Holocaust novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006) or Ruta Sepety's novel (2019) *The Fountains of Silence* (a depiction of life in Spain under the fascist dictatorship of General Franco) than individuals whose only exposure to the horrors of genocide and armed conflict come through the TV news. On the other hand, a consequence of today's interconnected and digitalised world is that most young people in Norway have access to unfiltered accounts of such human suffering through social media. This has most recently been seen in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as TikTok has become an arena for sharing and engaging with personal reports from the war zone (Nodland, 2022). As regards this particular example, then, it would be relevant for pupils to reflect on whether and how their stance as 21st century digital natives affects their responses to literary texts which depict war and human trauma, and to what extent these responses can thus be said to be "culture-dependent" (cf. Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3).

In this connection, the C/S/H component of the MIR can be criticised for its lack of specificity. For instance, this label does not explicitly indicate which differentiating factors might be relevant to take into account when considering the impact of "social" perspectives (e.g., identity markers like gender, age, religion, education, occupation, etc.) (cf. Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; Illmann & Nynäs, 2017). Moreover, whereas the complex character of the literary text is clearly reflected in the MIR through its focus on textual multivocality, the complex and dynamic nature of readers' identities is admittedly a more implicit concern in descriptions of the model (see Hoff, 2016, 2019). Teachers must therefore be attentive to diverse facets of cultural identity in order to ensure nuanced and comprehensive classroom deliberations that allow pupils to see the text as well as their own and other readers' identities in a "multilingual and multicultural context" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). Accordingly, their engagement with English literature can help them to move beyond their own "here and now" perspectives in a way that challenges reductionist perceptions of culture, identity, and intercultural communication.

In-depth learning

As previously mentioned, the curriculum describes in-depth learning as a process of increasing complexity (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 12). The multileveled approach inherent in the MIR lays the groundwork for such progressively demanding learning processes. In practice, this would, for instance, entail starting with matters related to Level 1 of the model before moving on to Levels 2 and 3. At Level 1, one way for teachers to facilitate a step-by-step advancement would be to guide the pupils' attention gradually away from the concrete literary voices which operate at the surface of the text(s) to the more abstract voices which can be found beneath the surface. Similarly, following their identification of textual aspects related to narrative structure and style, the pupils can be asked to consider the *effects* of such compositional elements. Some relevant aspects to consider in this connection, would, for example, be how the narrative point of view influences the pupils' perception of the literary characters and plot, who is given a chance to speak in the text and who is left out, who the text appeals to as well and whether or not the pupils identify with this implied reader. This type of investigation will be important if the pupils are to be able to recognise notions of "implicit conflict" (Hoff, 2019, 2029) in their communication with the text. In other words, it may enable them to discover aspects of ambiguity which are not immediately apparent to them and which will only emerge as they begin to peel away multiple layers of meaning.

As classroom deliberations move on to Level 2 of the model, a natural point of departure would be to focus on the different subjectivities that are represented within the classroom. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that this setting constitutes a multi-voiced, multicultural sphere in itself (Thyberg, 2012; Tornberg, 2004), which enables the classroom participants to reflect on how and to what extent cultural background influences their individual and collective responses to the text. However, an important way in which the MIR ensures particularly expansive and complex text interpretation processes is that it explicitly requires the reader to seek out other reader experiences that cannot necessarily be found in their physical vicinity – for instance, it would be impossible to

locate readers from other historical contexts among the pupils who are present in the classroom. Some potential pedagogical resources which have been suggested in this connection are book reviews (to be found in newspapers, magazines, podcasts, or similar) or alternative versions of the text (e.g., graphic novels or film adaptations which can be said to represent an illustrator's or film director's interpretation of the original text) (Hoff, 2016). Moreover, it should be noted that the digitalised school of today offers opportunities for classroom participants to deliberate the text with pupils in other geographical locations through internet-based communication (see Porto, 2014).

At the next stage of the reading process, teachers can ensure that Level 3 of the MIR is brought into play by prompting pupils to reflect on texts which share intertextual links with the Level 1 text. In many cases, pupils will be able to identify these links of their own accord (see Hoff, 2017). However, some intertextual references which might be taken for granted by a native English speaker will be more obscure to EFL learners in Norway (Birketveit, 2021; Wiland, 2016). Another factor to consider is the pupils' ages; for example, while they might recognise the 1980s aesthetic which permeates the Netflix hit series *Stranger Things* (Duffer & Duffer, 2016-), they are less likely to have heard of the 1980s film *The Goonies* (Donner, 1985), which served as a major inspiration for the series (Hedash, 2021). In such instances, the teacher's role as an intercultural mediator (see Byram, 1997, 2021) will be of great importance.

Another central point for consideration would be how alternative versions of the text (Level 2) as well as other, related texts (Level 3) can represent an "indexicality between discursive events that took place at different times in different places and now make new meaning in unexpected ways" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359). A concrete example which might be used to illustrate this point is Baz Luhrmann's (1996) motion picture *Romeo + Juliet*, a modernised version of Shakespeare's famous play. The film retains the Elizabethan English dialogue of Shakespeare's text while reframing the original tale of two feuding, aristocratic families in 14th century Italy as a story about warring mafia empires in the contemporary, fictional city of Verona Beach. In doing so, Luhrmann's version not

only brings Shakespeare's text from the past into the present but also adds new meaning to the narrative. Another text which achieves a similar effect is Madeline Miller's (2011) young adult novel *Song of Achilles*. Retelling a story from Homer's *The Iliad* via the point of view of Achilles' best friend Patroclus, the book portrays the two male characters' relationship as romantic in character. Whilst the setting remains the same in Miller's version as in the original, the alternative P.O.V. sheds new light on an ancient and classic Greek narrative, thereby opening up for other ways to understand it.

By exploring alternative versions of text as well as aspects of intertextuality, then, pupils may gain insight into how any human discourse or text carries traces of other voices and texts (Bakhtin, 2006; Dervin, 2016) as well as how representations of culture can be manipulated, reframed, and recontextualised (Kramsch, 2011). Thereby, MIR-based approaches to literature will arguably contribute to another aspect of in-depth learning, which is described in the curriculum as the ability to recognise connections between and across different contexts (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 12).

Critical thinking

Pupils' deliberation of multiple perspectives related to all three levels of the MIR will inevitably involve critical thinking, as this undertaking requires them to assess different sources and scrutinise established ideas (i.e., prior interpretations) about the literary text. In doing so, they may discover that their own point of view is incomplete (cf. Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 7). However, the classroom participants might also experience that the text itself guides them towards a specific and widely accepted interpretation (Hoff & Habegger-Conti, 2022). In order to gain insight into possible reasons for such diverse as well as uniform reader responses, pupils must learn to explore whether and how the text and different reader responses reflect particular motivations, hidden agendas, or underlying ideologies (cf. Dervin, 2016; Hoff, 2020). As "fake news" has become a pressing issue in contemporary media (Kendeou et al., 2019), the pupils' critical investigation of such

matters can be said to be a particularly relevant pedagogical concern in today's language classroom.

The very nature of literary reading – an interpretative endeavour which involves looking beyond the words on the page – suggests that pupils' encounters with English language literature can play an important part in developing this type of critical thinking skills. However, if this is to be achieved, they must be guided beyond the surface level of the text in order to examine underlying factors which affect the relationship between reader and text. The preceding discussion has already hinted at the significance of the NSS component of the MIR in this connection. By paying attention to matters pertaining to this component, pupils can gain an awareness of the manipulative effects of the literary text, i.e., the ways in which it shapes their responses by relying on a range of different literary techniques (Volkman, 2015). They can also be encouraged by the teacher to deliberate which implications this might have for how they navigate the intercultural dimension of the textual encounter. For example, when an author creates suspense through a controlled release of information, it may enhance the reader's eagerness to find out what happens next in addition to increasing their emotional response to the events that unfold in the story, which might come in the way of a more analytical or critical approach. Alternatively, a matter-of-fact, reporter-style account of events may make the reader indifferent to the literary characters and their experiences. One possible consequence of this is that it becomes difficult for pupils to develop an empathetic understanding of otherness, to the extent that their encounter with English language literature hinders rather than promotes their intercultural learning processes (see Hoff, 2017).

Furthermore, the reader's role in this equation must not be forgotten. For instance, pupils' interpretations of text may be influenced by their political stance, or they may be eager to express opinions and ideas about the text that they think are expected of them but which do not reflect their actual mindset (see Dervin, 2010; Hoff, 2020). Discussing such elusive aspects of the reader – text relationship may arguably not only promote language learners' abilities as intercultural readers of literature; they may also become better equipped to navigate notions of implicit conflict (Hoff, 2019, 2029) in encounters with non-literary texts as well as

in intercultural communication processes in the “real world”, most notably in terms of recognising that their own and other people’s actions and words may be shaped by underlying factors and thus cannot necessarily be taken at face value.

Problem-solving, creativity and innovation

LK20 associates the 21st century skills of problem-solving, creativity, and innovation with qualities like inquisitiveness, imagination, and the ability to come up with new and original solutions to predicaments (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 17). The relevance of these skills in connection with MIR-based approaches to literature might seem far from self-explanatory to teachers. However, the ultimate aim of prompting pupils to engage in a continuous questioning of alternative perspectives and competing interpretations of the text is to enable them to challenge these prior meanings in order to construct novel and creative interpretations (Hoff, 2016).

One way for teachers to help along such processes in the classroom is to ask the pupils to compose alternative, Level 2 versions of the literary text which tell its story in new and unexpected ways (cf. Kramsch, 2011). This might, for instance, be achieved by changing the narrative P.O.V., depicting events according to a different cultural/social/historical setting and/or retelling the story by drawing on (or mixing) conventions of other literary genres and text formats. The pupils’ artistic and creative abilities will thus be called upon. However, it is important that such classroom activities are regarded as more than an opportunity for the pupils to express themselves creatively. When given the opportunity to reject the version of the world on offer in the Level 1 text (or prior alternative Level 2 versions) and to suggest new, fresh renditions, the pupils will be challenged to participate actively in the interplay of multiple voices in human discourse and texts (cf. Bakhtin, 2006). From a critical intercultural pedagogy perspective (e.g., Dasli & Diaz, 2017), this type of endeavour comes with a certain degree of responsibility, since the pupils’ version of the text has the possibility to contribute to a more egalitarian social order by proposing a more just, realistic, or diverse representation of the world than is

offered by the Level 1 text. This is, of course, somewhat dependent on what kind of text is brought into the classroom in the first place – for instance, multicultural literature will represent marginalised voices and include diverse perspectives to a much greater extent than most of the “classics” within the Anglo-American literary canon (Dong, 2005). Nevertheless, recontextualisations of any kind of text will inevitably bring something new to the table. The pupils may thus be encouraged to make conscious decisions about whose voices to include and not to include in their text, and to reflect on how their artistic choices might affect the way in which these voices are represented, and consequently perceived, by readers (see Porto & Zembylas, 2022). In this way, pupils’ engagement with literature can arguably serve a problem-solving purpose in the sense that their recreations of the Level 1 text may challenge “taken for granted” representations of the world and open up for new ways of seeing, depicting and, ultimately, defining it.

Collaboration

One unique potential of pupils’ classroom encounter with literature (as opposed to the reading they may be doing in their spare time) is that it can take place as a socio-cultural process (Aase, 2005). Because the reading of literature is highly subjective and no single, “correct” interpretation exists, classroom discussions about this type of text may help pupils to deal with opposing ideas in a constructive manner (cf. Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 11). In other words, socio-cultural approaches to literature offer opportunities for pupils to participate in communities of (interpretative) disagreement (cf. Iversen, 2014). In this connection, it is worth noting that the MIR’s explicit inclusion of diverse reader perspectives makes such collaborative reading practices a pedagogical necessity rather than a possibility. Indeed, collaboration among the pupils will be imperative in order to ensure that all levels and components of the MIR are dealt with adequately.

However, whereas previous empirical research on literary reading in language education has found that social interaction between pupils can lead to rich and multifaceted reading experiences (Rødnes, 2011;

Thyberg, 2012), it is important for teachers to be aware of the fact that the socio-cultural dimension can also have an undermining effect. For instance, homogeneous group constellations or interpersonal issues among the pupils may stop them from following up on insightful observations or delving deeper into aspects of the text that they do not understand (Asplund, 2010). Furthermore, there is not always correspondence between task potentials and the reading and learning processes which take place in the classroom (Hoff, 2017). This means that while the MIR may very well be used as a basis for developing discussion prompts and classroom activities, a significant factor will be the teacher's "attentiveness to what is said (and what is not said) by the learners [so that] interesting observations can be elaborated upon, problematic statements can be countered and omissions can be addressed" (Hoff, 2019, p. 108) during classroom deliberations on literature. In order to be able to do this, the teacher must have a good overview of all the interactions which take place in the classroom. This is a rather daunting task – for example, it is not physically feasible for the teacher to be privy to everything that is said at all times when pupils talk about the text in groups. In this respect, collaborative writing tools like Wikis (see Brox & Jakobsen, 2014) might serve a useful purpose in the sense that the pupils' note taking during group discussions can give the teacher valuable insight into issues which might be necessary to address *in plenum*.

Multiliteracies

Finally, when it comes to multiliteracies, previous research (Hoff, 2017, 2019) has suggested that reading practices based on the MIR may call upon pupils' "out-of-school literacies" (Hull & Schultz, 2001) and thereby contribute to bridging what Habegger-Conti (2015) describes as "the gap between 'old' and 'new' media" (p. 106) in the EFL classroom. This is a somewhat misleading proposition, since competences which were previously regarded as an out-of-school concern have now become an educational priority, as evidenced by the explicit inclusion of multimodal texts in LK20 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, p. 3). Nevertheless, the preceding discussion has provided insight into

how MIR-based approaches to literature can potentially develop pupils' awareness of connections between and across "old" and "new" media, for instance by exploring how the film version of a story relates to the original, script-based text, or by creating alternative versions which draw upon other or multiple modalities. Furthermore, empirical investigations indicate that when pupils consider matters pertaining to Level 3 of the MIR during classroom encounters with "traditional" literary texts, they are inclined to identify intertextual links to multimodal media like 21st century films and TV series (Hoff, 2017). If there exists a gap between old and new text types in the English classroom, then, the above examples illustrate why and how a pedagogical tool like the MIR might play a role in closing it.

However, an important limitation of the model must also be addressed in the context of multiliteracies. The original description of the NSS component of the MIR (see Hoff, 2016, p. 60) refers to textual aspects which are associated with traditional, script-based literary texts (e.g., narrative point of view, tone, imagery, plot, setting, theme). Consequently, it does not specify how the competent intercultural reader deals with texts that rely on a combination of different semiotic modes to convey meaning (e.g., visual, linguistic, audio, spatial and gestural, cf. The New London Group, 1996). This is an important issue for classroom participants to consider. Whilst pupils' engagement with multimodal literature can add layers of enjoyment and insight to the reading experience (Rimmereide, 2021), the complex interplay of meaning-bearing elements can quite possibly also lead to misunderstandings, particularly when it comes to the intercultural dimension of the textual encounter (Benavides, 2019).

A forthcoming article (Hoff & Habegger-Conti, 2022) expands upon the original conceptualisation of the MIR in order to clarify what the model entails in relation to encounters with multimodal literature. One particularly relevant feature to note when it comes to the narrative style and structure of this type of text is that the different modes may not only compliment or enhance one another; they may also contradict or obscure one another (see Hallet, 2018). The TV sitcom *Modern Family* (Levitan & Loyd, 2009–2020) is a relevant case in point in this respect: On the one hand, the series challenges a number of stereotypes by depicting the

relatable, daily lives of a blended family whose members have diverse ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations as well as biological and non-biological affiliations, thereby normalising various “unconventional” family constellations. On the other hand, the series also reinforces some of the stereotypes it sets out to circumvent by way of different audio-visual cues, including costumes and the actors’ exaggerated mannerisms and use of accents. Further layers of meaning are added through the series’ attempt to be “in on the joke” with the audience (for instance, the actors frequently stare directly into the camera with a sheepish grin or roll their eyes when delivering a line). In other words, texts which rely on an interplay between different meaning-bearing elements tend to convey complex messages, some of which may be difficult for pupils to unravel. When relying on the MIR as a foundation for pedagogical approaches to multimodal literature, then, it is crucial that teachers move beyond textual aspects captured by the original description of the NSS component of the model and develop strategies for directing pupils’ attention to the unique compositional features of this type of text. A key concern in this respect will be to explore how the different meaning-bearing elements work together (or against each other) to communicate meaning.

Conclusion

The present chapter has explored the affordances of literature as an educational medium in the School of the Future, with a particular focus on the teaching and learning of English in Norway. With reference to the new educational needs which have emerged in the wake of recent societal developments, the chapter has discussed what 21st century skills entail in a context of literary reading and how MIR-based approaches to literature in Norwegian EFL classrooms can potentially contribute to the development of these skills.

We have seen that the encounter with English language text is linked to notions of interculturality in LK20, and that the curriculum reflects an understanding of culture and identity as dynamic, multifaceted concepts. A practical consequence of this is that classroom work related to English literature must contribute to pupils’ *cross-cultural communication* abilities

in a manner which challenges reductionist perceptions of such phenomena. The chapter has argued that the MIR provides an apt framework for classroom work in this respect, as its inclusion of a wide range of reader perspectives and texts from within and across cultures may help pupils to see texts as well as their own and other readers' identities in a multilingual and multicultural context. However, the discussion has also highlighted the need for teachers to reflect critically on what the C/S/H component of the model entails in order to ensure sufficiently nuanced classroom discussions about cultural identity. When it comes to *in-depth learning* as an aspect of literary reading, this has been described as a matter of interacting with text(s) and different reader responses through a process of increasing complexity, with the aim to explore connections between and across different contexts. The chapter has provided insight into how the multiple levels of the MIR may be used as a guideline for directing pupils towards a gradual and systematic process of discovery in this respect. Moreover, we have seen that LK20 links *critical thinking* to the ability to engage in processes of analytical scrutiny. The chapter has argued that such criticality is crucial to pupils' intercultural encounters with English literature, as it requires them to reflect on underlying dimensions of the reader – text relationship. The significance of the NSS component of the MIR has been highlighted in this context, as has the need to explore ideological and motivational facets of reader responses. Furthermore, when it comes to *problem-solving abilities*, *creativity* and *innovation*, literary reading has been proposed as an artistic endeavour that can challenge “taken for granted” representations of the world. The chapter has argued that the inclusion of alternative versions of text as a type of Level 2 reader response in the MIR challenges pupils to generate imaginative recreations of the L1 text. It has been suggested that this will prompt them to participate actively in the interplay of multiple voices in human discourse and texts; as a result, they may come up with new ways of representing and defining the world. As concerns *collaboration*, the emphasis on multiple perspectives in the MIR presupposes that the classroom be allowed to take shape as a community of interpretative disagreement when pupils are reading and working with literature. The chapter has pointed to both beneficial as well as problematic aspects of sociocultural reading processes, and the

key role of the teacher in organising, monitoring, and guiding classroom discussions with respect to the text has been highlighted in this regard. Finally, *multiliteracies* in a context of literary reading pertains, first and foremost, to the skills needed to engage competently with multimodal texts. Due to a lack of specific references to the unique compositional features of this type of text in the original description of the NSS component of the MIR, the chapter has emphasised the need for teachers to develop strategies for helping pupils to recognise and navigate the complex interplay of different meaning-bearing elements when multimodal literature provides a foundation for classroom work.

Similar to the concept of 21st century skills itself, many of the ideas put forth in the present chapter are not new *per se*. However, by clarifying how curricular aims related to 21st century skills and the encounter with text may be synthesised through classroom work related to English literature, the chapter has hopefully illuminated why this type of text should not be regarded as “outdated” but rather as a highly relevant medium for teaching and learning in the Norwegian School of the Future. Moreover, by concretising the theoretical and practical links between the MIR and the concept of 21st century skills, the discussion has expounded upon previous descriptions of the MIR, thereby providing further insight into its relevance as a theoretical framework for classroom practice. While the present chapter has theorised and exemplified how the MIR might be used as a pedagogical tool for promoting 21st century skills in lower and upper secondary EFL classrooms in Norway, there is a need for empirical investigations which can uncover additional possibilities and challenges related to the practical applicability of this model as a basis for pedagogical practice, both in the particular educational context which has been considered here as well as elsewhere in the world.

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Gamers' Self-Efficacy When Using English in School and When Gaming

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between gamers' and non-gamers' self-efficacy when using English while playing video games at home and using English in the classroom. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 79 first-year upper-secondary students in Norway. The participants were divided into groups of self-reported gaming time per day: Frequent gamers (>3 h), Gamers (2–3h), Casual gamers (1–2h), and Non-gamers (0 h). The results show a statistically significant difference between Gamers ($n = 11$), Casual gamers, and Non-gamers in terms of self-efficacy. Gamers show a higher sense of self-efficacy when using English in the classroom ($M = 39.45$) and while playing video games ($M = 39.9$) than those who play either more or less. Higher self-efficacy correlates with higher grades in both settings (Classroom setting $p = <.001$; Gaming setting $p = .010$). There was no connection between being a gamer and their given grades ($p = .337$). The findings suggest that playing a moderate amount of video games in English can affect students' self-efficacy positively in relation to using the language, both while playing and in the classroom. The findings also suggest that even though spending excessive time on video games might increase self-efficacy while playing, it cannot be transferred to the classroom. Background variables could not account for this difference. A secondary finding reveals clear gender differences in the amount of time spent on video games; further research is required in this field.

Introduction

When it comes to learning a second language (L2), a student's feeling of mastery and accomplishment can lead to increased motivation and

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increased use of this language, which in turn can increase the student's language skills. In relation to motivation, the term *self-efficacy*, or belief in our own abilities, is an important factor in this sense since it may affect our willingness to do something and our self-confidence when doing said action. Having a positive feeling of self-efficacy has shown positive results in relation to students' academic success (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Schunk, 1989). Having this feeling in relation to video games has shown an increased use of the L2 (Soyoo, 2018; Zheng et al., 2009). In addition, research has found that activities done outside of the classroom in English, which are called *Extramural English* (EE) activities, seem to affect L2 learning positively (Brevik, 2016; Sletten, et al., 2015; Sundqvist, 2011; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012); one of the EE activities that students often participate in is video games. For example, in 2020 in Norway, 86% of the age group 9–18 play games on either a PC, PlayStation, their phone or tablet (Medietilsynet, 2020, p. 5). Considering how many commercial games are in English, and how many students have access to and play these games, it becomes relevant to examine the impact these games are having on students' sense of self-efficacy in relation to language use.

The purpose of this study is to give teachers more information about the connection between video games and language learning, mainly how self-efficacy may be connected to playing video games. Having high self-efficacy is important for our internal motivation and approach to handling difficult events, which is important for students to have in their language classroom when something becomes difficult. Furthermore, EE activities have a positive effect on L2 acquisition, and one of those activities is playing video games, which happens to be highly motivating. We are also often required to use our L2 (English) in many commercial games, which could lead to language development. Indeed, research has found evidence that boys who played video games likely had increased their feeling of self-efficacy with regard to speaking English (Sundqvist, 2011, p. 117). However, since self-efficacy is domain specific, can self-efficacy related to the use of English be transferred from the gaming situation at home to the classroom? With such a high percentage of students playing video games today, most teachers have several gamers in their

classroom. Understanding how the combination of speaking English and gaming may affect language development might be relevant for how teachers teach and work with gamers in the classroom in order to take advantage of their increased use of L2 and self-efficacy derived from playing video games.

The research aims to answer the following question: What is the difference between gamers' and non-gamers' self-efficacy when using English in both written and oral form (1) in school and (2) when playing video games at home?

My hypothesis is divided into two sections, the first being that gamers will show higher self-efficacy than non-gamers when using English while playing games because research indicates that gamers have a high L2 production while playing games (Brevik, 2016; Brevik & Garvoll, 2019; Sletten et al., 2015; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015). This may in turn mean they feel less anxiety with respect to L2 production (Sundqvist, 2011, p. 117), having increased their self-efficacy in that arena. Research has found that students with access to video games tend to spend less time on other out-of-school activities (Weis & Cerankosky, 2010, p. 467). Since self-efficacy is domain specific, those who do not participate in other out-of-school activities might not be able to develop their self-efficacy in other domains than gaming. Thus, the second hypothesis is that gamers will have lower self-efficacy scores than non-gamers in the classroom since their self-efficacy will mainly come from playing video games, leaving them lacking in self-efficacy in other areas. This research also opens up possibilities for further research. If it turns out that the gamers have higher self-efficacy when gaming – but not in the classroom – then maybe there is something teachers need to do about this in order for these students to develop their self-efficacy in that arena as well.

Literature review

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy can be defined as a person's belief in their own abilities to perform a given action (Bandura, 1989, 2006). Perceived self-efficacy may, according to Bandura, determine people's thought patterns, how

they choose to behave, their emotional response in taxing situations, and how much effort they are willing to invest in activities (Bandura, 1989, p. 59–60). It is highly related to motivation, which is relevant in school settings or academia because when students have a high level of perceived self-efficacy, this may increase their wish to seek solutions, develop cognitive skills, and learn more academic subjects (Bandura, 1989, p. 66). High self-efficacy in relation to L2 has also shown an increased use of the target language, which may in turn affect language development (Soyoof, 2018; Sundqvist, 2011; Zheng et al., 2009). Pintrich and De Groot (1990, p. 33) found that the best predictors of performance in seventh graders were self-regulation, test anxiety, and self-efficacy. They also found that higher levels of self-efficacy correlated with higher levels of self-regulation and student achievement across the board (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990, p. 36). They argue that improving students' self-efficacy may foster their use of cognitive strategies, i.e. self-regulation (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990, p. 37).

Our self-efficacy belief comes from four sources of information: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1989, p. 60). Some of these sources are found within video games, by experiencing success when playing the game and receiving verbal persuasion from teammates, the player might increase their self-efficacy belief in that given setting. In relation to English, the player can develop higher self-efficacy when they are able to communicate with other players in English, or when they are able to understand commands, quests, and directions in the game itself.

However, Bandura argues that self-efficacy is *domain specific*, meaning that one might have a high level of self-efficacy in one area but not in another. Thus, there might not be a correlation between self-efficacy in different situations, unless the person's general feeling of self-efficacy is high. There is also a multidomain measurement of self-efficacy that can reveal a general indication of a person's "sense of personal efficacy" (Bandura, 2006, p. 307). If our personal efficacy is high, it might be easier to acquire higher self-efficacy in different areas because we already know what we need to do in order to "succeed", or feel a sense of mastery.

Extramural English activities

The positive effect of having a high level of self-efficacy in everyday life and in an academic setting is relevant in relation to *Extramural English* activities. EE activities are ones that students engage in outside of the English classroom that involve the use of English in different forms, such as watching TV, chatting, or playing video games. Watching TV in English requires the use of our listening skills (and reading skills if there are English subtitles); communicating with people online requires us to use our writing and reading skills, and possibly our speaking and listening skills as well depending on the communication method. The Norwegian Media Authority found that among the 2,682 respondents in their study, 70% agreed that gaming makes them better at English, which previous research confirms (Medietilsynet, 2020, p. 7). Research shows that Extramural English activities (EE) can be an effective tool for language learning, including oral proficiency and vocabulary acquisition (Sundqvist, 2011). Research has also discovered a positive relationship between EE and students' grades (Sundqvist, 2011; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sundqvist & Sylén, 2016). Indeed, research (Brevik, 2016; Brevik & Garvoll, 2019; Sletten et al., 2015; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015) also shows that students who play video games also generally do well in English in school because they often read and produce a lot of L2 when playing video games. This means that spending time on EE activities can increase students' chances to achieve academic success. Sundqvist (2011) also states that high-achieving students often engage in more EE; thus, their grades are higher, which is arguably a mutually reinforcing situation (p. 114).

There has also been found a positive correlation between playing video games and lower anxiety levels for L2 production. Sundqvist (2011) found that boys who played video games had lower levels of anxiety about using the language, which could in turn have affected their sense of self-efficacy (p. 117). Knowing that students today spend a lot of time playing video games outside of school (as an EE activity), it would be valuable to conduct further research to explore 1) if this also affects their self-efficacy belief in different settings, and 2) how their self-efficacy belief is similar or different when playing video games or participating in the classroom, a second arena where they use their L2.

Video games

One of the categories that has been involved throughout the studies of EE is video games. Most research done on video games is concerned with what aspects of L2 acquisition it affects and increases. The research often seems to be in favor of the potential benefits of L2 acquisition through video games. However, according to Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012, p. 308), despite the existence of research pointing towards the potential of L2 learning in video games, the empirical studies are scarce.

Research has found that video games as an EE activity have both a positive and negative impact on students' grades and academic achievements. In Norway, Brevik (2016) found that out-of-school gaming improved boys' reading skills in their L2 but not in their L1. Sundqvist and Sylvén (2012) also found that there was a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and time spent on digital games in Sweden. Frequent gamers, who played more than 5 hours a week, scored the highest on the vocabulary test and on the national reading and listening comprehension tests (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012, pp. 313–14).

On the other hand, Weis and Cerankosky (2010) found that boys between the ages of 6 – 9 who had access to a video game console had lower reading and writing scores than those without one (p. 467). They also found that the boys who had access to video games spent less time participating in after-school activities (Weis & Cerankosky, 2010, p. 467). In Norway, we have seen similar results as well. Sletten et al. (2015) examined the difference in grades between gamers and those participating in a sport as an extracurricular activity after school. They found that students who play a lot of video games achieve lower grades in mathematics and Norwegian compared to those who participate in sports. Students who participate in out-of-school activities have also shown higher grade averages and overall academic engagement, according to Knifsend and Graham (2012). However, they achieve similar grades in English (L2). Among the gamers there is little difference in grades (Sletten, et al., 2015, p. 346). Arguably, there are more factors that affect students' grades than just gaming; however, gaming can affect their reading skills in a positive way. It seems spending time on other after-school activities is also relevant for higher academic achievement.

At the same time, research also shows that there is no statistical difference between gamers and non-gamers when it comes to grades, but that the gamers showed an increased use of the L2. Zheng et al. (2009) found that students who played the game *Quest Atlantis* (QA), a game designed for children and students ages 9–13 with an educational backdrop and quests, expressed a high level of confidence in their daily and advanced use of English (p. 218). However, the statistical results of the essay test were in favor of the group which did not play, and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test yielded no difference between the groups (Zheng et al., 2009, p. 218). These results can be seen as positive, Zheng et al. argues, because the QA group “expressed high confidence in advanced and daily use of English” which made them “use language creatively and freely” (Zheng et al., 2009, p. 218). Soyooof (2018) found that students perceived video games as enhancing their L2 confidence because the games were intrinsically motivating and allowed them to be creative and autonomous in their learning process. While playing video games may also foster sociolinguistic competence, which is important for everyday life and communication (Peterson, 2012), it may also minimize students’ learning efforts with respect to the target language and maximize the English learning rate (Alhaq et al., 2020). The increased use of L2, reduction in speaking anxiety, and increased motivation to use it in different ways could therefore potentially lead to higher academic achievement in the long run due to the amount of output.

Material and methods

When the term *gamer* is used in capitalized form (Gamer), I am referring to the classification in this paper, and when the term is used with lower-case letters, I am referring to gamers as a group of people who play video games in general (that would encompass Casual gamers, Gamers, and Frequent gamers). The two settings discussed in the analysis will be 1) the setting of using English when playing video games at home, and 2) the setting of using English in the classroom.

Participants

The study used a sample of first-year students attending upper secondary school in Norway (ages 15–18; $n = 79$; 30 boys, 49 girls) and taking vocational and general courses. The participants were grouped according to their self-reported amount of time spent on playing games per day. The groups and gender distribution can be seen in Table 1. Initially, although the study asked for students at all levels of upper secondary to participate, only some first-year teachers and their students agreed to do so. The participants and their schools were chosen through purposeful sampling, the requirements being: 1) that they were upper secondary students in Norway, and 2) all had to have English as either an elective or mandatory course. The schools were chosen based on my knowledge of schools in different areas in Norway, including Vestfold, Vestlandet, and Northern Norway. Each school's English department head was contacted via e-mail to distribute the questionnaire to their English teachers. The response rate was low; 22 schools were contacted, but only a few schools in the southern parts of Norway (Vestfold and Vestlandet) agreed to participate. Consent was requested in the questionnaire, which was anonymous.

Table 1. Gender and Gamer Type Distribution

Gamer classification	Female n	Male n	Total n
Frequent gamer (>3h)	5	5	10
Gamer (2-3h)	2	9	11
Casual gamer (0-2h)	12	15	27
Non-gamer	30	1	31
Total	49	30	79

Material

The empirical data included a questionnaire written in English, except for the question about consent, which was written in Norwegian to avoid any misunderstandings. It was distributed from early September until early November through *Nettskjema* (UiO). The teachers were free to administer it during class or give students the option to fill it out at home. The questionnaire consisted of 44 questions that asked about categorization

(games played, gamer classification, etc.), self-efficacy measured with a 6-point Likert scale (23 questions), and extramural English activities. It contained questions about gaming and in-class participation and use of English in both settings as well.

The questions were mainly written by me according to Bandura's (2006) guide on how to construct self-efficacy scales; several were phrased in terms of "can do" since *can* denotes capability (Bandura, 2006, p. 308). Some questions were also either adapted or used as they appeared in other original research, Zheng et al. (2009), Allan (2006), Sundqvist (2009), and Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1993). The reason for basing some questions on earlier research was not only to gain inspiration on how self-efficacy had been measured but also to include questions that had a high level of reliability. In accordance with Bandura's suggestions (2006, p. 313), I included four test questions about the participants' belief in whether they could lift certain objects as a practice scale to help participants become familiar and clear up misunderstandings they may have had.

The questionnaire was given as a pilot test to two students in the same age group (15–18). They asked to have the scale extended from 4 options to 6 options because they felt some elements required a lower or higher value. This was done before the distribution to avoid a ceiling effect where the items might have been too easy or too difficult for the participants (Ary et. al., 2014).

Analytical procedures

The reliability score for all questions combined (23) scored a high reliability of $\alpha = .903$, which is positive; however, the questions related to the use of video games (GQ1–4) and participation in the classroom (CQ1–6) did not directly ask students about their sense of self-efficacy in relation to English but rather about their sense of general self-efficacy in the two settings. In order to make sure that self-efficacy measured the use of English, these were removed from the making of the index, see Table 2. The classroom questions also included two questions (CQ 3 and 4) that were not asked for the gaming setting with regard to their willingness to participate in classroom activities. These questions were not asked in the

gaming setting since the chances of gamers finishing or playing a game they do not like is less likely, particularly since they play the video games in their free time.

The questions regarding the use of English when playing video games (GQ5–11) and participating in English class (CQ7–13) were used to create a self-efficacy index, see Table 3. These items had no questions that needed to be reverse scored. The reliability score measured using Cronbach's alpha for the main questions regarding self-efficacy when using English were as follows: gaming and self-efficacy ($\alpha = .87$), self-efficacy in the English classroom ($\alpha = .91$), and all questions regarding self-efficacy combined ($\alpha = .93$). These questions were chosen because they focus on students' written and oral communication abilities rather than on their motivation. While these questions are similar in nature, their difference lies in the setting. A Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the self-efficacy items. There was a positive linear correlation between the two variables ($r = .763, p < .001$), meaning that they tend to increase and decrease together.

All the data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 28. I kept the convention of regarding $p < .05$ as significant. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. As regarded ANOVA, the post-hoc test used was Tukey's HSD when the group variances were seen as equal. Partial eta squared (η^2) was used to measure effect size in ANOVA. Cohen's conventions were used to determine effect size for eta squared, .01 being small, .06 being medium, and .14 being large (Pallant, 2013; Schäfer & Schwarz, 2019). In cases where homogeneity of variances was violated, two different tests were used, the Welch and Brown-Forsythe (Pallant, 2013). The Games-Howell test was used instead of Tukey HSD in these cases.

Table 2. Questions Removed from Self-Efficacy Index

English when gaming questions (GQ)
1. If I have to play a video game I have never played before, I already know I am going to lose.
2. I always try my best when I play video games.
3. If I try hard enough, I can complete the video game I want.
4. If I make a mistake in a video game, I can try again and learn from my mistakes.

English in the classroom (CQ).

1. If I have to do something new in English class that I have never done before, I already know I am going to fail.
2. I always try my best in English class.
3. I can partake in or complete most tasks in English class if I try.
4. I work hard to do well in English even when I don't like the class.
5. If I try hard enough, I can get the grade I want in English.
6. If I make a mistake in class or an assignment, I can try again and learn from my mistakes.

Table 3. Self-efficacy Index**Gaming questions (GQ) used for self-efficacy index.**

5. If I have to write something in English when playing a video game, I can do it.
6. I can express myself in written English when I play video games.
7. I can write grammatically correct when chatting in English in a video game.
8. If I have to talk to someone in a video game, I can understand what they are saying in English.
9. If I have to speak English in a video game, I can do it.
10. If I have to talk to someone in a video game, I can express myself in English.
11. I can talk about topics related to video games without difficulty in English.

Classroom questions (CQ) used for self-efficacy index.

7. If we have to write about a new topic in English class, I feel I can do it.
8. I can express myself in written English in the classroom.
9. I can write grammatically correct in English class.
10. If I have to talk to someone in class, I can understand what they are saying in English in the classroom.
11. If I have to speak English in the classroom, I can do it.
12. If I have to talk to someone in the classroom, I can express myself in English.
13. I can talk about school related topics without difficulty in English.

Background variables controlled for

The research questions are concerned with the differences between gamers' and non-gamers' self-efficacy scores in the use of English in a school setting and when playing video games, but the collected data also enabled examination of other variables. The variables controlled for in this study are different gamer types, other EE activities, and grades. Other variables were types of games played, language used when playing, and more detailed gender differences, which should be examined in a different paper.

Results

Self-efficacy and gamer classifications

The ANOVA results concerning self-efficacy when using English while gaming showed a statistically significant difference between the mean score of Gamer and Casual gamer ($p = .007$, 95% C.I. = 1.3708, 11.4844) and Gamer and Non-gamer ($p = .018$, 95% C.I. = 0.7218, 10.6447). Statistically significant results mean that they are unlikely to occur by chance; in other words, they are likely due to a specific cause. The p -values show that the chances of the differences measured between the gaming classifications arising from chance is small since they are below .05. The effect size measures the magnitude of the results, or their practical significance, which is high ($\eta^2 = .166$), suggesting that gamer classifications explain 16.6% of the variation between students' self-efficacy while using English when gaming. This score complements the significance measured from the p -value. Gamers have the highest mean score for self-efficacy, an average of 39.9, while Casual gamers score 33.48, see Table 4. Similar results can be seen between Gamers and Non-gamers, where the Gamers score higher for self-efficacy than the Non-gamers who have a lower mean score. There is a possibility that Gamers have a greater feeling of self-efficacy due to their gaming habits since the results show the main differences between Gamers and the two other categories, Casual gamers and Non-gamers, who play less during a day.

The ANOVA revealed statistically significant results between the same groups as previously found in the classroom setting ($F(3, 75) = 3.063$, $p = .033$). The effect-size was considered medium ($\eta^2 = .109$), with 10.9% of the differences being explained by the different gamer classifications. Gamers had a much higher mean score of 39.45, and Casual gamers had the lowest score of 32.88 ($p = .026$, 95% C.I. = 0.5636, 12.5677). The difference between Gamer and Non-gamer was also significant, where Non-gamers have the second lowest mean score ($p = .039$, 95% C.I. = 0.2108, 11.9886). In both settings, Gamers score the highest of all groups, suggesting there is some attribute found in this group which could be part of their high self-efficacy score.

Regarding both settings, there was no statistical difference between Frequent gamers and Gamers ($p = .849$ while gaming; $p = .329$ in the

classroom), nor between Frequent gamers and Non-gamers ($p = .225$ while gaming; $p = .938$ in the classroom). What this indicates is that the difference in mean score could be random and not attributable to the amount of time spent on video games. However, it is worth noting that while Frequent gamers have a higher mean score of 38 in the gaming setting, they only score 34.7 in the classroom setting. This finding could suggest that their self-efficacy is indeed higher when playing video games but that they are not as confident in the classroom.

Table 4. Self-Efficacy ANOVA Descriptives

Dependent variable	Gamer classification (Total <i>n</i>)	Mean	SD
Self-efficacy in the gaming setting	Frequent gamer (10)	38	3,59
	Gamer (11)	39,9	3,2
	Casual gamer (27)	33,48	6
	Non-gamer (31)	34,22	5,8
	Total (79)	35,24	5,7
Self-efficacy in the classroom setting	Frequent gamer (10)	34,7	7,2
	Gamer (11)	39,45	3,2
	Casual gamer (27)	32,88	6,7
	Non-gamer (31)	33,35	6,5
	Total (79)	34,21	6,6

Note. The maximum score for each setting was 42. The Mean summarizes the responses and gives us the average answer for that group. The gaming setting relates to the use of English while playing video games at home through either oral or written communication. The classroom setting relates to the use of English inside the classroom; no specific activity was mentioned, and they did not play video games in class.

Table 5. Grade Distribution among Gamer Classifications

Gamer classification	Self-reported grades received					Total
	2	3	4	5	6	
Frequent gamer	0	1	2	4	3	10
Gamer	0	0	3	5	3	11
Casual gamer	2	2	9	11	3	27
Non-gamer	2	1	9	12	7	31
Total	4	4	23	32	16	79

There was no statistical significance between the gamer classifications and grades received ($p = .337$), see Table 5 for grade distribution. This

signifies that the grades they received are not connected to the groups they were placed in, meaning time spent on gaming is not statistically connected to grades. There was a small statistical significance between the gamer classifications and grades they believed they could get, i.e., a question about their ability to achieve a better grade ($p = .046$). The effect size for the latter ($\eta^2 = .101$) was considered medium. The difference was found between Gamers, who had believed they could get a higher grade, and Casual gamers, who did not believe this as strongly ($p = .040$, 95% C.I. = 0.0327, 1.9134).

Gamers and EE activities

To examine the correlation between the gamer classifications and their participation in extramural activities, a cross-tabulation was conducted, followed by an ANOVA. There was not a statistically significant difference in the other EE activities between any groups, meaning none of the groups spend more or less time than any other group on such activities. In addition, most participants reported spending time on other EE activities than playing video games. There was a close to significant result in the “talking online” category ($F(3, 75) = 2.518, p = .06$), and the groups that showed the largest difference were Gamers, who spent more time talking compared to Casual gamers ($p = .127$) and Non-gamers ($p = .244$).

Self-efficacy, gamers, and grades

The ANOVA examining the relationship between self-efficacy and grades violated homogeneity of variances for the classroom self-efficacy questions ($p = .018$) but not for the gaming questions ($p = .069$). Thus, the Welch and Brown-Forsythe robust tests of equality of means were conducted, and both tests reported a statistical significance (Classroom setting $p = <.001$; Gaming setting $p = .010$). In the gaming setting, the students who received grade 4 had lower self-efficacy belief than those who had received grade 5 ($p = .046$, 95% C.I. = $-6.9029, -.0400$) and 6 ($p = <.001$, 95% C.I. = $-9.1430, -1.8625$). In the classroom, the differences were significant between those who received grade 2 and grade 6 ($p = .037$,

95% C.I. = $-34.4190, -1.8310$). There was also a significant difference between those who received grade 4 and grade 5 ($p = .006$, 95% C.I. = $-8.9917, -1.1252$), and between grade 4 and grade 6 ($p = <.001$, 95% C.I. = $-12.1256, -4.4287$) and grade 5 and grade 6 ($p = .012$, 95% C.I. = $-5.9008, -.5367$). In both settings, those receiving the lower grade reported lower self-efficacy than their counterpart, meaning that grade 5 reported lower self-efficacy than grade 6.

Discussion

I would like to emphasize that the findings of this study should not be overgeneralized due to the sample size, which was comprised of only 11 Gamers, see Table 1. However, the collected data reveals a positive pattern between self-efficacy belief and playing video games, with a few limitations.

This research aims to explore whether there is a difference between gamers and non-gamers' self-efficacy when using English in written and oral form (1) when attending school and (2) when playing video games at home. The hypothesis mentioned earlier was that gamers would have a higher sense of self-efficacy when using English because they use it frequently, which can be confirmed by these results (Sundqvist, 2011; Zheng et al., 2009). Frequent gamers and Gamers do show higher self-efficacy than non-gamers in both situations, see Table 4 for mean differences. Frequent gamers, however, are not statistically different from the other groups, suggesting that this difference might be random. It is only Gamers' results that is statistically significant from Casual gamers and Non-gamers. This enforces Sundqvist's (2011) assumption that frequent gaming is not only highly likely to affect students' self-efficacy, since both Frequent gamers and Gamers score high, but it also marks a division between the gamer classifications and time spent on gaming. Gamers ($M = 39.45$, $SD = 3.29$) show a higher mean score compared to Frequent gamers (a difference of 1.9), and the deviation within the Gamer group is lower, meaning they are more consistent in their answers as a group (though only by 0.38). This creates a division between the Gamers and Frequent gamers, which could point towards there being activities or qualities about Gamers that

affect their self-efficacy which we do not see as statically significant in the other groups. Despite playing a little bit every day, Casual gamers, who play less than 2h a day, have the lowest mean score in both settings, suggesting that amount of time is not enough to increase self-efficacy compared to Gamers. There is something that separates Gamers from the other gamer classifications in terms of self-efficacy, which is not found in those who play little or not at all. This could suggest that there is a fine line between how much video games one should play to see a statistically relevant result in high self-efficacy and how much playing more (more than 2 hours a day) can increase self-efficacy.

In addition, there is a positive linear correlation within the self-efficacy questions themselves ($r = .763, p < .001$), meaning that these variables tend to increase together, i.e., greater self-efficacy related to L2 use when gaming is associated with greater self-efficacy in the classroom. Arguably, this could also mean that greater self-efficacy when using English in the classroom affects students' sense of self-efficacy when using English in different situations, such as when gaming. However, all groups show higher self-efficacy in the gaming category even though some of them report not playing games at all. None of the additional variables give any indication as to why this is the case. One possible argument could be that the environment, or setting, is seen as being different from the classroom. Failure in a video game can be seen as positive because it allows you to try again. These failures, according to Gee, can allow players to take risks that they would not normally take in environments where failure has a higher cost – for example related to grades in school (Gee, 2006). On the other hand, Gamers report the highest and most consistent self-efficacy scores in both settings. This could suggest there is something that affects Gamers' self-efficacy that the other groups do not have, which gives them a high feeling of self-efficacy in both situations. It is worth pointing out that Frequent gamers report high scores of self-efficacy in the gaming setting ($M = 38$) but much lower in the classroom setting ($M = 34.7$). This could suggest that they are not able to transfer their self-efficacy from one setting to another, or that their personal efficacy does not affect their self-efficacy in the classroom, unlike their fellow gamers in the Gamer group.

One reason for the difference between Gamers and Frequent gamers could be the amount of time they spend on other out-of-school activities in combination with playing video games. It could be that partaking in other activities might affect one's personal self-efficacy, which might in turn be transferrable to other domains. According to Bandura (2006), having a high sense of personal efficacy, the multidomain measurement of self-efficacy, might make it easier to acquire high self-efficacy in other areas. Thus, if participating in out-of-school activities influences grades in other courses than English, as noted by Sletten et al., (2015), it is possible that it could also influence a student's multidomain self-efficacy. Participating in other activities might lead students to feel a sense of mastery in those areas, for example being good at playing football, which in turn can affect their overall self-efficacy. Sletten et al. (2015) and Weis and Cerankosky (2010) note that those who play video games tend not to participate in other out-of-school activities. However, since Gamers only spend 2–3 hours a day on video games, they have time for other activities. Frequent gamers, on the other hand, might spend more time playing video games, leaving them with high self-efficacy in that area but with no other out-of-school activities to participate in. This could provide the Gamers with higher self-efficacy in many areas, increasing their overall personal efficacy.

One might also argue that the domain being examined is the use of English (written and oral), and that the settings of gaming and being in class are secondary. Thus, a combination of high-grades (Gamers had an average grade of 5), participation in EE-activities other than gaming (they talked slightly more than Casual gamers as an EE activity), and playing video games (2–3 h/day) have left the Gamers with a high sense of personal self-efficacy, which makes it transferrable between different situations as long as the domain is the same (in this case the use of English). However, it seems to be important to include video games as a factor since other EE activities had no significant impact on self-efficacy scores.

Based on the data from this research, it is not participation in other EE activities that marks this difference between non-gamers and gamers. There were no significant findings between the groups, and all groups report participating in EE activities. However, it is worth noting that

most of the groups had a relatively high mean for self-efficacy since the maximum mean could be 42, and all group means are above 32 (Table 4). Their participation in other EE activities could be part of the answer as to why their mean scores are as high as they are; it could also provide part of the answer as to why they have lower self-efficacy than the gamers. They use their English quite often, but perhaps not as often as the Gamers ($M = 39.9$) and Frequent gamers ($M = 38$), thus resulting in lower self-efficacy than those groups. Indeed, despite it not being a statistically significant finding, Gamers also talked more online than Casual gamers and Non-gamers, presenting another difference between the groups. These results could imply that while students who participate in EE activities have high self-efficacy, playing video games might increase self-efficacy more than other EE activities. This reinforces Sundqvist's (2011) assumption that boys who play video games likely have a higher feeling of self-efficacy; it also confirms the results found by Zheng et al. (2009) where students expressed a high level of confidence in using English after playing video games in this study due to high levels of self-efficacy seen in Gamers and Frequent gamers.

There was also a positive correlation in both situations regarding self-efficacy's connection to students' grades; while in the classroom ($p = <.001$) and while gaming ($p = <.010$). Earlier research (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Sundqvist, 2011; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015) suggests that higher grades correlate with higher self-efficacy, and the current data confirm this suggestion. However, the differences that are statistically significant are not only between the lowest and highest grades. The largest grade gap is found in the classroom setting between grade 2 and 6, but most of the statistical differences are found between those who receive grade 4 and those receiving grades 5 and 6, despite grade 4 showing a "high degree of competence in the subject", according to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016). To clarify, 78% ($n = 18$) of those receiving grade 4 are Casual gamers or Non-gamers, which could be part of why they report lower self-efficacy in both settings. This does not mean their grade is dependent on playing video games; rather, it could offer some insight into why their self-efficacy is lower. The same could be argued for those receiving grade 2, since they

also fall into the same categories. However, none of the variables examined in this paper could account for the self-efficacy differences between grades 5 and 6 in the classroom.

Despite there being a connection between grades and self-efficacy, there was no connection between the gamer classifications and grades received ($p = .337$). Although earlier research has seen a connection between the two, those studies look at specific test results, including reading skills (Brevik, 2016; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012) and vocabulary levels (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Similar results to the ones from this study have been seen earlier (Sletten, et al., 2015; Zheng et al., 2009). Arguably, being a gamer does not affect your grade positively or negatively in a statistically significant way when we only look at grades received in English (and not specific learning goals or test results). It should be noted that none of the Gamers reported receiving grades 2 or 3, meaning they perform at an average and above average level in English. However, since there was no statistical significance between gamer classifications and grades received ($p = .337$), their grades are not necessarily only a result of their gaming but other factors as well, which could be linked to time spent on other out-of-school activities, or EE activities, which all participants reported partaking in. There was, however, a small statistical significance between Gamers and Casual gamers when it came to the grades they believed they *could* get ($p = .046$), possibly showing some evidence that gaming can increase students' belief in their own self-efficacy. In this case, it is their belief that they can achieve a better grade if they want to or try hard enough which could be useful in the future for their motivation to achieve and work hard for a higher grade.

Another interesting finding is the gender distribution among gamers. There is only 1 male who categorizes himself as a non-gamer compared to 30 females. This means that only 38% of the girls play video games, while 96% of the boys do. The amount of gamer girls in this research is lower than the average for students aged 15–16 in Norway. According to the Norwegian Media Authority, 97% of boys within that age range play video games, but only 62% girls do (Medietilsynet, 2020, p. 5). There are studies that suggest there are language learning contexts where females might feel more motivated than boys, and vice versa (Onwuegbuzie et al.,

2000). Gaming has commonly been seen as a male-dominated area, which could provide male gamers a higher level of motivation when practicing skills in its context, such as language development, while gaming. This could affect their self-efficacy in this situation because they are already motivated, which could account for the Frequent gamers' high self-efficacy score in the gaming setting but the lower one in the classroom setting. However, 54% of the boys are in the Casual gamers category, which shows lower self-efficacy. This could be connected to the discussion concerning gender differences in school, where boys tend to score lower than girls overall (Statistics Norway, 2021), a situation which might affect their self-efficacy. The results show a gender difference in gametime, but future research will need to be conducted in this area.

Concluding remarks

The motivation for this study was to examine the differences between gamers and non-gamers' self-efficacy in relation to using English in the classroom and while gaming at home. The data shows some evidence that Gamers ($n = 11$) who play between 2–3 hours per day report a statistically higher self-efficacy score than both those who play more and those who play less. This could imply that there is a limit to how much you can play in order to feel a sense of mastery of the language, i.e., higher self-efficacy. For example, unlike Frequent gamers, who also score high in self-efficacy while gaming, Gamers seem able to transfer their self-efficacy between the two settings. It is plausible that these Gamers also spend time on other out-of-school activities, or homework, which could be affecting their personal efficacy and which could make it easier for them to transfer domain specific self-efficacy. There was no statistical evidence that being a gamer affects your overall grades; however, Gamers did believe they could achieve higher grades than the other groups, suggesting their self-efficacy is high and that they believe that if they work hard enough, they can get better grades.

Using English while playing video games and using English in the classroom require similar types of skills, including oral and written production of L2 English. Frequent gamers, however, do not seem to be able

to transfer their self-efficacy between different settings, even though what is being used requires the same ability (their use of English). This could be relevant for teachers to be aware of. Research has shown that high self-efficacy may lead to academic success. Consequently, it might be useful to take advantage of Frequent gamers' high sense of self-efficacy while using English in the gaming setting to further develop their self-efficacy in the classroom. Further research is needed on how to approach this suggestion. It would also be interesting to study what other types of games the different gamer categories and genders play. The surprising results of the higher mean score in the gaming setting for all groups is also worthy of further research. Examining the differences in self-efficacy and grades between genders in the current dataset would also be relevant due to the high gender differences.

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Professional Textbooks in English Didactics: Authors' Perspectives

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Abstract: This chapter is based on interviews with fifteen authors whose professional textbooks in English didactics are currently on the reading lists for the five-year teacher education programme in Norway called the *lektor* programme. The chapter starts by defining the genre of the professional textbook, and reviewing relevant research and terminology, before describing the digital interview and transcription processes. Of the many topics raised in the interviews, the following are highlighted in this chapter: the ways in which authors select their writing and publishing partners; how they address their intended reader; how they relate to perceived conventions about what sort of texts belong in a professional textbook; the reasons why student teachers need textbooks; and the varying emphasis placed on different kinds of knowledge: research, theory, repertoire and contextualisation in relation to the current school curriculum. The chapter ends with a summary of the authors' predictions for the genre, and a discussion of the role that the national accreditation system, CRISTIN, should, but does not yet, play in ensuring the vitality and quality of textbooks in both English didactics and other professions.

Introduction

This chapter reports on a study of textbooks in teacher education. More specifically, it investigates authors' perspectives on professional textbooks in English didactics. The empirical data comprises interviews with fifteen authors, who were chosen because their books were on reading lists in

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English didactics modules in Norway for the academic year 2021–22. Our interest in this topic arose partly in response to the recent flurry of textbooks in English didactics, written and published for teacher education in Norway. The range of such textbooks from which teacher educators can now choose has led to international textbooks in English didactics all but disappearing from reading lists in Norway, where previously they had featured prominently (Caspersen et al., 2017; Moi et al., 2014).

Despite the current dominance of textbooks written for the Norwegian context, there is a striking neglect of textbooks of any sort in policy documents in Norway. For example, a recent White Paper, though it states unequivocally that there is too little research in and about teacher education (Meld. St. 4. (2018–2019), p. 67), makes no mention of books, let alone textbooks. Nor does the 2021 report of the executive agency of the Ministry of Education and Research – Diku – make any reference to books of any kind. By contrast, there are 129 occurrences of word combinations using “digital”, a quantification of the complete lack of policy, reference or statistics on syllabus literature and, indeed, other types of dissemination (see also Vestbø, 2020). In the most recent report from Diku, we see the same tendency: two pages are dedicated to the digitalisation of higher education, while syllabus literature and dissemination are not mentioned at all (Tungesvik, 2021).

The absence of textbooks in official policy documents is not new. Writing in 1993, Johnsen saw this omission as explaining why there was so little research on textbooks: as an object of study they had “not yet been sanctioned” (p. 22). More recently, research in the field of English for academic purposes has tended to focus on more prestigious research genres at the expense of instructional genres (Bondi, 2016). Digital education media receive far more attention in research and policy than do textbooks, and here publishers in the private sector are a key stakeholder. The development of digital educational media in recent years has led to the sale of paper-based and digital learning resources being of about equal worth in 2020 (Gilje, 2021). Today, the future of printed textbooks in schools is uncertain, and there is widespread concern that funding for new educational media may mean that the purchase of textbooks will lose out to one-on-one tablets and software licences (Kvinge, 2021).

Against this backdrop of neglect and the increasing focus on digital educational media, we set out to find out more about today's professional textbooks in English didactics for teacher education. We coined the term *professional textbook* to identify textbooks written for professionally-oriented modules in English teaching and learning, distinguishing this genre from textbooks written primarily for disciplinary modules, on topics such as English literature or English language. We sought out the experiences and perspectives of textbook authors, all of whom are employed in teacher education, or have been until recently, so that in addition to being authors, they are experienced teacher educators. This gives them a broad basis from which to discuss professional textbooks in English didactics. The overarching research question is:

What characterises the writing of professional textbooks in English didactics?

More specifically we ask:

What sort of decisions do authors make in shaping their professional textbook?

What do authors perceive as the need for professional textbooks in English didactics?

What importance do authors accord to different types of professional knowledge in their textbooks?

Although this chapter focuses on professional textbooks in English didactics, it offers perspectives that are relevant to teacher education in other subjects. One such perspective is the perceived value and financing of textbook writing. While we were initially wary of addressing this issue, the topic was repeatedly raised by our interviewees. We have therefore chosen to conclude this chapter with a reflection on the position of professional textbooks in CRISTIN, the current accreditation system for scholarly and scientific production and dissemination in Norway.

The genre of the professional textbook in English didactics

A commonly used term in the Scandinavian discourse about textbooks is *læremidler*, where *lære* denotes both teaching and learning. *Læremidler*

is variously translated into English as “educational media”, “teaching resources”, “teaching aids” and “learning resources”. The extensive theoretical literature associated with *læremidler* offers several useful distinctions. Didactic *læremidler* are those designed for teaching (Hansen, 2006), and it is in this category that we find textbooks. A further distinction can be made between didactic *læremidler* and “second order texts” (Selander, 2013). These latter can be used in an educational setting, though they are not designed for this purpose. Literary works are an obvious example in the context of teacher education.

Læremidler is not the only central Scandinavian term that does not match up readily with an English equivalent. “Textbook” can be translated by two terms that the Norwegian Publisher’s Association distinguishes between, namely *lærebok* and *fagbok*. In their yearly statistics over book sales, the Norwegian Publisher’s Association describes the *lærebok* as intended for use in tertiary education, whereas the *fagbok* is also intended for a professional market (Den Norske Forleggerforening, 2020, p. 19). The distinction between these is, arguably, as much an issue of academic status and financial incentives as of content (Nylenna, 2017). For example, a *lærebok* allows the publisher to apply for state funding, provided the book serves a segment of Norwegian tertiary education that might not otherwise have access to relevant literature adapted for the Norwegian context (Diku, 2021). To achieve this funding, the book must be on the reading list at an institute of higher education. A *fagbok* does not qualify for this type of funding, but can be given accreditation in the Current Research Information System in Norway (CRISTIN). Such accreditation is important for the authors’ careers and universities’ funding (Nylenna, 2017).

The term *textbook*, then, refers to a flora of text types (Johnsen et al., 1997, p. 31), and defining the term necessarily imposes various degrees of restriction (Johnsen, 1993, p. 24). What all textbooks do have in common, whether designed for primary, secondary or tertiary education, is that they are part of an asymmetrical form of communication where the author knows and writes for those who know less (Selander & Skjelbred, 2004). So do what are sometimes termed “academic books”, but these fall outside our definition of professional textbooks, since, though “as

difficult to define as the academic disciplines themselves”, academic books are typically a long-form publication that conveys the result of in-depth research carried out over a period of years and which makes an original contribution to a field of study (Deegan, 2017). Academic books seldom need to be positioned in relation to policy documents or curricula. School textbooks, by contrast, must fulfil politically set agendas, as these find expression in policy documents and curricula (Skrunes, 2010, p. 62). Professional textbooks position themselves more freely between the two: they do not need to focus on the curriculum, although, as we shall see, some authors choose to do so. Furthermore, textbook authors must select, simplify and adapt (Askeland et al., 2017) to a far greater extent than must authors of academic books. This is also the case at tertiary level, where students, not least student teachers, have very diverse disciplinary knowledge and school experience.

All textbooks can be described in terms of their content, their purpose and their audience (Hyland, 1999), and the primary audience for a professional textbook of English didactics is student teachers, as well as in-service teachers interested in continued professional development. Professional textbooks present the knowledge and values that a student must master in order to successfully practise that profession. Hyland (1999) describes textbooks for undergraduates as “one of the primary means by which the concepts and analytical methods of a discipline are acquired”, as well as conveying “the norms, values and ideological assumptions of a particular academic culture” (p. 3). In teacher education they are therefore texts that “suggest and legitimise content, rules, norms, ideals, and discourses related to teaching” (de Cássia Fernandes Hegeto, 2021, p. 195).

We understand professional textbooks to have four main components related to the teaching and learning of English. They typically include *theory* related to English as a second or foreign language; *contextualisation* in relation to the national curriculum, learner diversity and other educational issues; and *repertoire*, by which term we refer to learning and assessment activities that teachers can use in the classroom. Finally, textbooks include *research* that sheds light on these three components.

Approaches to the study of textbooks

One of the most influential textbook researchers in Norway, Egil B. Johnsen (1993), once asked why the study of textbooks had never been established as a separate college or university discipline (p. 21). He offered as a partial explanation an observation by Hacker (1980), that research tends to focus on what is new and to steer clear of what is perceived to be on its way out. We will consider the demise or survival of textbooks towards the end of this chapter. But since Johnsen bemoaned the status of textbook research in 1993, the field has benefited from a period of intense activity at the Norwegian National Centre for Teaching Aids (1993–2000), including the work of Staffan Selander and Dagrun Skjelbred, amongst others. In more recent years research has tended to focus on digital educational media, with almost no interest in the ways that textbooks and digital learning resources are used in combination (Gilje, 2017).

Textbook theory and research have been heavily oriented towards primary and secondary school (Knudsen et al., 2011), and tertiary-level textbooks are a marginalised field of study (de Cássia Fernandes Hegeto, 2021, p. 195). Yet one can explore the relevance of studies of primary and secondary school textbooks for the professional textbooks in our study. For example, as just mentioned, school textbooks are usually written to meet the requirements of a particular curriculum (Tønnesen, 2013, p. 149), and so we can ask professional textbook authors to what extent they too write to accommodate the most recent school curriculum. Similarly, Selander (2013) defines an educational text as one that is “produced for a particular institutionalised use, an educational system with its own space, time and social organisation” (p. 31, our translation), and so we can ask in what ways the authors in the present study intend their books for particular institutionalised uses. A final example is the claim that “textbooks have the distinct advantage of having a relatively homogenous institutionalised function across diverse social, political and cultural spaces and time” (Christophe et al., 2018, p. 415). We asked authors to speculate on the institutionalised functions that professional textbooks may be called on to fulfil in 20 years’ time. Will these, as Christophe et al. claim, be much the same as today?

Despite these points of contact with existing textbook research, we, like Askerøi and Høie (1999) in their study of textbooks for vocational subjects, have had to draw on studies with limited application to our own. To illustrate this challenge, we may consider Gilje's categorisation of the four main areas of textbook research (2017). These are 1) the representation of ideology and history; 2) the analysis of multimodal texts; 3) investigations by educational stakeholders into the extent and use of learning resources and ICT in the classroom; and 4) observational studies of learning resources and social interaction in the classroom. Our study is not easily accommodated within this classification. It is better accommodated in an earlier categorisation on which Gilje drew. Johnsen (1993) distinguished between 1) historical investigations; 2) ideological research, a form of content analysis typically concerned with discrimination, ideology and democracy; 3) the use of textbooks in terms of accessibility, effectiveness and classroom practices; and 4) what Johnsen (1993) described as a less researched field: the study of authors, publishers, approval mechanisms, curricula, political approaches and user approaches (p. 311). It is in this last category that the present study belongs. It furthermore contributes to a current trend in textbook research that Fuchs and Bock (2018) describe as "a coming of age" in textbook research (p. 7). This trend is marked by the diversification from content analysis to the study of contexts and practices, which in our case entails the study of authors' perceptions of the multiple contexts of textbook production and use.

Methods

The authors who participated in this study were identified from the reading lists for the academic year 2021–2022 in English didactics modules at the seven universities in Norway that offered the *lektor* programme in English. This five-year teacher education programme was chosen because didactics is taught in separate modules, unlike programmes of initial teacher education in years 1–7 and 5–10, where didactics is integrated into the subjects (Nasjonalt råd for lærerutdanning, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). With the exception of one university, students in this education programme are required to take more than one didactics module, and reading lists

from all the didactics modules were therefore collected. We identified ten professional textbooks within English didactics that featured either in part or in whole on those reading lists, and whose authors were asked to participate in this study.

An interview guide was piloted with the two authors of a professional textbook in Norwegian didactics, and slightly re-written as a result. The guide included questions relating to

- their academic background and professional experience
- their motivation for writing the professional textbook/s
- the choice of co-author and publisher
- the editorial and publishing process and the book's reception
- the book's intended user and the inscription of this user in the text
- the role of different text types, such as case studies, questions and tasks

More generally, interviewees were asked to reflect on

- the balance between a “ready digested” professional textbook and the focus in teacher education on source criticism
- the status and challenges of writing professional textbooks in an academic institution
- the future of professional textbooks in English didactics

Interviewees were also invited to comment on any other aspects of textbook writing that they wished to address.

The interview guide served as a set of prompts in a conversation that was sometimes quite strongly interviewee-led, placing the interviews on a continuum between semi-structured and unstructured (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 511). Authors of the same textbook were interviewed together: seven interviews with a total of fifteen authors. Some authors had collaborated on more than one book. Each interview lasted about an hour and was carried out and recorded in Zoom, with both researchers present. The video and sound files were stored in the data collection tool Nettskjema. They were transcribed by the researchers using the Microsoft Word online transcription tool.

As there were always at least four people present, the interviews were not only data collection events, but also social occasions. This was in part because the first author of this chapter had met many of the authors in other professional contexts, but also because several of the authors, after having worked intensely together while writing their textbooks, had not met up for some time.

The transcription process followed the reflective practice advocated by Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005), where transcription decisions are based on the purpose the interviews are to serve. In the present case the purpose was to gather information about the interviewees' perspectives. The transcription was therefore somewhat denaturalised, removing most hesitations, false starts and encouragements, and nearly all stammering. We have, moreover, standardised the grammar in direct quotations. What remained were those features of oral speech that we deemed to contribute to the informational or attitudinal content of the interviews.

The guidelines on informed consent, privacy and data storage from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data were followed throughout, and the authors' permission to use their full names was sought both before and after the interviews, and addressed at the start of each interview. This means that the respondents were prepared to be quoted by name, a premise that may well have affected their responses. We have since decided against naming the authors, because some of them reported being disconcerted when they saw in writing the hesitations and disfluencies of their oral communication. Another argument for anonymising the material is that our discussion of the academic accreditation system CRISTIN addresses themes raised by the authors, including guidelines for publication points, that could have an impact on their future publications.

While each textbook was formed by the authors' attitudes, values and understanding of English didactics, they also seemed to represent a "collective awareness, an understanding that is valid for the society and the time of which the author is a part" (Johnsen et al., 1997, p. 34, our translation). We came to see the seven interviews as a set, a shared conversation. They generated a wide-ranging and rich data, with the concomitant challenge of thematic analysis across 120 pages of dense transcription. It

is a challenge that the representation of a qualitative study must balance a holistic interpretation of the interviews with the fragmentation that necessarily results from categorisation (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 524). After each interview we identified possible themes and patterns of response. We discussed the interviews more systematically once they were all completed. Throughout the writing process we reviewed our perception of the interrelationship of the various themes and how different ways of organising the findings could throw light on our research questions. We have chosen to present our findings under three headings: Shaping a professional textbook; Why students need professional textbooks; and The relative importance accorded to research, theory and repertoire.

Findings

Shaping a professional textbook

In this section we consider how author partnerships were initiated and how the quality of professional textbooks was addressed. We also report on the authors' intended audience, the types of text they thought it appropriate to include, and whether or not they contextualised their textbook in relation to the current school curriculum.

When asked how author partnerships were initiated, interviewees reported that it was often one person who had an idea for a professional textbook who then invited another person to participate. Several authors said that their idea would not have become a book were it not for their writing partner. The choice of whom to collaborate with was usually based on existing or previous professional relationships. One author, for example, said that they knew “that we can work well together, that it's a productive partnership”. Other factors that influenced the choice of co-author included shared professional interests or a shared place of employment. Another partnership experienced that the publisher already had a book in mind, so that “they asked us more to do than we asked them to be allowed to do this”. In the case of edited books, interviewees explained that they went in search of contributors with an expertise that they themselves lacked. There was also one example of the publisher initiating the textbook and writing partnership:

It was the editor who reached out to me and asked if I would be interested [...] and then I think that you [...] also came over, joined us and this is when she suggested [...] as the third author, so that's – she basically hooked us up.

Some author partnerships reported that the choice of publisher was straightforward since they already had a well-established relationship with a publishing house with which they had previously collaborated. Some even referred to their confidence in a particular editor at that publishing house. Others, however, experienced a more challenging process in finding a suitable publisher. One author partnership recalled that before the publication of the first edition of their book, they had had to argue for the need for textbooks in English didactics written for the Norwegian context. They recalled some colleagues being sceptical of their ambition to compete with international publications, remembering an attitude of “why are you writing this book, because there are so many books on English teaching methodology. Not written in Norway, but written for the world market, so you know, who do you think you are, really?” They were also met with resistance from the publisher they approached, who initially believed that there wasn't a market for this type of book. More recently, a few authors described as drawn-out or problematic the process of finding a publisher who was committed to meeting their aspirations, or who shared their understanding of the amount of work involved in creating a revised edition.

Authors typically reported that although they were themselves entrusted with the main responsibility for ensuring the quality of their text, the publisher was in most cases involved in recruiting an external reader before the book went to print. Whether the external reader was designated “peer reviewer” or “consultant” seemed to depend on the conceptualisation of the book rather than the rigour of the review process itself. While authors generally expressed satisfaction with this situation, several authors pointed out that co-authorship in itself provides an ongoing process of revision and peer review.

Turning now to the authors' intended audience, we found them to be in agreement that their books were written to cater for a diverse group that includes both initial teacher education and in-service teachers. Since *lektor* courses qualify students to teach in secondary school, some of the

textbooks focused on secondary school only, whilst others also saw primary school student teachers as their intended audience. Some authors also discussed whether targeting a broad readership was a possible weakness of their textbooks. Firstly, as one author explained, there is little indication that most in-service teachers read research. And secondly, several authors made the point that students who train to become teachers have many different knowledge bases and textual experiences, which means that it is challenging to write textbooks that both include everyone and captivate a diverse group of readers. It was our observation that authors from the same institution tended to have a shared understanding of their students' abilities, and that this may have influenced their understanding of their intended audience. Some spoke of their students being "at a very high level", while others were concerned to cater to the needs of their "C-students".

When it came to what types of text it is appropriate to include in a professional textbook, opinions differed as to how the genre should be understood. This was significant, since the categorisation of the textbook itself was in part determined by the types of texts the authors included. One author, for example, distinguished their textbook from what they called "plain textbooks", a genre which they characterised by its inclusion of text types such as tasks and questions. Another negotiated the same issue by saying that their textbook was "not a textbook as such, but *fagbok* [...]. So it's important to use those words if you have peer reviewed, done those things". Several authors expressed a dislike of conventions that in their perception unreasonably restricted what they could include in their professional textbook, although for pragmatic reasons they abided by these conventions. For example, in one case both authors were very much in favour of "reflection questions and tasks and what have you", but knew from experience that these text types would trigger a fight for publication points "and the quarrelling and the arguments and all the emails". Other authors, however, not only expressed dissatisfaction with the expectation that they should not include certain text types, but successfully flouted these expectations by deliberately including reflection questions and making sure that they otherwise documented that they had fulfilled the requirements of a *fagbok*. They

described the convention that tasks be excluded from textbooks at tertiary level as “strange” and out of line with comparable international research-oriented publications.

For some authors it was important that their textbook was conceived or revised in order to respond to new topics and priorities in the national school curriculum of 2020. For one author partnership “a close and consistent engagement with the curriculum” was central to the second edition of their book. For others it was not, because, as they explained, a book tailored to the current curriculum would soon become outdated. They did not wish to be forced to rewrite their books with every new curriculum revision. One author partnership explained that they saw the purpose of their book as equipping student teachers to think critically and constructively about central didactic issues so that they would be able to implement and adapt their teaching to any curriculum.

The need for professional textbooks

We turn now to the reasons our interviewees gave for why student teachers need professional textbooks. These included the need for a text that provides the basic information a student needs, that a book is a handy format, that textbook authors are better equipped to select and summarise theory and research than are most students, and that textbooks initiate students into the discourses of language didactics and a holistic academic tradition.

Authors were usually motivated by their perception of what was lacking, either in the courses they taught or in the market in general. One respondent spoke of their “driving force” being that “most people probably didn’t know that they needed this book. So it was more a question of putting this on the agenda”. Most frequently mentioned, however, was the need to provide students with an introductory text. The value of an introductory book as an overview and guide to English didactics was expressed through a range of spatial metaphors. Professional textbooks were described as providing “a starting point”, “a basic level introduction” and “the foundation that helps them make sure that they’ve covered all the ground”. One interviewee used navigational metaphors, describing

professional textbooks as “a good map and a guide” that showed the reader “the path”.

The need for a path was explained by another author: “The more complex the field of English didactics becomes, the more need there is, and will be, for books that give a good basic overview over complex topics”. As well as being an increasingly complex field of study, it is also relatively new, and for this reason, too, it requires a careful introduction:

The students struggled to really see: What is English didactics? What is this field all about and how does it differ from pedagogy? And they needed a book because it was easier for them then to sit down and leaf through the book and see: what can English didactics mean? What kind of topics are relevant and how does this differ from a book in pedagogy, for instance? So we really felt this need for a book.

Several authors raised a more pragmatic argument for a one-volume introductory text: that it is easy to use. They reported that students had previously appreciated compendia for this same reason. In fact, one author partnership had formed to write the first edition of their book in order to gather into one place the resources they had developed in their courses for initial and in-service teachers. Yet although authors talked of the advantages of having one book, their own teaching practices tended towards picking out individual chapters on the same topic from more than one book for students to read on the same topic. It was in fact seen as an advantage of a one-volume book that it facilitated such selection: “Take it or leave it. Take parts of it, leave parts of it. You know, it’s a handy format”.

Another frequently mentioned argument for the professional textbook in English didactics was the need to make research accessible: “If nobody creates that material, then the students would be left with reading 50 research articles in their first year, and that’s just not going to happen”, one author commented. Accessibility has to do with selecting relevant sources and highlighting what is most important, but it also has to do with writing with a clear reader-orientation, because, as one writer remarked, “You’re not fooling anyone if you’re using simple language”. The process of digesting large amounts of research and theory and making them

accessible to students at bachelor level was described by several authors as a demanding form of self-education.

We challenged authors to reflect on whether their selecting and summarising of research and theory could undermine the development of critical reading and the students' ability to find and assess sources in connection with their assignments and research projects. This criticism of textbooks was consistently rejected by the authors in our study. They typically argued that "in order to be able to reflect on something and make your own choices, you need some input, some basic input to what is this all about, before you can go to the next stage". Another described the textbook as "a basis for proceeding with further individual research and more specialised articles". Several authors mentioned that textbooks can help students become independent readers because they suggest further reading at the end of each chapter, and because they are thoroughly referenced, thus providing students with opportunities to pursue more independent learning.

There were a couple of instances when authors explained alternative ways in which they conceived of critical thinking. Students are developing their critical thinking, said one respondent, when they develop and adapt the repertoire suggested in the textbook. Another made the case that their book develops critical thinking by broadening students' awareness, in that it offers them "a diverse range of literary titles related to a variety of topics such as multilingualism, identity struggles, LGBTQ+, et cetera". This argumentation can be seen as an example of the importance attributed to literature in English didactics, and its potential to develop the whole student. For one author, developing the whole student – *Bildung* – was nothing new but integral to the university at which they worked. It has, they explained:

a tradition which is worth taking care of, and which you do not find in international books at all. And I mean this distinction between methodology and didactics has been quite important for us. And I think also some of the Norwegian books in didactics have less focus on this than what we wanted.

Their co-author concurred: "Bildung is central in everything that we do". Similarly, another respondent said that without textbooks "what

you might miss then is sort of the holistic passing on of an attitude". Textbooks, in other words, were seen as providing a site for shared learning experiences and shared values.

We had ourselves wondered about the resilience of textbooks as a shared learning experience, given student teachers' exposure to a digital landscape that offers them so many choices and possibilities. When we asked the interviewees what role they foresaw for the shared learning experiences that a printed textbook offers, most, though by no means all, shared our concern. As one concerned author said, "Everything is a click away, but that's everything. And you don't want everything, you want what you need [...]. It's the relevance and the focus, which you don't get if you just Google something". Other respondents expressed similar concerns about the limitations to the types of knowledge students tend to acquire using online resources as their primary learning texts in English didactics. They worried that these resources were not yet able to replace the systematic and research-based presentation of what is and is not important that professional textbooks offer the student teacher.

When it comes to whether students will need professional textbooks in years to come, authors found it challenging to predict with any certainty whether professional textbooks in English didactics would be part of moving language teaching forward in the long term. One foresaw that the combination of paper and digital resources that is typical for today's school practices is a trend that universities would come to adopt, just as they tended to lag behind but finally adopt other school practices. What the professional textbook will look like in twenty years' time entails questioning what a book is, said another author, who pointed out that "reading a book" is already a much more diverse activity than it was before audio and digital books came along. The future of the professional textbook might be as an open access resource or a digital document where individual chapters are available for purchase, suggested an interviewee, while another was confident of the need for something that served the purposes of today's professional textbook, although it might not go by that name:

I can't imagine that there will be no need for a textbook. Maybe the word "text" will be gone. Maybe the word "book" will be gone. But something that shares

not only content, not only ideas, but also what works in the classroom or what works in the learning environment.

All in all, although most of the respondents found it challenging to envisage the future of professional textbooks in teacher education, they shared the hope that there would be a continued need for an introductory text that developed a common understanding of what English didactics is, and of what it means to teach English in Norwegian schools.

The relative importance accorded to research, theory and repertoire

In this section we look at how authors try to define and structure the field of English didactics through their emphasis on and positioning of three kinds or domains of knowledge: research, theory and repertoire. One can see the authors' differing perspectives as part of an argument about whose knowledge is of most worth. It is even played out on the covers of their books: a sober cover underpinning the weightiness and seriousness of the academic field; pictures of engaged students signalling a focus on the active and collaborative learner.

The authors typically focused on what they identified as central and underrepresented aspects of the field, and varied considerably, not least in the extent to which they viewed repertoire as a central kind of knowledge. Using repertoire was by many considered necessary to help prospective teachers expand their practices. Authors sometimes describe their textbooks as addressing student and teacher weaknesses. By contrast, other authors wrote in the tradition of a university discipline, seeking to improve on previous textbooks that they felt to be insufficiently theoretical or research-oriented. These authors were also concerned to clear up misconceptions, such as the deficit view of multilingualism, or inadequate conceptualisations of communicative competence.

Changes made in the few years between the first and second (and in one case third) editions of the textbooks in this study indicate which kinds of knowledge are most valued. Authors reported that in their later editions they had typically included more theoretical perspectives and

added recent research. For one pair of authors, the centrality of research was self-evident, and the reason for writing their book in the first place. “Because we started teaching from that principle from research to practice [...] before we wrote the book”. They explained that it is a guiding principle for the five-year education programmes that they are research based”, and that this had determined the structure of the chapters in their textbook, and to some extent which topics they had chosen to include. In their view, “We cannot make sure that our teacher education is research based unless we make sure that they use research in their education”.

No matter the relative emphasis placed on repertoire, theory and research, all the authors expressed the need to link different kinds of knowledge, rather than seeing them as “distinct domains”. For most authors this linking should be done in the textbook, but for the author partnerships at two universities, repertoire belonged not in the textbook, but in seminars and school placements/practicum. There is perhaps an issue of authority and tradition here, an issue of what types of knowledge are considered to be of most worth. One writer had been criticised for “not being research-based enough”, despite having more than 30 years’ experience as a teacher educator. They and their co-author explained that their practical experience was just one of several sources of knowledge in their book, which was “developed out of [...] own experiences, knowledge, background, reading and research”.

Discussion

It has been said that “Until recently, very little was known about which actors have taken the initiative in order to shape what is included and excluded from textbooks” (Christophe et al., 2018, p. 418). Our findings indicate that whether or not it is the publisher or the prospective authors who initiate contact, it is still the case, as Caspersen et al. (2017) reported, that authors tend to have their contacts in various publishing houses, developed over time in various projects. While there was one example of an editor putting together an author partnership, most authors teamed up with a familiar colleague. The interview situation, in which co-writers were interviewed together, as well as the fact that at the time of the

interview both the respondents and the researchers believed that all participants would be named in the presentation of findings, mean that the interviewees were not likely to speak poorly of their co-author, other textbook authors, their publisher or the quality control to which their texts were submitted. On the contrary, the respondents tended to report positively on most aspects of the process of shaping their textbook, or at least of the completed process.

The question of peer review is worth commenting on here. The textbook authors in Caspersen et al.'s (2017) study reported, as did the authors in the present study, that peer review and quality control were strict and thorough (p. 80). However, since each textbook in the present study had apparently just one reviewer, it is a reasonable assumption that the reviewer was not a specialist in all aspects of English didactics that the textbook addressed. That the review process was applauded by the authors should therefore be interpreted in light of the unlikelihood that they would wish to publicly question or undermine a review process on which the academic accreditation of their textbook depends.

In explaining the need for professional textbooks in English didactics, our interviewees participated in a bigger conversation that goes beyond the concerns of teacher educators or even textbook writers for the different professions. As one university teacher and author put it, textbooks introduce people to the bigger picture by creating knowledge structures and presenting a range of perspectives (Storø, 2016). Similarly, in defence of both professional and disciplinary textbooks, Vestbø (2020) writes that “[...] the medium of the book is unparalleled when it comes to providing students and the general public with in-depth knowledge in an accessible form” (our translation). We find similar arguments raised by the authors in the present study. Firstly, students need textbooks to introduce them to the field of English didactics. Secondly, and related to the first argument, the delimiting function of textbooks allows students to focus on what is central to each topic rather than navigating the vast resources available online. Thirdly, textbooks can initiate students into the discourse the authors deem most desirable, whether it is that multilingualism is a resource or *Bildung* is the foundation on which all education should build.

Our respondents saw the textbooks as providing an entry to the field of didactics, and their decisions on what to include and exclude are based on their own perceptions of what students need to know. This means that students are dependent on textbooks authors, at least initially, as models for how to write about didactic topics. Hyland (1999) addresses this dilemma in his study of tertiary textbooks, concluding that they did not equip students to read or write research articles independently. “The primary goal of textbooks authors”, he said, “is to make intellectual content accessible rather than to provide undergraduates with the means to interact effectively with other community members” (p. 21). Similarly, Bondi (2016) writes that textbooks are poor models for student writing and research because they “seem to conceal the argumentative nature of disciplinary knowledge, by presenting a well-established set of facts and theories” (p. 325). However, as our respondents made very clear, students need to build up their skills through a process of academic socialisation, where professional textbooks have an essential role to play in the early stages of their education. As Bondi (2016) acknowledges, textbooks “are key to the process of acculturating novices into the epistemology of the discipline” (p. 328). Without professional textbooks that select and delimit content, students might look online to find immediate answers to questions that come up. This is a concern, considering that a study in the field of nursing education found “many students are too uncritical when they search online, especially in the first part of their education” (Poulsen & Brodersen, 2011, our translation). Our interviewees express these same concerns, based on their experience as teacher educators as much as on their being writers. Unlike a textbook, the internet has “no beginning and no end, everything is equally important/unimportant, and the user is his or her own doorkeeper who finds out, rejects, and chooses through informational channels, and keeps up to date with the possibilities” (Askerøi & Høie, 1999, pp. 24–25, our translation).

Textbook authors take on the responsibility for assuring that the content they present allows students access to the field, and some authors explicitly spoke of a holistic approach to language and language learners as being central to their understanding of the field. In so saying they corroborate the view that “educational texts are always produced in a context

that can be political, moral, economic, as well as related to the subject itself or more general educational contexts. Their purpose has always been to contribute to the education of citizens” (Johnsen et al., 1997, p. 17, our translation). Similarly, Skrunes (2010) talks of all textbooks developing the whole learner, of their being part of educational practices where certain values are more or less promoted.

As well as promoting values, textbooks can be understood as promoting different types of knowledge to varying extents. More than thirty years ago, Christian-Smith (1991) claimed that questions and arguments about whose knowledge is of most worth were prominent in textbook research (p. 7). His claim provides an insightful approach to our consideration of today’s professional textbooks. We identified types of knowledge under the headings of repertoire, contextualisation, theory and research. For some authors, an emphasis on repertoire was central, inasmuch as it promoted engaging lessons, something that both they and their students saw as pivotal to successful language learning. For others, the knowledge most important to grounding English didactics was theoretical or research based.

Though it would be incorrect to suggest that our data identified an outright contradiction between these positions, we did find that the authors sympathised to differing extents with questions and arguments about whose knowledge is of most worth in defining what English didactics should be in teacher education. The question of whose knowledge is of most worth is by no means unique to Norway or even Europe. In her diachronic review, de Cássia Fernandes Hegeto (2021) identified what she termed “axes of development” had led to changes that she found across pedagogical textbooks in teacher education in Brazil. These included a less instrumental perspective, meaning less repertoire, and a greater focus on reflection and research (p. 199). The authors in this study acknowledged the importance of research, thus aligning their textbooks with key policy documents in Norway, including White Paper 4 (2018–2019), which states that higher education is to be research based. Particularly pertinent to the present study is the national curriculum for the five-year *lektor* programmes, which specifies that students have to “actively and critically relate to research, and learn to question the contributions and uses of research” (Nasjonalt råd for lærerutdanning, 2017, p. 5, our translation).

Textbook authors must position their books in alignment with these policy documents, and in so doing they may find that there is a slight disconnect between themselves and some other teacher educators. In a recent study, for example, most teacher educators reported that although they wanted to be closely linked to school practice, they experienced that “abstract knowledge” was accorded more status at their teaching institutions than the competence gained through years of school experience (Ulvik & Smith, 2018).

Despite the different ways in which the authors conceived of English didactics, and the differing weighting they gave to its components, they shared an understanding of their role as contributing to moving the field forward. They believed that their books could make a significant difference in the lives of both student teachers and the pupils that the students would themselves go on to teach. It is therefore far from adequate to describe a professional textbook in English didactics simply as one “that informs, explains, discusses and rounds up: this, and only this, is what we know” (Johnsen, 2010, p. 14). Taken as a whole, the interviews show that professional textbook authors see themselves as contributing to an ongoing definition of the field of English didactics in Norway. A textbook, they said, should equip students with a theoretical grounding and an understanding of research that will enable them to respond critically and appropriately to what we do *not* yet know.

Implications

We start this section with some as yet unfulfilled predictions about the demise of the school textbook. This possibility was raised already in the 1920s by teachers in the Reform Movement, both in the US and in Europe. School textbooks were considered to be under threat when cheap paperbacks came on the market (Purves, 1993, p. 14), and again when audio-visual technology was heralded as the scientific way forward for language learning after World War 2. A survey published in 1998 found that almost half of the head teachers in upper secondary school predicted, prematurely as we now know, that the internet would be as important as textbooks in education by 2003 (Askerøi & Høie, 1999).

So what about the professional textbook? Does it have a future? It is hardly surprising that many of the respondents struggled to answer this question, given that embedded within it are many other uncertainties, including uncertainty about the development of digital educational media, the capacity for sustained reading of coming generations of screen-oriented students, uncertainties relating to the organisation of higher education and teacher educations in particular, and indeed uncertainty about the future of the world itself. It was, nonetheless, one of the central questions that prompted the present study.

More prosaically, the study was prompted by the number and diversity of professional textbooks in English didactics written for the Norwegian context. It is surprising, perhaps, that there are so many, given that in Caspersen et al.'s (2017) finding that the development of *læremidler* was mentioned as requiring “a special inner motivation” (p. 83). A recurring theme in the interviews was just that, the authors’ motivation, their desire to make a difference by defining the field and influencing how English didactics is taught and understood, “a feeling of wanting to be one of the voices, perhaps turn it in a certain direction”. Several authors clearly expressed how important they felt it was to write a professional textbook because of the role it could play in teachers’ and pupils’ lives. The interviewees acknowledged, and indeed emphasised, that more students would read a professional textbook than research articles by the same author. Comparing their more prestigious academic publications with their textbook, one author declared:

I mean, we have hundreds and literally thousands of students in Norway each year reading our books and the impact is just immense compared to this publication points article somewhere. So it doesn't make any sense.

In addition to wanting to define the field and reach as many readers as possible, authors reported that textbook writing made sense to them on both a personal and a professional level, notwithstanding that it sometimes came at the expense of more prestigious academic activities. They said, for example, “Institutions want us to write textbooks and I've been surprised by how many people mentioned the book, know the book, seem to, you know, respect the fact that I've been involved in this book”. They

said, “You see there’s a need. And then the privilege of being able to do something about it. It’s meaningful. It gives me a good feeling professionally”. And one of the authors was gratified to find that researchers at an international conference were referencing their book.

Whether there will ever be a new batch of professional textbooks in English didactics of comparable breadth will depend in part on whether and for how long the authors of the present batch continue to revise their textbooks to meet changing educational discourses, policies and research developments. In a larger perspective it will depend on the survival of the genre of the professional textbook in teacher education. The authors in this study are unanimous in seeing a central role for something, in whatever format, with the functions that are now fulfilled by professional textbooks. But there are many factors at play: the complex interrelationship of private and public sector publication policies; local and national teacher education policies; students’ willingness to obtain and read books; and the quality and accessibility of digital alternatives.

One factor that will continue to play a part in determining the quality and vitality of professional textbooks is academic publication policy. As previously mentioned, we did not initially intend to write about national and institutional policies relating to the accreditation and status of professional textbook writing, but in light of the strong opinions that were expressed in most of the interviews, we came to regard this as a central component of the authors’ shared conversation. Just as almost all the respondents in Caspersen et al.’s (2017) report mentioned the pressure to produce publication points as a challenge for the development of textbooks for teacher education (p. 74), nearly all of our authors expressed dissatisfaction with what they perceived as the limitations and inconsistencies of the current accreditation practices.

To illustrate the vagaries of the system, we can take the case of *Textbook X*, which was motivated by the authors’ conviction that their textbook addressed an important and underrepresented aspect of the field of English didactics. *Textbook X* is research-based, the authors explained, but it does not present new research, and the book was not conceived with a view to receiving publication points. Instead the authors found themselves rewarded in other ways.

In Norway, academic productivity is measured in the Current Research Information System in Norway (CRISTIN) which requires the fulfilment of four criteria. By far the most problematic for professional textbooks is the criterion that it be a *scientific* publication, defined as one that presents new insights:

[...] While an academic text disseminates existing knowledge and is primarily aimed at students, professionals and the general public, a scientific publication will expand or challenge the status of knowledge in the academic field of research. (Høyskolen Kristiania, 2022)

As this quotation implies, professional textbooks are not the obvious place to publish new research or theoretical perspectives because they are not where fellow academics in the field would expect to find them. The example of *Textbook X* illustrates something of the complexity of determining whether a publication expands or challenges the status of knowledge. It is arguably one of the more ground-breaking of the professional textbooks in this study. Although it does not present new research, it is *research-oriented*, as are they all, to varying degrees. And yet, unlike most of them, it neither aspired to nor received accreditation.

The fifteen authors in our study adduced strong arguments for the continued centrality of professional textbooks in teacher education. In the autumn of 2021, however, CRISTIN was widely criticised as an impediment to the writing of good textbooks for tertiary education. In our opinion, what is needed is an accreditation system and a process of peer review that can properly assess whether a professional textbook makes a significant contribution to the nationally identified ambitions for teacher education. The same conclusion was drawn by Moi et al. (2014). Better recognition in CRISTIN, they said, and criteria that are more related to teacher education, would motivate research and development linked to the professionalisation of the teaching profession and the integration of theory, practice, disciplinary studies and didactics (2014, p. 27). Such a system would also, in our opinion, make possible a more open debate about the relative importance to be accorded to different kinds of knowledge in professional textbooks. It would be fairer, more rigorous, more transparent and more reliable than the negotiations and compromises

that some authors reported. Most importantly, a fairer accreditation system would contribute to the quality and even the survival of professional textbooks in teacher education.

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From Survival to Thriving Mode in EAP Classrooms in the Emergency Online Teaching: Student Perceptions of Learning-Oriented Assessment in Higher Education

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Abstract: Learning-oriented assessment (LOA) has gained attention as a classroom-based assessment approach because it is used to stimulate learning through assessment by focusing on actively engaging students in assessment and feedback. Although prior research has examined LOA from multiple vantage points, there is a lack of research on its implementation in online learning and how different stakeholders perceive the impact of online LOA practices. This chapter reports on a mixed method study exploring students' perceptions of the LOA approach based on an integrated assessment task (reading/listening-to-writing/speaking) and used within the scope of an EAP program in a Turkish context to study its impact upon learning. Participants included 45 university students who completed an initial questionnaire; 21 of these students then participated in focus group interviews. Findings revealed positive student perceptions of online LOA tasks because of the opportunities these tasks provided for improved language and academic skills, collaboration and dialogue, deeper learning, and longer engagement. In addition, there was evidence of a greater emphasis on teacher feedback over students' self- and peer evaluations when revising the written report. The findings highlight pedagogical implications for using integrated assessment tasks in online LOA practices.

Introduction

Worldwide school closures due to COVID-19 pandemic resulted in emergency online teaching to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on formal

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teaching and learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). With the emergence of online teaching, standardized language assessment and testing procedures in many contexts were challenged by the sudden shift to emergency remote online education. Consequently, in some of the undergraduate English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses offered within the scope of the undergraduate English program at our university in Turkey, teachers adopted project- and process-based assessment procedures which involve learning-oriented approaches to assessment. Although online teaching and assessment have emerged as the “new normal”, little is known about how students perceive the effects of online assessment practices on their learning (Ma et al., 2021). This paper describes a learning-oriented approach (LOA) based on an integrated assessment task (reading/listening-to-writing/speaking) in higher education in a Turkish context and discusses its design and implementation during emergency online teaching. It also relates findings of a classroom-based research study, based on a student questionnaire and interviews, conducted to examine learner perceptions of the assessment task’s impact upon learning.

Learning-oriented Assessment (LOA) has gained prominence in second and foreign language teaching (L2) contexts because it conceptualizes the view of assessment as “supporting learning in a systematic and integrated fashion” (Salamoura & Morgan, 2021). LOA engages students in discussions about constructs and expectations of assessment, facilitates learner self-regulation, promotes the use of metacognitive tools to plan, monitors and evaluates the learning process, and empowers lifelong learning (Baker et.al., 2021). Thus, LOA is conceptualized as an interactive means which focuses on providing greater learning opportunities and improvement of learning rather than simply ranking, measuring, and selecting learning (Scarino, 2013). From an LOA perspective, the key point of all assessment, whether formative or summative, is the extent to which it facilitates and promotes learning (Green, 2017).

According to Green (2017), when evaluating assessment use, it is important to unpack the perspectives of teachers, learners, and other stakeholders in terms of how they comprehend the demands of assessment and integrate these demands into their practice. In contrast to

traditional standardized assessment, which is often used in a wide variety of contexts for different purposes, LOA is associated with diversity of assessment across educational contexts and approaches. Thus, it is argued that further research is necessary to examine “the underlying features of LOA for a better understanding of how it is conceptualized and operationalized in different contexts” (Gebriel, 2021, p. 2). Findings and implications derived from this study have the potential to contribute to the growing literature on LOA practices in different higher educational contexts.

In addition, exploring student perceptions can promote fairer assessment practice, which has emerged as a key challenge of online assessment procedures in various educational contexts. Aitken (2012) argued:

By listening to students, and reflecting on what they say, teachers will have important information to improve student learning and teacher praxis. Pedagogically-oriented teachers not only listen to students’ voice respectfully, but also step back and trust students for taking much of the responsibility for their own assessment and learning. (p. 197)

Therefore, involving stakeholder voices provides insights for teachers and curriculum/testing developers for effective instructional design and implementation of LOA programs, bringing more learning opportunities. Consequently, within the context of this research study during online education, students’ perceptions about their own needs and experiences gained prominence. LOA can establish assessment practices in a new conceptual framework, in turn guiding teachers to “develop and use assessment in more exciting and empowering ways to enhance meaningful learning” (Zeng et al., p. 213).

This study is an attempt to address the research purposes explained above through exploring the following research questions:

1. How do university L2 students consider the impacts of learning-oriented online integrated assessment tasks on their learning?
2. What are the perceived factors that facilitate student learning in online learning-oriented assessment?

Literature review

Features of learning-oriented assessment

According to Carless (2015), LOA primarily aims at developing “productive student learning processes” (p. 964), which involves the interaction of processes such as assessment tasks undertaken by students, expansion of self-evaluative capacities, and learner engagement with feedback. LOA requires cognitive engagement of both learners and teachers (Hamp-Lyons, 2017) and involves assessment for learning (AfL) strategies (Black & William, 1998; Stiggings et al., 2004) to harness assessment to facilitate the learning experience (Fulcher, 2021). In addition, Khan and Hassan (2021) suggest that LOA produces tasks that have three benefits: synergizing assessment’s formative and summative functions, promoting active involvement of teachers in giving feedback that informs both teaching and learning, and promoting active engagement of learners in self-/peer assessment.

According to Carless et al. (2006), learning-oriented assessment involves three elemental features: (1) deliberately designed tasks to bring about effective learning, (2) active engagement through self-/peer evaluation, and (3) timely feedback providing learners with what-next strategies to improve their work. The first principle refers to tasks that engage learners in processes that support learning and guide them to “build the skills they will require if they are to perform effectively in the real world” (Hamp-Lyons, 2017, p. 90). Green (2017) concurs that this first principle is associated with task authenticity, relating assessment tasks to “language use in the world beyond the classroom” (p. 121). The second principle encompasses broader concepts of self- and peer assessment, such as learner training for identifying different performance levels used with evaluation criteria, judging one’s own performance, determining actions to improve performance, and gaining assessment literacy in criteria use. This principle puts forth learner agency through self-regulation, interdependence, and building skills for life-long learning (Green, 2017). The final principle is associated with a feeding-forward approach (Duncan, 2007) in which learners are both supported to improve their task performance and use the feedback in different tasks and learning contexts

(Hamp-Lyons, 2017). Green (2017) points out that in LOA, feedback is conceived as a regulatory mechanism for both teachers and learners to act on the insights gained to improve their performance.

All learning-oriented principles cultivate “sustainable assessment” since they stress “the need for all assessment practices to equip learners for the challenges of learning and practice they will face once their current episode of learning is complete” (Boud & Soler, 2016, p. 401). This emphasizes learning how to learn and how to self-direct. Zeng et al. (2018) remark that: “Knowledge and skills that school students of today will need when they join the workforce have not yet been created”. Consequently, rather than simple knowledge transmission, education in the new century should target capacity building in the creation, management, and transfer of knowledge alongside its acquisition (Zeng et al., 2018). LOA aims at harnessing assessment practices to facilitate the learning experience through tasks that require “learner involvement in the process of doing and assessing the tasks, and the feedback provided to the learners on task performance” (Fulcher, p. 34). In addition, in LOA schemes, authentic language use can be achieved by the exploitation of integrated tasks (reading/listening-to- writing/speaking) (Fulcher, 2021; Plakans, 2013). Fulcher emphasizes the use of integrated, creative, goal-driven, authentic tasks that “require discussion, analysis, and response to reading or listening texts to reveal the ability to interpret and use language for practical purposes” (p. 38), leading to a change in the learners themselves. Similarly, Baker et al. (2021) argue that change and growth in academic writing is facilitated through integrated tasks involving regulation of metacognitive strategies (e.g., identifying the key information in source texts and planning its use in the written outcome) and cognitive processes (selective attention while reading, recall of reporting language when giving reference to source texts). To target change and growth in learners, effective LOA tasks should include opportunities for communication and integration of skills through dialogue, learner involvement, support through scaffolding, and feedforward feedback (Fulcher, 2021). The design of the integrated assessment task (explained in the Methodology section below) ensures these features.

Impact of LOA on learning

Based on the core elements of a learning-oriented assessment approach, Carless (2015) draws attention to learning-oriented tasks, developing students' evaluative expertise, and enhancing students' engagement with feedback for the development of quality student learning in higher education. Studies in higher education concur that emphasis on learning-oriented assessment practices and self-/peer evaluation fosters effective learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Sadler 2010). Hartle (2020) explored the efficacy and affordances of using LOA in an EAP program offered at an Italian university and concluded that adopting LOA as a framework in both summative and formative assessment tools may impact teaching pedagogy and student learning positively. Ma et al. (2021) examined students' perceptions of the impact of LOA on their feedback literacy in an online EAP writing course at a Hong Kong university during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers remarked that students held a primarily positive view of the influence of LOA on feedback literacy development in terms of appreciating feedback, developing judgements, and taking actions, but less favorable student opinions of the online mode of learning in promoting such literacy.

Learning-oriented classroom assessment has been shown to improve academic achievement (e.g., Baker et al., 2021; Kim & Kim, 2017; Navaie, 2018; Salamoura & Morgan, 2021), foster students' learning motivation and engagement (Keppell & Carless, 2006), and reduce their anxiety (e.g., Bayat et al., 2017). In their critical meta-analysis, Zeng et al. (2018) argue that LOA positively impacts student learning because assessment is seen as a process of learning, alongside assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment of learning (AoL) approaches. Assessment as Learning (AaL) refers to active student participation in their own assessment. AaL, it is argued, engages students in meta-cognitive processes such as setting learning goals, considering learning strategies, assessing learning progress, and using feedback to reach new understandings. It also directs students to autonomy and draws attention to complex tasks "that encourage students to show the connections they are masking among the concepts they are learning as they integrate their assessment into their learning" (p. 221).

Kim and Kim (2017) explored how reading-to-write tasks given to 10 TESOL graduate students within the scope of an EAP program in Korea are used for LOA, focusing on the instructor's feedback and its impact on learners' performance, concluding that the feed-forward approach provided improved student performance. The findings suggest that through learning-oriented feedback, LOA supported improvement in students' language and academic skills. It also provided an opportunity for the instructor to critically reflect on their own instruction. Researchers also noted that students recommended peer assessment for additional writing feedback.

In addition to teacher feedback, which feeds forward to the learners, LOA programs both value self- and peer assessment practices and position learners as assessors of their own/peer performance, which in turn promotes more efficient learning. By becoming critical evaluators of their own and/or peer performance, learners can become more independent as they are able to identify their current level of performance and determine what action they need to take to reach their desired level of competency (Black et al., 2003). Lam (2013) compared teacher, self- and peer assessment to investigate the extent to which each facilitated writing revision, concluding that while self-assessment might not guarantee text revision, if combined with focused teacher feedback, it may improve final drafts. On the other hand, Fyfe and Vella (2012) argued for explicit learner training on exploitation of assessment criteria, which would lead to improvement in writing. They examined assessment rubrics as an explicit teaching tool in the classroom that had the potential to lead to improved understanding and, consequently, to better outcomes in academic writing tasks. Findings revealed that students believed that reflective intervention had a beneficial effect.

Similarly, Shen et al. (2020) reported that while peer assessment significantly reduced Chinese college students' dependence on the teacher as well as enhanced learner autonomy and confidence, it did not improve their ability to evaluate their learning process in English writing classes. In another study, Lopez-Pellisa et al. (2021) examined peer feedback during a collaborative writing assignment in a blended learning environment comprised of 85 university students. They found that students were

encouraged to reflect on and discuss the content they worked with, consequently revising their written outcome.

Methodology

The research context

This research study was conducted with first-year university students enrolled in a reading-into-writing-and-speaking EAP program in the Turkish context. This course consisted of 4 contact hours each week over a 16-week semester, and, due to COVID-19 lockdowns, it was conducted online through Zoom meetings integrated into the university's learning management system, Moodle.

Throughout this integrated skills undergraduate English course, students work on their academic and language skills to increase their autonomy in their field of study. Students' aims include improving their group presentation skills and academic writing skills (detecting a social, economic, or environmental problem, writing a research question, doing literature review, evaluating existing solutions and suggesting a new solution, citing, and referencing). The course objectives are embedded into content exploring the concepts of "sustainability" and "sustainable development goals". The EAP program aims to meet course objectives as well as provide comprehensive content knowledge. The content of the course entailed videos, abridged versions of United Nations' reports on various aspects of sustainability goals, authentic academic and newspaper articles, as well as articles and sources contributed by the students. Thus, the integrated approach employed a process-based reading-to-write-and-speak assessment task which was used both formatively and summatively.

The assessment task adopted the core features of LOA, including a deliberate focus on effective learning, self-/peer evaluation, and timely feedback, as illustrated in Table 1 on the next page.

Groups of students were required to work on a problem-solution paper in three stages, concluding with a presentation of their work to peers. In each phase, groups evaluated their own performance when working with a specifically designed rubric. Tutorials with their instructor provided

Table 1. Illustration of the Integration of LOA Features into the Assessment Task

Features of LOA	Integration of LOA Features into the Assessment Task
Learning task	Adaptation of integrated skills (reading-to-write, reading-to-speak), approach to simulate authentic real-life language tasks expected in academic life
Student involvement in self-/ peer evaluation	Rubrics to be used in each stage of the project to encourage learners' active engagement in their own learning through self- and peer assessment. Evaluation of performance in group to foster opportunities for collaborative learning
Feedback as feed-forward	Written feedback and online Zoom tutorials to discuss suggested changes for improvement to guide and promote future learning

students with opportunities to reflect on their outcome in comparison to the course objectives, ensure understanding of the feedback through discussion within the group, allow for further clarification, and consider ways forward. Student work was retained on the course Moodle page for revisiting prior feedback, which was used for corrective actions. Groups also used Google Files to work collaboratively online. In phase 1, they were asked to choose one of the UN sustainability goals as their research topic, determine a local context (e.g., their own campus and city) and formulate their solution-oriented research questions (i.e., How can we prevent plastic waste from being thrown into the sea off the coast of Istanbul?). Then, they outlined their research aims and briefly listed their preliminary research findings regarding underlying causes, major effects, and existing solutions with respect to their chosen threat. In phase 2, they submitted a research report of around 1,000 words, building both on their work in the prior phase as well as on teacher, self-, and peer evaluations. Acting on feedback, they revised the relevant parts of their work and went into more detail on the problem's significance (defining and analyzing the problem, referring to relevant and reliable external sources to demonstrate the scope of the problem). They also elaborated on causes, consequences, and existing solutions. Each group provided brief information on the solution player, summarized the existing solutions with research-based data, and evaluated the existing solutions based on their strengths and weaknesses in the target context. Then, learners assessed these solutions in relation to the research question and decided on actions to deal with their researched issue. In this phase, to support their research reports, learners

cited information from course readings and their selected research-based sources in line with academic conventions (e.g., using citation practices such as quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and referencing). In phase 3, groups explained their own solution in detail and provided justification for its superiority to existing ones within the chosen context. At the end of phase 3, groups submitted their final draft after considering the feedback provided. They performed group presentations of their project with suggested solutions to their chosen sustainability problem in online Zoom meetings.

Participants

This study was conducted with undergraduate Turkish native speakers enrolled in an undergraduate EAP program at a Turkish University. There were 45 volunteer students who completed the questionnaire, and 21 of these participated in group interviews. At the onset of the study, 60 students were invited to take part, and 75% responded to the questionnaire. These first-year university students had fulfilled the university English language entry requirement by achieving either a minimum of 65 on the institutional proficiency test or a mean average TOEFL iBT score of 80. They had taken a prerequisite undergraduate English course aiming to improve their academic skills (with a focus on reading and writing) and linguistic skills, based on the theme of “sustainability”. In addition to establishing topic familiarity, this prior EAP course also took an integrated approach, employing reading-to-write assessment tasks to practice integrating sources into their own work. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the courses were moved online during the spring semester of the 2021 academic year (at the time of this study).

Data collection and analysis

Perceptions of the online LOA task were gathered through a questionnaire and focus group interviews. Banerjee (2021) identifies interviews as a common data collection approach in L2 LOA studies. Focus groups consisted of group members who worked together during the assessment

process. These interviews generate diverse perspectives because the discussion allows negotiation about how meanings are made. Also, some participants feel safer discussing issues within a group rather than as an individual. “The discussion may lead to unanticipated findings because of the ways in which the discussion itself generates thoughts and feelings” (Blaxter et al., 2006, p. 194). Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The data analysis incorporated inductive thematic analysis without being framed by *a priori* expectation (Thomas, 2006). During thematic analysis data was coded based on iterative reading, and then codes were merged into categories which conflated into main themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quotations are incorporated into the findings of the current study to represent these main themes. On the other hand, questionnaire data were analyzed quantitatively with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) using descriptive statistics.

As their teacher and researcher, I briefed my students about the aims of the research and invited their voluntary participation. Informed consent of the participants was taken. The data collection process was conducted at the end of the semester. Focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed for later analysis. An “informant interview” approach was adapted, allowing participants to contribute to the research agenda to uncover relevant issues. I often initiated our interaction with phrases, such as “Can we talk a bit about ...” and “Can you tell me about ...” rather than confining their response to strictly structured and set questions (Atkins & Wallace, 2012).

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the data interpretations, triangulation and member checking were used. The researcher shared the emerging themes from the transcripts and asked participants to comment on the way the issues were framed and clarify any ambiguities.

Findings and discussion

Regarding the participants’ profiles, the majority (63%) considered themselves “good”, and some “advanced” (19%) in terms of their information technology (IT) skills, while others believed (19%) that they had average level skills (Mdn = 3 and SD = 0.62). They also held a

positive impression regarding their participation in the online course; the overwhelming majority (91%) considered that they actively engaged (Mdn = 3 and SD = 0.65).

Learners widely acknowledged favorable perceptions of the online LOA task as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Student Perceptions of the Online LOA Task

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Std Dev
	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)		
1. The online assessment task was easier to complete in comparison to in-class assessment (time & energy savings)	5	21	37	37	3.07	.88
2. The online assessment platforms (e.g., LMS, Turn-it-in, Zoom, Panopto) were user-friendly	0	7	49	44	3.37	.62
3. The online assessment (in terms of delivery, tools, and posting of results) in this course was fair and transparent.	0	2.3	47	51	3.50	.55
4. I was comfortable with the assessment platforms during online learning	0	2.3	44	54	3.51	.55
5. The online assessment task helped me understand how much I had learned and what more I needed to learn.	0	14	42	44	3.30	.70

Students' response to the questionnaire revealed that some factors are deemed important for quality student learning in online LOA. The majority of the learners (74%) expressed that the online assessment task was easier to complete in comparison to the in-class assessment with regard to the time and effort required to fulfil the task. In addition, it was reported that the overwhelming majority (93%) considered the online platforms that are used to carry out assessment to be user-friendly. During the interviews some students further highlighted user-friendliness by referring to the easy access to their previous work as well as the feedback from their teacher, which in turn was reported to bring about longer engagement opportunities. Also, 98% perceived online assessment as "fair" and "transparent" regarding the delivery, tools, and posting of the results. Nearly all students pointed out that they felt comfortable

with the assessment platforms during online learning. However, during interviews some students expressed that the shift to digital learning was challenging. Consequently, the positive trends expressed by the students may imply that these factors are deemed significant in facilitating quality student learning through online assessment tasks which adopt an LOA framework. An important finding was that the overwhelming majority (86%) believed that the online assessment task positively impacted their learning, implying a change and growth in their language and academic skills. This finding was also reflected by the interview results.

Interview findings revealed further details and led to the identification of three emerging themes: (1) social learning through collaboration and dialogue, (2) deeper learning, and (3) the prolonged effects of online LOA assessment tasks and their interaction with student learning.

Social learning through collaboration and dialogue

Findings revealed diverse perceptions regarding the emergency online learning experience. Some students expressed that this experience had been difficult and challenging. One participant stated: “This time period’s been cold and dark both mentally and socially”. Another disagreed: “Online learning’s been efficient and easy because you’re only a click away from each class” (S2). Similarly, learners expressed diverse opinions about the online LOA assessment task and the way it interacted with their learning.

Learners acknowledged that the assessment task positively impacted their learning, indicating opportunities for socialization and dialogue; however, the degree of effectiveness depended on factors related to individuals, such as motivation, approach to learning, and group dynamics. A student commented:

My group consisted of people who really wanted to do something. We made a fair distribution of duties in the group, and everyone had a fair workload. However, my friends in other groups complained about their groups because they said the others in their group didn’t do anything. We were lucky, and we did well. (S7)

Different opinions were voiced regarding the effectiveness of online group work during this assessment task. Some learners contended that working online hampered their socialization process, as expressed in the following quotation:

If we were physically at school, we could have gotten together and worked on the project. But using Zoom made things less effective. Sometimes we just shared the work, and everyone worked individually. If this had been face-to-face, we could have built up the group dynamics much faster and worked much more efficiently. (S1)

For others, however, working online as a group was a valuable learning experience. One student asserted: “I think working online helped us to socialize with one another. I was able to stay in contact with others. I usually can’t easily get to know people in my classes. But here through this project, I had my group members as friends” (S5). In a similar vein, another student remarked that the project provided a rationale for them to engage in communication and dialogue:

We were also using Zoom and breakout rooms in other courses, too. In one of them, we were told one day to go to a breakout room and discuss a topic with our other group members. But when we got there, nobody spoke. We didn’t even turn on our cameras. It was like we’d closed a curtain on each other. So, we were there, but at the same time we weren’t. But in a project like this, which lasted for a whole semester, our discussions in breakout rooms were meaningful. We participated, befriended each other, and had open communication. (S9)

Deeper learning

Participants widely acknowledged that the online LOA program provided opportunities for effective learning. Students seemed to believe in its benefits, especially in terms of writing and reading skills. One conceded:

Writing is hard. And it’s gotten a lot more difficult, especially for our generation, one that doesn’t read and write a lot. In this respect, I think I’ve improved a lot. This project was different from the writing work I did in previous classes. It was

in the style of deep learning. It's very important to read the texts, pay attention to the keywords, extract the main ideas, then synthesize them with your own ideas and use them in quotations. I think it's a lifelong learning opportunity. It's an experience that every student at the university should have. (S12)

Overall positive perceptions were expressed in the questionnaire and interviews regarding the assessment task's impact upon learning, and these echo conclusions of previous LOA studies (Baker et al., 2021; Bayat et al., 2017; Navaie, 2018; Salamoura & Morgan, 2021).

When considering the impacts of the online assessment task upon learning, learners tended to make comparisons with the one-shot online exams in other departmental courses. Almost all expressed their appreciation for the EAP course's process-based LOA program, praising its opportunities for deeper learning. Some learners argued that the assessment task in this study motivated/guided them in setting goals and provided opportunities for collaborative learning and better comprehension:

I think it was to our advantage that there is no specific exam for this course and that we worked on the project throughout the entire semester. We learned a lot. We worked in a step- by- step way, planning what to do next, helping each other. I think we liked it a lot, and so we studied more. (S3)

It can be inferred that the online LOA task improved motivation, resonating with previous research findings (Keppell & Carless, 2006).

Some students acknowledged the authenticity of the skills targeted in the course and tested through the assessment task. These skills were seen as transferable to academic courses beyond this one. As one student postulated:

While doing this research project, we learned about how to conduct research using reliable sources, and it was very beneficial. I made use of this skill in my other courses as well. Similarly, I think what I learned about citation skills was also very useful. (S9)

Furthermore, one learner praised the real-life skills that the task encompassed, highlighting the benefits of having felt greater motivation and a more positive attitude towards learning:

To be honest, my perception of English courses was a bit negative. I thought I already knew a lot of English, what was the point? But then when we created our project, I really felt excited, and I worked hard. It was great to make and present a project that we loved doing. It seemed like there was nothing we couldn't do in the project. It was very close to real life. (S11)

Such positive views suggest that employing integrated skills approach in LOA via inquiry-based activities and authentic problems piqued learners' curiosity, encouraged critical reflection, questioning, and knowledge-building around genuinely interesting topics; consequently, it created opportunities for deeper learning as well as higher levels of engagement.

It was also argued that the assessment program targeted real-life skills commonly required in professional life beyond formal education and was seen as “a good practice for the future” (S14). One student pointed out that the integrated skills, and academic citation practices, would be valuable in an academic career. Another prioritized the group work required: “Group work's an experience that must definitely be acquired because in working life, there's a lot of teamwork, or group work. When evaluated in this way, it's critical to gain group work experience at university” (S21). These findings align with prior studies emphasizing sustainability in LOA schemes (Boud & Soler, 2016; Zeng et al. 2018).

However, the speaking component (i.e. delivering an online presentation) received some criticism in terms of authenticity. One student commented:

I don't think that doing presentations online on Zoom seems real. It's not possible to have eye contact with people. I felt like I was talking into thin air. I was talking to a camera ... Not being able to see other students and their reactions stressed me out. (S15)

Another learner drew attention to the differences between face-to-face and online presentations:

Presenting online is different. When we do presentation in an in-person class, we must be careful about different criteria. Body language, for example, is

important to me. So, presenting online was difficult for me. I think standing up and presenting in front of other people is much different. (S17)

From the above-mentioned comments, it can be inferred that online learning may require a reassessment of the construct of speaking when delivering a presentation.

Longer engagement

Learner responses in interviews posited prolonged engagement in learning through feedback, performance self-evaluation, and accessing online records. To begin, learners reported using teacher feedback to improve their work in each stage of the assessment task. One commented:

In each step of the project, we had to improve our work based on teacher feedback. We also evaluated it ourselves. It was like making a promise to ourselves. I think all of us felt responsible to build something step-by-step and put in effort to make our work better. (S13)

Some stated that they worked with the assessment rubric to evaluate their performance and combine teacher feedback with their own self-evaluation while revising their drafts. The phrases “making a promise”, “feel responsible”, “build something”, and “put in effort to make our work better” signify both commitment and strategy use to improve one’s own outcome. Learners reported actively employing rubrics to understand learning expectations and use as a planning tool in their revisions. This quotation highlights the point that self-evaluation was deemed a factor that triggered students’ prolonged engagement with the task via sustained effort to understand learning expectations. Thus, both teacher- and self-evaluations are considered to be a means for making learning transparent for students and providing scaffolding for their understanding of the learning objectives, leading to enhanced performance.

However, not all held this view; indeed, the focus on evaluating one’s own performance with rubrics was criticized by some learners, who argued that emphasis should be placed upon teacher feedback rather than self-evaluation: “I think self-evaluation of our work was ineffective

because some of us took it lightly. And after all, our teacher's feedback was the most important" (S18). In addition, as seen in the following quotation, some students expressed discomfort with giving peer feedback, fearing that it would harm their social interaction: "It's difficult to give feedback to your friend. They may resent it. Also, I've never worked with criteria and giving feedback to my friends before. So, I'm not very good at it" (S16). This leads to the inference that some consider peer evaluation as an alien and unfamiliar practice that has not been an aspect of their previous learning experience.

Secondly, some learners felt that keeping and accessing records online enhanced their engagement. All course content and drafts were kept on the learning management system (LMS), and students expressed mixed (but mainly positive) views about having easy access to these materials. One stated: "I think it's super to have all the materials online. With online learning my attention is more focused working online instead of worksheets and papers. I became more organized. It's great to be able to access them whenever I want" (S8). However, other remarks indicated that the shift to digital learning has been challenging: "It was difficult to have all the material on the screen. Normally, I'm a person who's very used to paper" (S1). However, overall, most highlighted that online learning was well-supported by the record-keeping aspect of LOA tasks; consequently, this led to prolonged learner engagement and interaction with the course content. To illustrate, one participant concurred:

One of the best aspects of online learning was that lessons were recorded. We even recorded the tutorial session in which we were given feedback for our friend who'd missed the discussion. When we worked on our draft, we listened to our discussion because sometimes you might not understand written feedback. Hearing the discussion again was helpful. (S2)

Reviewing the video of their tutorial created an opportunity for students to lengthen their period of engagement. In relation to this point, Salamoura and Morgan (2021) remark that learning management systems and/or other digital platforms provide efficient technological support for collecting and recording different types of evidence which both shows learning and promotes it further.

Conclusion

Students are key stakeholders in all assessment programs, including classroom-based assessment. The current study focused on how EAP students in a Turkish context perceived an online LOA-oriented integrated assessment task administered during emergency online education, and how they interpreted its effect on their learning. The assessment task was used both formatively and summatively, fulfilling a variety of assessment purposes, including AfL, AoL and AaL. Findings indicate that even under the difficult circumstances caused by COVID restrictions, the online LOA assessment task brought about a positive learning experience. Students reported having acquired improved language and academic skills due to the opportunities for collaboration and dialogue, deeper learning, and a longer period of engagement provided by the assessment task. The findings also reveal that the online assessment task facilitated longer engagement and critical reflection via record keeping, despite a certain amount of criticism regarding the emerging construct of delivering presentations online. In addition, there was evidence of a greater emphasis on teacher feedback over self- and peer evaluation by students when revising their written reports.

The present study holds several implications for teaching and assessment in EAP contexts in higher education. The analysis of the questionnaire and interview data reveals that integrated reading-to-write and reading-to-speak tasks were considered highly beneficial for the expansion of students' language and academic skills. Therefore, LOA-oriented integrated assessment tasks should be considered for EAP programs.

In addition, in view of criticism with respect to self- and peer evaluation, it is important to stimulate learners' engagement in their own learning and progress; thus, prior research studies have emphasized the development of student assessment literacy, or "evaluative expertise" (Carless, 2015). This can be achieved through explicit teaching on how to use criteria for self-/peer evaluation and examples/models, illustrating different levels of performance and how these correspond to the bands/descriptors in the given criteria (Hamp-Lyons, 2017; Zeng et al., 2018). Sharing, clarifying, and discussing the criteria with learners is a key element for ensuring students' comprehension of learning aims (William,

2011). One possible approach is integrating learner training in assessment into instruction in local context, along with other approaches which rely on LOA, to support effective assessment practice, boost learners' evaluative expertise, and create a learning culture (Zeng et al., 2018).

As an illustration, teachers may create activities to raise students' awareness of self-/peer evaluation procedures and processes. Learners expressed positive perceptions regarding the group tutorials with teacher feedback and found watching these videos later to be helpful as well. Fulcher (2021) posits "when learners have received peer or teacher feedback, this involves creating activities in which they have time to consider the feedback, ensure they have understood it through discussion with other learners or asking the teacher, and attempting parts of the task again in order to see if they can change the quality of their performance" (p. 44). Other useful forms of training may include in-class demonstrations and modeling through the use of rubrics, followed by work in teacher-student conferences (Shen et al., 2020).

The study is limited in terms of educational context and confined to a particular time and student profile; as a result, it is considered necessary to explore the efficacy of LOA in different educational contexts, which will facilitate professional learning by practitioners, administrators, and researchers alike (Khan & Hassan, 2021). Therefore, future research areas may be expanded to include the perceptions of diverse stakeholders. In addition, written outcomes could be examined in follow-up studies to identify students' progress in learning; this can in turn shed light on the relationship between student beliefs about LOA and its actual impact on their learning.

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Language Learning Strategies in the 2020 National Curriculum for English

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Abstract: The concept of language learning strategies (LLS) has a central place in the new Norwegian national curriculum for English (LK20). Current research on the new national curriculum has focused on general challenges for teachers, comparisons with the previous curriculum, intersections between LK20 and other international documents, and the value of multilingual teaching and learning. This chapter contributes to this body of research by providing an investigation of LLS in LK20. International LLS scholars mainly discuss taxonomies and skills-based classifications of LLS and signal the need for more research on strategy instruction. In Norway, ELT research reveals that teachers of English are insecure about teaching LLS explicitly in the classroom. Recent research also indicates that there appears to be a degree of uncertainty among teachers concerning the possible conceptualizations of LLS and their distinctions from other related concepts, such as teaching strategies. This chapter explores both explicit and implicit conceptualizations of LLS in LK20 by applying a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The findings indicate that, firstly, LK20 supports the teaching of a variety of LLS found in theoretical classifications and didactic literature. Secondly, LK20 indirectly presents the importance of critical literacy and multilingual skills as types of LLS which have not been explored in the LLS field so far. Finally, the indirect approach to LLS in LK20 may prompt the need to establish governmental programs to support English language teachers in their work with LLS.

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of language learning strategies in the new national curriculum for English from 2020 (henceforth LK20). Notably, English language teaching (henceforth ELT) scholars in Norway have provided insightful discussions on various aspects of the new English curriculum, such as: comparisons with the previous curriculum (Simensen, 2020), intersections between LK20 and the *Common European framework of reference for languages* (Speitz, 2020), implications and challenges for teachers (Burner, 2020) and the value of multilingual teaching and learning (Haukås & Speitz, 2020). The present paper aims to contribute to this body of research by focusing on LLS in LK20.

The terms *language learning strategy*, *learning strategy*, and *strategy* seem to be used interchangeably in both research and practice. For the sake of clarity, we employ the term *language learning strategy* (henceforth LLS) for both plural and singular forms. However, the more general term *strategies* is also used to discuss terminologically salient distinctions between LLS and other conceptualizations (see sections II and III).

According to Oxford (2017), there are 33 definitions of LLS, which indicates that it is a complex term with various scholarly conceptualizations. In the present study, LLS are referred to as systematic and conscious steps, including both thoughts and actions, that are selected and used by learners to enhance their language learning and use, both in a short- and long-term perspective. Firstly, this means that learners should have a high level of consciousness regarding their learning progress, goals, and needs. Secondly, learners would have knowledge of a variety of LLS from which they are able to select the most suitable ones to serve their purposes in a certain context related to language learning or language use. In this understanding of LLS, teachers' role would be to guide and support learners in their systematic and purposeful discovery and implementation of LLS in the classroom, thus enabling them to transfer LLS use outside of the classroom.

Studies in applied linguistics and cognitive psychology have contributed to establishing the foundational role of LLS in language learning (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021, p. xxix). International research on LLS has mainly focused on areas such as self-regulation learning theory (Oxford,

2011) and individual differences between learners concerning, for example, gender (Mitits & Gavriilidou, 2014), age (Peacock & Ho, 2003), socio-economic status (Butler, 2014), educational proficiency (Gavriilidou & Petrogiannis, 2016), and motivation (Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014). Gavriilidou and Mitits (2021, p. xxx) claim that more research is needed on how LLS may be used for developing linguistic skills in phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax. Further, scholars point out that the LLS field would benefit from more research on taxonomies (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021), multilingual learners (Mitits & Gavriilidou, 2016), and strategy instruction (Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021). Research on taxonomies and strategy instruction would also include conceptualizations of LLS in official governmental documents such as LK20, which is the topic of the present investigation.

According to Oxford (2002) and Haukås (2012), explicit strategy teaching is most effective and would be best integrated in ordinary classroom activities on a regular basis (Oxford, 2002). Interestingly, Haukås (2012) claims that Norwegian language teachers seem reluctant to teach LLS explicitly, even if they have positive attitudes towards them. Hammershaug (2021) presents similar results in her qualitative study of eight individual interviews with Norwegian lower-secondary teachers of English. Furthermore, she explains that a potential reason for these teachers' reluctance to work with LLS explicitly might be their lack of procedural knowledge of LLS (Hammershaug, 2021, pp. 85–86). Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 44) reports that successful strategy teaching requires teachers to have extensive knowledge of LLS, including how they work and when they are optimal. Consequently, a deeper knowledge and understanding of LLS might lead teachers to adopt an explicit approach to them in the classroom. To gain more insight on this matter, teachers might turn to LK20, which they consider an official guideline for their teaching practices (cf. Gudem, 1990). The investigation of LLS conceptualizations in LK20 may thus provide useful reflections on LLS for all English language teachers, and especially those who might be interested in implementing LLS explicitly in the classroom but feel unprepared to do so.

A possibly challenging aspect of LK20 is that, like the previous curriculum, it “leaves important decisions and interpretations to the

institutional, instructional, and personal domains” (Speitz, 2020, p. 44). Hammershaug (2020) argues that this challenge extends to the conceptualization of LLS in LK20, since it does not seem to provide explanations of LLS or concrete ways of working with them in the classroom. However, it may be argued that an in-depth, theory-based investigation of both explicit and implicit references to LLS may reveal potential guidelines and specific examples of LLS to be used in the classroom. Therefore, this study asks and attempts to answer the following research question and two sub-questions:

How are LLS conceptualized in the new Norwegian national curriculum for English, and what practical guidelines might they provide for English language teachers?

1. Are LLS mentioned explicitly in LK20? If so, where and to what effect?
2. Are LLS mentioned implicitly in LK20? If so, how may these implicit references be interpreted in relation to current LLS taxonomies in ELT?

While this study is similar to the one conducted by Hammershaug in 2021,¹ it differs from it in three main aspects: purpose, theoretical scope, and methodology. In terms of purpose, this study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of LLS in LK20, while Hammershaug (2021) discusses LLS in LK20 as part of a larger project where the focus is on teachers’ conceptualizations of LLS that are based on their understanding of LK20. Concerning theoretical scope, this chapter presents an integrated discussion of established taxonomies of LLS (such as Oxford, 1990) and concrete didactic skills-based approaches to LLS based on various types of language skills, for instance oral and writing skills (see Munden, 2014) and reading skills (see Tishakov, 2020).

As far as methodology is concerned, this study systematically addresses both the explicit and implicit references to LLS by employing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. In comparison, Hammershaug (2021) employs Goodlad’s curriculum theory (1979) and Tyler’s Rationale (Tyler, 1949), which are especially appropriate for investigating explicit

¹ Learning strategies in EFL: Teacher perspectives and insights from the 2020 curriculum for English (2021).

occurrences of LLS. In this study, hermeneutic phenomenology is understood as a method for interpreting and explaining texts (cf. van Manen, 2014, p. 26). A hermeneutic phenomenological approach is appropriate here for two main reasons. Firstly, it favors questioning more than reaching fixed conclusions, thus facilitating the discussion of meaning (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). In this particular case, the phenomenon to be investigated is represented by LLS as a concept; subsequently, the researcher engages in a dialogue with the LK20 text to investigate the potential meanings of LLS in LK20. Secondly, phenomenology is concerned with revealing that which is concealed about the phenomenon in question, but which – together with the aspects made visible in the text – constructs the meaning of the phenomenon as a whole (Heidegger, 2010, p. 33). Therefore, both explicit and implicit references to LLS in LK20 were made visible in order to provide potential interpretations of LLS as a phenomenon.

Further, van Manen (2014, p. 257) explains that “examples in phenomenological inquiry serve to examine and express the aspects of meaning of a phenomenon”. In other words, specific examples or instances of LLS are important for discussing the meaning of LLS as a phenomenon. Accordingly, the data set for this study consisted of examples of 15 explicit and five implicit references to LLS. The explicit references were first identified and collected by eliciting the terms *strategy*, *learning strategy*, and *language learning strategy* in LK20. The implicit examples of LLS and guiding principles for using them were collected from LK20 based on the theoretical input discussed in section II, which includes LLS taxonomies and skills-based LLS. It may be argued – and rightfully so – that a different researcher may have used a different set of equally valid theoretical tools to identify implicit examples. However, this is one of the characteristics of hermeneutic interpretations, where the analysis of a text is placed in the researcher’s own socio-historical existence (van Manen, 2014, p. 131). Finally, both the explicit and implicit references to LLS were then analysed based on their immediate linguistic context (O’Keefe & Walsh, 2012: 160) and in connection with established theories, classifications, and findings from within the LLS and ELT research areas.

The value of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it indicates potential venues for further research on LLS which might integrate new perspectives from

the curriculum, such as the focus on critical literacy and multilingual competence. Secondly, it provides useful reflections and concrete examples of LLS for classroom practice, which may be beneficial for stakeholders at various levels, for example in-service and pre-service teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, and other decision-makers at local and governmental agencies.

What are language learning strategies?

Conceptualizations of LLS

The main purpose of an LLS is to facilitate and improve language learning and use for the ordinary learner (see Macaro, 2010; Cohen, 2021) through conscious employment. In a general sense, LLS are “steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” (Oxford, 1990, p. 1). Similarly, Cook (1991) defines LLS as choices which learners make as they learn or use a foreign language, which eventually have an impact on learning. These definitions place an explicit focus on learners, who are responsible for consciously employing LLS for the purpose of supporting and driving their learning process forward. As Oxford (2021, p. 27) explains, an essential characteristic of LLS is that they are used consciously. When a learner has employed a certain LLS to the point that it has become an automated habit, it may no longer be classified as a strategy. In a similar vein, we may draw distinctions between LLS and extramural English activities (henceforth EE). To be more specific, the primary aim of LLS is to purposefully facilitate learning inside or outside the classroom, while the main motivation for EE is to entertain and relax outside the classroom (cf. Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). While EE may indeed lead to learning beyond classroom walls, such learning typically occurs unintentionally (cf. Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016), without setting learning goals and monitoring the learning process. However, an integrated approach to LLS and EE may be attempted by learners if they become aware of their learning process, set goals, and monitor their language acquisition and development during their EE activities (see Liverød, chapter 9 in this book).

As learners embark on using LLS consciously, Cohen (2021, p. 4) points out that they also need to know what steps or actions to follow when employing a certain strategy. He claims that a recommendation such as “look for clues in the context” may be too vague to provide enough support for learners. This prompts the need for a systematic approach to strategies, which has been advocated by Oxford (1990) and Macaro (2006). In practice, the steps undertaken in a certain strategy would be consciously selected and sequenced to reach the intended goal. For example, when attempting to read and understand a new text, learners may be encouraged by their teacher to use inferencing as an LLS to grasp the message of the text when they do not understand words or stretches of text (cf. Tishakov, 2020, p. 188). For this LLS to become accessible and concrete enough for learners, the teacher would have to provide them with certain steps for achieving this, for example:

- Marking key words in the text
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words from context
- Activating previous knowledge about the topic of the text
- Connecting the ideas conveyed in different sections of the text

This systematic approach may be easily transferred from the classroom setting to everyday-life situations, which would contribute to promoting life-long learning, which is in focus in LK20 (see section III).

Macaro (2006, p. 327) presents strategies as “conscious mental activities which must contain not only an action but also a goal and a learning situation”. If learners are to make these conscious choices, they must first become aware of various LLS, and then explore them in a wide range of learning situations while at the same time being guided by learning goals and monitoring their learning outcomes. Similarly, Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 163) connects LLS to *self-regulated learning* by explaining that the latter involves controlling and monitoring the learning process, where learners can alter their use of LLS based on their needs. To support such a development, teachers would need to adopt an explicit approach, where they present or elicit the LLS to be used, the intended learning outcomes, and the tools needed for measuring these outcomes. This process would also

involve a discussion with the learners about selecting the most appropriate LLS for the intended goal based on their level of proficiency. To illustrate, learners might debate whether checking the meaning of an unknown word in a dictionary or attempting to guess it from context would be most beneficial in the learning situation at hand. Ultimately, implementing such a process implies that teachers would be able to distinguish between LLS and learning styles on the one hand, and LLS and teaching strategies on the other hand.

Fenner (2018, p. 286) claims that there has been a considerable degree of confusion between LLS and learning styles. Learning styles are based on learners' personal preferences, so that, for instance, certain learners may prefer a visual style to an auditory one (cf. Lightbown & Spada, 2006: 59). While it is expected that learners' personal preferences would have an impact on selecting LLS, certain scholars advise against a limited view of LLS based solely on the learning styles represented in a classroom. More specifically, Imsen (2005, p. 354) and Hopfenbeck (2014, p. 23) claim that, because learning styles may change over time, each learner should have the opportunity to test a wide variety of strategies. Providing examples of relevant LLS before the learners choose their preferred LLS to solve a task would allow them to reflect on how their learning preferences might influence their LLS choices and to what extent their choices help them reach their intended goal.

In Norwegian educational settings, terminological confusion between LLS and teaching strategies may be caused by first-language interference, where the Norwegian signifier *læring* refers to two concepts, learning and teaching. Consequently, the Norwegian term *språklæringsstrategier* has two different meanings – *language learning strategies* and *language teaching strategies*, which might be confused since they are typically employed in the same context. For example, in their chapter on writing in English, Lund and Villanueva (2020, pp. 131–137) use the term *strategies* in the subheading “Ideas to practise different text types and strategies” without explaining their conceptualization of the term. Based on the contents of the respective subsection, the term seems to be used to implicitly refer to teaching strategies, learning activities, and teaching materials without distinguishing between them. Similarly, Munden (2014) uses the term

strategies to refer to both LLS and teaching strategies without explaining her choice. More specifically, she presents listening strategies by addressing the learner directly, for example: “Look at gestures and other body language” (Munden, 2014, p. 243), which implies that this is constructed as an LLS. By contrast, she addresses the pre-reading strategies to the teacher, for instance: “Gather what they [the pupils] already know about the topic” (Munden, 2014, p. 263), which indirectly presents this as a teaching strategy rather than an LLS by allowing the teacher to take the central role. Interestingly, this teaching strategy could potentially be transformed into an LLS by working with it explicitly and allowing learners to take an active role, rather than merely answering the teacher’s questions. This is significant because this teaching strategy, as long as it is not made explicit for learners, has a restricted level of transferability to autonomous learning outside of the classroom.

Two main distinctions may be drawn between LLS and teaching strategies. Firstly, LLS are employed actively by learners, while teaching strategies are implemented by teachers (cf. Nunan 1991). Secondly, even though LLS would ideally be taught explicitly, teaching strategies may remain implicit if the teacher so chooses. For example, switching from English to the students’ first language would be an appropriate teaching strategy for clarifying difficult concepts (cf. Muysken & Appel, 2005), but the teacher does not need to present this teaching strategy explicitly to the learners for it to be successful. In the same field of multilingual strategies, an important LLS is drawing comparisons between English and other languages the students already know (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019). In this case, however, the teacher would need to present this explicitly as a useful strategy for language learning – and possibly also model it – to ensure that it reaches its full potential both in the classroom and outside formal educational settings, as it may contribute to developing learners’ communicative competence (cf. Hymes, 1972). Consequently, the difference between LLS and teaching strategies is that LLS require explicit teaching and guidance to support students in making conscious choices to achieve the learning goals at hand, while teaching strategies may be successfully implemented, even if they remain implicit for students. Investigating various types of LLS may help further distinguish them from other related concepts.

LLS taxonomies

There are several different ways in which LLS may be classified, and scholars have not yet reached a consensus on the matter (Fenner, 2018, p. 292; Gavriilidou & Mitits, 2021, p. xxx). Oxford (1990) presents a complex categorization of strategies, all of which cover main types of LLS discussed by other scholars (see Chamot & O'Malley, 1990; Harmer, 2015; Macaro, 2006; O'Malley et al., 1985). Oxford's classification also seems to be commonly used as a reference point in Norwegian ELT literature (see Fenner, 2018; Munden, 2014). To begin with, LLS may be classified as *direct* or *indirect* (Oxford, 1990) based on target language use. More specifically, LLS which directly involve the use of the target language are labelled as direct, while LLS which do not are labelled as indirect. For example, "asking clarifying questions" as a listening strategy (Munden, 2014, p. 243) would be classified as a direct strategy, while the strategy about considering gestures and other body language would be classified as indirect because it does not involve the use of the target language. Direct LLS are further classified as: memory LLS, cognitive LLS, and compensation LLS. Memory LLS involve the use of actions and materials, such as images and sounds, to help learners remember target language features. Further, cognitive LLS involve ways of dealing with learning, such as practicing the language, taking notes, summarizing, and writing journals. For example, comparing English with other languages by creating personalized multilingual vocabularies (cf. Krulatz et al., 2018) is a concrete cognitive strategy which facilitates vocabulary learning in English and other languages. Further, compensation LLS refer to ways of overcoming challenges in speaking and writing, for example switching from the target language to another language during a conversation where a learner does not know or remember certain words in the target language. The purpose of this switching is to bridge the communication gap and continue the conversation. In the case of transparent words, even switching to a language which is not common to both interlocutors might help. To illustrate, a speaker of Norwegian and a speaker of Romanian who generally communicate in English might understand the concept of *library* without using English by instead using either the Romanian word *biblioteca* or the Norwegian word *bibliotek*, because these are transparent words. It may be noted that

this LLS is more likely to be suggested by a teacher using primarily communicative teaching methods rather than natural methods, where the focus is on the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom. To avoid using another language, teachers adopting mainly natural methods might recommend other compensation strategies, for instance rephrasing or using gestures and facial expressions to explain an unknown word or phrase. However, while these strategies work well for concrete concepts, they might be more difficult to implement for abstract ones.

Indirect LLS are classified as metacognitive LLS, affective LLS, and social LLS. Since they do not involve the direct use of the target language, they would correlate more closely with communicative teaching methods, which encourage discussions about pragmatic aspects and contexts of language use. Metacognitive LLS typically refer to planning, monitoring, and assessing learning processes. Affective LLS concern how learners feel about the target language and involve ways of lowering their anxiety and taking their emotional temperature. Social LLS refer to interacting with others by asking questions and cooperating with others, and may be understood in relation to Vygotsky's theory of learning (see Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) in at least two ways. Firstly, learners may expand their zone of proximal development (henceforth ZPD) in language knowledge and skills by receiving guidance from teachers or more proficient language users. Secondly, having the use of LLS modelled by a more proficient language user may help learners to employ known LLS when they face new challenges, thus eventually expanding their ZPD and becoming independent learners.

Importantly, Oxford argues that the six main types of LLS she presents rely on each other (Oxford, 1990) in that learners should be introduced to multiple LLS within each of the categories to help them master various aspects of language learning and become self-regulated learners. To accomplish this goal, teachers would first require detailed knowledge of various types of LLS and how these could be taught explicitly. Secondly, teachers would also benefit from reflecting on how LLS could be connected to their own teaching practices and methods in order to develop balanced approaches to teaching (cf. Drew & Sørheim, 2009). Thirdly, teachers would need to develop a critical understanding of how LLS are presented in the national curriculum for English.

A discussion of LLS in LK20

This section investigates the conceptualization of LLS in LK20, focusing on LLS in the English curriculum for instruction at the lower-secondary level and including explicit references to LLS in the Core Curriculum. The analysis of LLS focuses mainly on their relevance for the instructional domain; that is, for teachers' practices, decisions, and planning processes (cf. Goodlad, 1979, p. 348). Goodlad (1979, p. 348) explains that the implementation of curricula also involves other stakeholders, including learners in the experiential domain, educational institutions in the institutional domain, and local or governmental agencies in the political or societal domain. However, the instructional domain is especially important in this analysis of LLS because teachers play a crucial role in training students to use LLS.

The Core Curriculum

In the Core Curriculum, LLS are conceptualized both explicitly and implicitly. They seem to have a central place in the sub-section on learning to learn under principles for education and all-round development. The first reference is to *learning strategies*, which are presented as a component of teaching along with fostering students' motivation and promoting good attitudes (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). In this sense, LLS – as a specific type of learning strategies – are constructed as one of the foundational elements for promoting lifelong learning. The second reference is more general, where the mastery of “a variety of strategies to acquire, share and use knowledge critically” is presented as a way of achieving in-depth learning. In this phrasing, the broader use of the term *strategies* as relevant for ELT instruction may involve both LLS and strategies for language use. It should be noted that LLS theorists do not distinguish between these two categories as they argue that strategies employed for language use will lead to language learning and vice versa.

Essentially, one of the main goals of using LLS in learning to learn is that learners ultimately develop the ability to acquire knowledge independently. Interestingly, while no concrete examples of relevant LLS are presented directly, it is implied that reflecting on learning involves

the use of metacognitive LLS to enable learners to effectively monitor their own learning process and achievements. It is also implied that LLS instruction may be implemented to help learners “formulate questions, seek answers and express their understanding in various ways” and thus “assume an active role in their own learning and development” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). Formulating questions, seeking answers, and expressing understanding are activities which may prompt LLS teaching if implemented in a systematic and purposeful manner, where learners take an active role. In this case, teachers would be responsible for providing a wide range of LLS in the classroom.

The English subject curriculum

LLS are referred to both explicitly and implicitly in the main areas of the English curriculum, namely the core elements, interdisciplinary topics, basic skills, and competence aims and assessment. Interestingly, LLS are mentioned consistently in similar, if not identical, phrases in the sections on formative assessment for Years 2, 7, and 10. Therefore, an analysis focusing on LLS for the lower-secondary level will also be relevant for understanding the LLS presented for the elementary level.

LK20 contains 15 explicit references to LLS in total; notably, the concept is always referred to in plural form. To illustrate, there are two occurrences of LLS in the core elements that are represented by two slightly different phrasings: the word *strategies* and the phrase *language learning strategies*. The first occurrence, in the description of the first core element, “communication”, posits that “pupils shall employ suitable strategies to communicate, both orally and in writing, in different situations and by using different types of media and sources” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). This phrasing essentially echoes the theoretical view on LLS as conscious choices (see section II) made by learners to facilitate their oral and written communication in a variety of situations and media. The more general term *strategies* here suggests that they are to facilitate primarily language use rather than language learning. By contrast, LLS scholars seem to conceptualize LLS as simultaneously relevant for both language learning and language use.

Further, LLS are referred to explicitly under the headline “language learning”, the second core element of the curriculum, as follows:

Language learning refers to developing language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, and the ability to use language learning strategies. Learning the pronunciation of phonemes, and learning vocabulary, word structure, syntax and text composition gives the pupils choices and possibilities in their communication and interaction. Language learning refers to identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know, and to understanding how English is structured. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

The first constitutive element of language learning is language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, which includes knowledge of language structures. The second constitutive element of language learning is represented by LLS, where the term *language learning strategies* is used to indicate that it refers to language learning rather than language use. Based on this excerpt, learners are to gain insight into both linguistic features of English and LLS to promote their own learning. Interestingly, the following sentence indirectly provides an example of cognitive LLS, namely “identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know”. In other words, multilingual cognitive strategies based on comparisons between various languages may be successfully employed for working with language structures in ELT. The implication is that students develop their LLS as they use their knowledge of other languages to understand the structures of English. At the same time, learners equipped with appropriate LLS may subsequently use their knowledge of English to strategically acquire other languages as part of their life-long learning process.

In the section dedicated to basic skills, LLS are explicitly mentioned three times: under oral skills, reading, and writing, respectively. In these instances, LLS typically collocate with the verb “to choose” or “to use”, which emphasizes the importance of learner consciousness and responsibility. The document presents two components of successful oral performance: selecting “suitable strategies” and presenting information in an appropriate manner based on the communication setting (Norwegian

Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Interestingly, the use of the broad term *strategies* without the premodifier *language learning* may indicate that strategies for oral skills are understood here to be strategies for language use rather than language learning. In other words, strategies for oral communication seem to be indirectly presented as conceptually different from strategies for language learning. For example, the use of body language or miming may be considered a useful communication strategy without necessarily being considered a language learning strategy. To support both learning and language use, Munden (2018) provides several examples of speaking and listening LLS (2018, p. 204, 243), such as imitating a proficient speaker of English. In fact, this is a successful LLS for oral production, which has been proved to increase English learners' grammatical accuracy (LaScotte & Tarone, 2019). Further, the development of both speaking and listening skills generally benefits from a wide array of LLS, such as cognitive, affective, and social LLS (cf. Munden, 2018).

For developing writing skills, learners are to select "appropriate writing strategies" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Munden (2018, p. 277) defines writing strategies as conscious ways of thinking about aspects of the writing process. This definition may seem somewhat lacking, as writing also involves several other actions, for instance finding a suitable topic or materials to use, gaining inspiration, and committing words to paper (or any other type of support) in a coherent manner. Writing LLS may thus range from brief steps like checking the spelling of an unknown word (Munden, 2018, p. 277) to cognitive LLS such as making rough notes and mind maps, and social LLS such as discussing model texts with teachers or peers. While Lund and Villanueva (2020, p. 132) also mention discussing model texts as an example of LLS, their use of the term *strategies* in this chapter does not allow for distinctions between teaching strategies and LLS. It may be noted that Munden (2018), for instance, provides extensive examples of strategies for oral communication, while writing strategies are relatively scarce by comparison.

In terms of reading skills development, the curriculum indicates that learners are to use "reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit

information” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It may be noted that this phrasing is slightly more specific than the ones referring to strategies for oral skills and writing. Tishakov (2020, pp. 185–189, based on Grabe 2009) presents eight reading LLS which may be useful for understanding explicit information. These are: 1) summarizing, 2) forming and answering questions, 3) elaborative interrogation, 4) activating prior knowledge, 5) using text-structure awareness, 6) using visual graphics and graphic organizers, 7) inferencing, and 8) monitoring comprehension. While 1) to 6) may be classified as cognitive strategies, 7) represents a compensation strategy and 8) represents a metacognitive strategy. Munden (2018: 265) also mentions a reading strategy which seems to be a combination of 4) and 7), namely to use what is already known together with clues from the context in order to understand what is unknown.

The phrase ‘implicit information’ is crucial here because it places text comprehension beyond the factual understanding of a text. In other words, this implies that LLS based on critical literacy might be useful for the identification of various implicit positions that texts create for their readers, as texts are never neutral (cf. Janks, 2010). Such considerations seem to be missing from both Munden (2014) and Tishakov (2020). A detailed exposition of how critical literacy may be used for developing reading LLS is beyond the scope of this paper. However, in more general terms, critical literacy frameworks (cf. Janks, 2010) may be employed to promote reading LLS by training learners to discuss the functions of various linguistic forms and structures. For example, learners might be encouraged to discuss how the use of different grammatical moods (cf. Halliday, 2014, pp. 698–707) in texts might create different positions for them as readers (cf. Janks, 2010, p. 78).

LLS are referred to explicitly in the first competence aim after Year 10, which states that learners are expected to “use a variety of strategies for language learning, text creation and communication” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Firstly, the positioning of LLS in the first aim reveals that they have a foundational role for competence development in English. Secondly, this phrasing indicates that language use, represented here by text creation and communication, is

perceived to require different strategies than those employed for language learning. Thirdly, it may be argued that listing *text creation* as a separate element of language use, although it represents a form of communication, implies that developing proficient literacy and visual literacy skills in English is assigned special importance in the curriculum. Consequently, theoretical frameworks of LLS might be further developed and refined to account for *literacy*, as well as *visual* and *critical literacy* LLS for text production.

Interestingly, strategies appear to be essentially presented as teachers' responsibility in the section on formative assessment for Year 10.² To be more specific, teachers are expected to facilitate learner participation and foster the desire to learn "by using a variety of strategies and learning resources to develop the pupils' reading skills and oral and writing skills" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It is somewhat unclear whether this phrasing refers to LLS or teaching strategies. On the one hand, it may be inferred that it calls for teachers to explicitly teach and model LLS for learners. On the other hand, this could be understood as a requirement for teachers to implement teaching strategies (see section II), which would not involve an equally high level of consciousness on the learners' part. This interpretation might be more likely than the former, given that the context here seems to refer to teaching practices where the teacher has the most central role. Although LLS and teaching strategies may conceptually overlap in terms of content, the main practical distinction is that, while learners use conscious decisions in their implementation of LLS inside or outside the classroom, they need not do so when teachers use teaching strategies (see section II) in the classroom.

The same paragraph in the section on formative assessment also includes an implicit reference to LLS. The curriculum states that:

The teacher and pupils shall engage in dialogue on the pupils' development in English. With the competence the pupils have demonstrated as the starting point, they shall have the opportunity to express what they believe they

2 Importantly, the second paragraph in the section for formative assessment is the same throughout the entire curriculum document, namely for years 2, 4, and 7.

have achieved and reflect on their own development in the subject. The teacher shall provide guidance on further learning and adapt the teaching to enable the pupils to use the guidance provided to develop their reading skills, writing skills and oral and digital skills in the subject. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

Despite the absence of the term *strategies* here, there is an indirect reference to the use of LLS. To be more specific, learners are to become aware of their learning achievements through reflections and discussions with their teachers and peers. This would inherently involve evaluating their own learning development, which is a metacognitive strategy (cf. Oxford, 1990). Based on this idea, the implementation of metacognitive LLS plays a crucial part in formative assessment processes where learners have a central position. Consequently, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator, so they would have to be aware of types of LLS which facilitate formative assessment and guide learners by explicitly working with LLS.

Another implicit reference to LLS is found in the seventh competence aim after Year 10, which states that students are to “explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages he or she is familiar with and use this in his or her language learning” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). It may be argued that this aim represents a cognitive LLS very similar to – but more specific than – the cognitive LLS referred to implicitly under language learning analysed above. To be more specific, the ability to draw comparisons and identify similarities and distinctions between English and other languages in students' repertoires is a useful LLS because it enables them to activate their schemata and make connections between their knowledge and the new information they encounter (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019). At the same time, this aim may be understood as a compensation LLS, since linguistic comparisons between several languages may be used to overcome challenges in both language learning and language use (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019).

Interestingly, the sub-section on health and life skills under interdisciplinary topics presents “the ability to handle situations that require linguistic and cultural competence” as a means for developing “a positive self-image and a secure identity” (Norwegian Directorate for Education

and Training, 2019). In a way, this may be considered an indirect reference to the effects of using cognitive and compensation LLS, since they might help students to manage situations where linguistic competence is central. In a similar vein, Burner and Carlsen (2019) claim that knowing and using several languages might have affective and health benefits for students because it supports the development of a sense of belonging and personal identity. Furthermore, affective and social LLS may also contribute to developing learners' confidence and linguistic identity as users of English (cf. Hammershaug, 2021).

Generally, it may be argued that the LLS conceptualizations in LK20 call for the implementation of a variety of LLS from classifications such as Oxford's (1990), as well as skills-based strategies such as those mentioned by Munden (2018) and Tishakov (2020). However, there are two types of LLS which do not seem to be extensively discussed in theoretical frameworks of LLS so far and which are related to comparisons between multiple languages (cf. Burner & Carlsen, 2019) and literacy skills involving specifically visual and critical literacy skills (see section III). In addition, the implicit references to LLS in LK20 provide concrete examples of LLS; however, the fact that they are implicit might make them difficult to identify as such, especially without the use of guiding theoretical frameworks. Consequently, teachers might need professional guidance and support when engaging with LLS in LK20.

Conclusions

The English curriculum seems to have a dual approach to LLS, a situation which might make it challenging to navigate for instructional purposes. Firstly, LLS are referred to both explicitly and implicitly in sections dedicated to language learning, basic skills, competence aims, and formative assessment. It may be argued that the relatively significant number of explicit references throughout the document echoes scholarly positions that advocate the explicit teaching of LLS. At the same time, the explicit references seem to imply that the curriculum supports a terminological distinction between strategies for language use and strategies for language learning. This view does not seem to be supported in current research on

LLS, where LLS are considered useful for both language learning and use at the same time, since learning often occurs as the language is used both in and outside formal educational settings.

The five implicit references to LLS discussed here contain concrete examples and effects of LLS use related mainly to cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and affective LLS. In the section dedicated to language learning, the implicit reference follows the explicit one directly, which may indirectly help teachers to understand them as conceptually related. However, in the competence aims, the indirect presentation of the multilingual LLS in the seventh competence aim is not in direct proximity with the explicit reference to LLS in the first competence aim, so it might be difficult for teachers to establish connections between them. In other words, the implicit references to LLS become visible when they are seen through the solid lenses of definitions, classifications, and discussions of LLS from various scholarly sources. Conversely, the lack of such supporting material may render these implicit references invisible for curriculum users.

LK20 generally assigns learners an active central role in the implementation of LLS, while teachers are assigned the role of facilitators. More specifically, students are expected to become self-regulated learners who can monitor their learning process and alternate their LLS use based on their needs. Consequently, teachers are to adopt an explicit approach to LLS to support self-regulated learning. This corresponds with research in the LLS field, where learners are responsible for the conscious implementation of LLS to promote language learning and use. The only exception to this in LK20 is an instance in the section on formative assessment, where it may be argued that the document refers to teaching strategies rather than LLS. While the content of teaching strategies and LLS may in some cases overlap, work with LLS places special emphasis on learners' consciousness, which is not necessarily needed for applying teaching strategies.

In terms of theoretical definitions and classifications of LLS, the investigation of LK20 reveals three main aspects. Firstly, LK20 supports the use of a variety of LLS found in theoretical classifications and didactic literature. Secondly, LK20 also indirectly presents the importance of critical

literacy and multilingual competence as the basis for LLS conceptualization and design, which have apparently not been explored in the LLS field so far. On a more general note, the ELT field in Norway may benefit from more systematic and comprehensive investigations of intersections between established LLS taxonomies (see Oxford, 1990) and skills-based LLS (cf. Munden, 2018; Tishakov, 2020). Research projects such as doctoral studies may, for example, focus on investigating LLS within larger theoretical frameworks and include an investigation of classroom practices and learner experiences.

This approach to LLS in LK20 may constitute a challenge for teachers as facilitators of LLS implementation as they are faced with important decisions and interpretations concerning the role and value of LLS use in the classroom. Consequently, various initiatives may be designed to support teachers at different levels. For instance, in-service teachers might benefit from internal seminars organized by their school leaders with the purpose of discussing and interpreting LLS in LK20 not only in subject-based groups but also across disciplines. In-service teachers might also benefit from collaborations between their schools, together with universities and governmental agencies whereby they receive in-school training. Pre-service teachers would benefit from maintaining a clear focus on LLS in their teacher education programmes. Finally, to provide easily accessible and tailored support for teachers, governmental agencies should consider funding projects organized by universities and educational agencies whereby scholars would offer informal and personalized mentorship and support to teachers through social media, podcasts, and individual or group meetings either in person or on online video conferencing platforms.

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The Subject of English in LK20: A Catalyst for Multilingual and Intercultural Competence?

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Abstract: This chapter focuses on aspects of multilingualism and intercultural competence in the subject of English in the LK20 curriculum. Both terms are first thoroughly defined and discussed; the text then presents a content analysis of the new national curriculum (LK20) with a specific focus on the Core Curriculum and *Curriculum in English*. The authors find that both concepts, multilingualism and intercultural competence, are well incorporated in the LK20 English curriculum, appearing both separately and in tandem. The subject of English is presented as an important building block in pupils' dynamic and developing linguistic and (inter)cultural repertoire. As the first additional language taught in school, English has the potential to be a catalyst for both multilingual and intercultural competence (MIC). However, becoming this catalyst in practice may depend on teachers' and school administrators' interpretations, competences, and attitudes.

Introduction

This chapter explores aspects of multilingualism and intercultural competence in the subject of English in the LK20 curriculum. The aim of the study is to investigate in what ways these two important educational concepts are represented, separately and in combination, and which potential the subject has for nurturing students' multilingual and intercultural repertoire.

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For the past three decades, the Council of Europe (2001, 2018) has influenced curriculum development in Europe. The Council of Europe claims that “[a]ctions seek not only to promote language learning but also to secure and strengthen language rights, deepen mutual understanding, consolidate democratic citizenship and contribute to social cohesion” (Council of Europe, n.d.). Since the publication of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (hereafter CEFR), an important aim has been to promote social inclusion through plurilingual and intercultural education (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 157). According to this approach, as a person’s experience of language in cultural contexts develops and expands, from home language(s) to the language(s) of society and languages of other peoples (whether learned at school or through direct experience), “he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” (CEFR Section 1.3).

Similarly, in Norway, national curricula have been influenced by the Council of Europe’s aims with respect to language education policy. Since the reform of upper-secondary education in Norway in 1994 (R94), and subsequently in the all-encompassing school reform of 2006 called *Kunnskapsløftet* (LK06) and its renewal in 2020 called *Fagfornyelsen* (LK20), national curricula were significantly inspired by Council of Europe policy and activities.

Multilingual and intercultural competence are both stressed as important educational goals in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018); therefore, they are also stressed in curriculum reform in Norway (LK06; LK20). Interestingly, the Council of Europe views these two concepts as one when it claims that they constitute “the ability to use a plural repertoire of **linguistic and cultural resources** to meet communication needs or interact with other people, and enrich that repertoire while doing so” (Council of Europe, n.d., p. 10, emphasis added). The Council of Europe uses the terms *plurilingualism* and *multilingualism* for different perspectives (a topic to which we will return in the Theory section).

Internationally, the two concepts of multilingualism and intercultural competence have been among the “hot” topics of the past decade. This may

be due to several causes, which include globalization, increased mobility, international conflicts, migration, and political crises. These changes have made societies more multilingual, and the need for knowledge about social inclusion and intercultural communication has become more prominent (Kramsch, 2019; Weber & Horner, 2012). However, even though “the multilingual turn” (May, 2014) is promoted in research and language policy, some researchers claim that there remains a monolingual bias in practice (Kachru, 1994; Kirsch et al., 2020). This illustrates a discrepancy between the research and policy field on the one side and the practice field on the other, regarding both intercultural competence and multilingual competence (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Lundberg, 2019; Myklevold & Speitz, 2021; Simensen, 2003). Furthermore, aspects of multilingualism may be subject to political and social dilemmas (Berthélé, 2021; Kelly, 2015). One of the dilemmas in the practice field is that students are sometimes reluctant to use their full multilingual competence in class (Čeginskas, 2010; Liu & Evans, 2015; Myklevold & Speitz, 2021); another is that teachers report that they are insecure as to what multilingualism is, as they have not received any training in this area (Myklevold & Speitz, 2021). Having this as a background, the present chapter will analyze the policy level, i.e. the English language curriculum (LK20) and explore the following question: In which ways have the concepts of multilingual and intercultural competence been incorporated in English as a subject in Norway’s latest educational reform (LK20)?

In order to be able to investigate the two terms *multilingualism* and *intercultural competence* in this text, these concepts need to be defined; moreover, it is necessary to discuss the role they play in contemporary theory about language learning.

Theory

We begin by looking at the term *multilingualism* itself. Multilingualism is a complex phenomenon, one that is multifaceted and therefore hard to define. The Council of Europe uses the term *multilingualism* when it involves a societal dimension, as in “the coexistence of different languages in a given society” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4), and *plurilingualism* when talking about an individual’s language repertoire (Council of Europe, 2001).

Several definitions tend to “count” the number of languages any individual possesses either actively or passively, as seen in Li’s definition that, “Anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading)” (Li 2008, p. 4). Yet other definitions of multilingualism involve issues such as (multilingual) identity (Aronin & Laoire, 2004; Rutgers et al. 2021), as when it is argued that language “represents and mediates the crucial element of identity” (Aronin & Laoire, 2004, p. 1). Norton (2013) connects language learning and identity to the language learning context, including power relations in the social world (e.g., status of languages) and social interaction.

Other scholars distinguish between linguistic identity and multilingual identity; they define these two as “associated but different; linguistic identity refers to the way one identifies (or is identified by others) in each of the languages in one’s linguistic repertoire, whereas a multilingual identity is an ‘umbrella’ identity, where one explicitly identifies as multilingual precisely because of an awareness of the linguistic repertoire one has” (Fisher et al., 2018, p. 2). Tiurikova et al. (2021) also discuss language and identity when they relate open-mindedness to L3-learning at school and multilingual identity (p. 1).

Some researchers also link multilingualism to *metacognition* since it involves cognitive processes associated with comparing, assessing, and juxtaposing several languages in one’s multilingual repertoire (Haukås, 2018; Jessner, 2018; Myklevold, 2022). While metacognition may be defined in different ways, it frequently involves a consciousness dimension and an “awareness of and reflections about one’s knowledge, experiences, emotions and learning” (Haukås et al., 2018, p. 1). In other words, multiple language learning often involves a comparative and metalinguistic perspective. A multilingual teaching pedagogy, for example, including the identification of cognates across previously learnt languages, might be linked to making students more metalinguistically aware of the broad vocabulary they already have in their multilingual repertoires (Myklevold, 2022).

In this text we define multilingualism in a holistic and broad sense, incorporating both its individual and social dimensions as well as aspects of identity and metacognition. We also include dialects and varieties of

languages that the individuals may have in their repertoires. Since pupils in Norway are exposed to many different dialects and Nordic languages, such as Swedish and Danish, and learn English from Year 1, we view *all* students, including those in mainstream classrooms, as multilingual (Haukås & Speitz, 2020, Myklevold & Speitz, 2021).

Next, we move on to the other main concept in our analysis, namely intercultural competence. Our understanding of the term *intercultural competence* follows the definition by Dypedahl (2019). It is: “the ability to relate constructively to people who have mindsets and/or communication styles that are different from one’s own” (p. 102). The reason for the choice of the verb “to relate” in this definition is twofold: 1) intercultural competence in interaction with people, and in 2) interpretation of actions and words through texts (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2020, p. 81).

Øyvind Dahl poses an important question, asking, “Is culture something we have or something we do?” (Dahl, 2014, n.p.), arguing for a middle position between a descriptive essentialist approach, where culture is something static, and a dynamic constructivist approach, where culture is fluid. All language users may in this view be affiliated with various groups or cultures, depending on contexts. According to Dypedahl and Lund (2020), intercultural communication “is understood as any dialogue in which tension may occur as a result of different lenses” (p. 19). It can, consequently, also be linked to the concept of democratic citizenship.

Michael Byram’s (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in language learning has undoubtedly had a strong influence on the activities of the Council of Europe. It includes five elements (“*savoirs*”); attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*). Although Byram’s model has been much discussed and criticized, among other things for being too harmony-centered, which may cause learning processes that are shallow (Hoff, 2019), it is still used and referred to frequently. Lund (2008) claims that most theorists “agree with Byram that the concept has to do with attitudes, skills and knowledge” (p. 3), and Dypedahl and Lund (2020) confirm a considerable consensus among scholars with regard to central elements of intercultural competence (p. 20).

At the same time as both intercultural competence and multilingualism have received increasing attention in research and curricula, some scholars are now asking for critical approaches to these phenomena. For example, in the field of multilingualism, it is argued that too much research has only focused on the benefits of multilingualism (Berthelé, 2021; Kelly, 2015; McNamara, 2011; Myklevold & Speitz, 2021), and that there has been a selective and celebratory discourse that should be addressed in the field (Berthelé, 2021). Further, even though multilingualism has cognitive and social benefits, it is claimed that “multilingual education is a truly challenging enterprise” (Aronin, 2019, p. 1). With this in mind, the present text involves a critical investigation of representations of multilingual and intercultural competence in the English subject curriculum.

Method

Data were collected through a content analysis of the new national curriculum (LK20), placing a specific focus on the Core Curriculum and the English subject curriculum. As Bowen argues, documents are “stable, ‘non-reactive’ data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher’s influence or research process” (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). Content analysis was chosen in order to analyze how multilingual and intercultural competence is depicted, defined, and operationalized in the subject curriculum of English. We have mainly focused on English as a compulsory subject for all students in Norway from Year 1 to Vg1 (Year 11), since we concentrate on the multilingual repertoires of all students present in mainstream classrooms.

The present content analysis includes a) a scrutiny of aspects of multilingualism and intercultural competence in the overarching Core Curriculum, and b) an analysis of representations of multilingualism, multilingual competence, and intercultural competence in the national subject curriculum in English. According to Cavanagh, central to content analysis is “the distillation, through analysis, of words into fewer content-related categories” (Cavanagh, 1997, p. 5). The presence of certain words, expressions, and themes was analyzed, e.g., “comparing

languages” or “intercultural understanding”. The findings were then assigned to separate and intersectional concepts (see Figure 1, Model of multilingual and intercultural competence (MIC)).

Findings and discussion

As previously mentioned, the research question explored was: “In which ways have the concepts of multilingual and intercultural competence been incorporated in English as a subject in Norway’s latest educational reform (LK20)?”. Therefore, in the following we are first going to look into aspects of multilingualism, then aspects of intercultural competence, and, finally, examples where both concepts appear “in tandem”, i.e., where they are presented in the same utterances and contexts.

The overarching Core Curriculum in LK20 stipulates that, “All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource [...]” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). In addition, in the new *Curriculum in English*, a significant and recurring competence aim is the following: “The pupil is expected to be able to use knowledge of similarities between English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar in language learning” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). This important competence aim, which is included, in variations, from Year 2 to Vg1 (Year 11), alludes to the fact that there are many languages present in contemporary EFL classrooms in Norway, and that all of them are intended to be recognized as a part of pupils’ linguistic repertoire.

Moving on to the three core elements of the *Curriculum in English* – “Communication”, “Language learning”, and “Working with texts in English” – we can observe a strong focus on language aspects in the first two elements: “The pupils shall experience, use and explore the language from the very start” (core element “Communication”), or “Language learning refers to developing language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, and the ability to use language learning strategies” (core element “Language learning”). A multilingual aspect is also included in the description of language learning: “Language learning refers to identifying connections between English and other

languages the pupils know and to understanding how English is structured”. In this description there seems to be an underlying assumption about metacognition in language learning, suggesting that comparing languages may increase students’ language awareness (Haukås et al., 2018; Jessner, 2018).

As already mentioned above, an element of comparing languages is consistently represented in the competence aims for English: Already after Year 2, the curriculum states: “The pupil is expected to be able to find words that are common to English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar”. This aim is repeated on all levels (after Year 4, and after Year 7), with variations and increasing complexity. After Year 10, the respective competence aim states that “the pupil is expected to be able to explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with and use this in one’s own language learning”. This aspect is interesting with respect to multilingualism. It means that the pupils’ first languages, either Norwegian or other home or everyday languages, are (officially) recognized and included in both their linguistic repertoire and language learning in school. This is very much in line with the Council of Europe’s language policy recommendations (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018) presented earlier in this chapter. It also means that *all* pupils are considered to be either multilingual or developing a multilingual repertoire (Haukås, in press; Haukås & Speitz, 2020).

Moving on to aspects of intercultural competence, the Core Curriculum in LK20 states that pupils shall “develop their language identity [...]” and that language provides them with “a sense of belonging and cultural awareness” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). The first sentences of the *Curriculum in English*, “Relevance and central values”, pick up on the same aspects:

English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development. [...] English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

Both *cultural understanding* and *intercultural understanding* are used as terms in this paragraph. The text continues to name similar aspects, including individual and societal values:

The subject shall develop the pupils' understanding that their views of the world are culture dependent. This can open for new ways to interpret the world, promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudice. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

These paragraphs from the introductory text to the English subject contain all five elements of Byram's intercultural communicative competence: attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram, 1997).

Next, unlike “comparing languages” (see above), intercultural aspects are not treated as consistently in the subject's competence aims. On the contrary their appearance is more sporadic, e.g. after Year 4, pupils are expected to “talk about some aspects of different ways of living, traditions and customs in the English-speaking world and in Norway”. This representation of intercultural competence seems rather conservative in that it adheres almost exclusively to what Dahl labels “a descriptive essentialist approach” (Dahl, 2014, n.p.). Previously (for instance in LK06), the main geographical and cultural focus used to be on Great Britain, the USA, and other “English-speaking countries”. Now, using the phrase “the English-speaking world” seems to be an attempt to widen a traditional and historical perspective. However, contrasting the English-speaking world and Norway seems odd because it does not take into consideration the view that Norway could easily be included in the English-speaking world.

Having looked at elements connected to *multilingualism* and aspects of *intercultural competence*, we will now move on to analyzing parts of the curriculum where the two terms are presented in the same utterances and contexts.

Both *multilingual* and *intercultural competence* are already highlighted in the introductory paragraph of the *Curriculum in English*, “Relevance and central values”. They include individual and societal aspects, identity

development, and pupils' self-reflexiveness of their own worldviews. In addition, when the ability to speak several languages is described as an asset in education and society, the two terms appear together. In the latter perspective, multilingualism as an asset in society, the curriculum states its objective quite strongly by declaring that, "the students *shall* experience that the ability to speak several languages is an asset at school and in society in general" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, emphasis added).

Whereas the first two core elements in English seem to focus mainly on linguistic aspects, the third one, "Working with texts in English", treats multilingualism and intercultural competence in combination:

By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. They shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others' identities in a multilingual and multicultural context. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

In this paragraph both aspects appear "in tandem" several times; interestingly, they also appear in connection with pupils' identity development. This part reflects section 1.2 on "Identity and cultural diversity" in the Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017), which states, "The teaching and training shall ensure that the pupils are confident in their language proficiency, that they develop their language identity [...]". The curriculum hereby acknowledges, and even underscores, the view that all language learning happens in a heterogeneous, multilingual, and multicultural context, and that language learning, context and identity development are connected (Norton, 2013).

Interdisciplinary topics, two of which are included in the *Curriculum in English* – "Health and life skills", and "Democracy and citizenship" – are worth looking at in this presentation of findings as well. The topic of "Health and life skills" aims at pupils' becoming able "to handle situations that require linguistic and cultural competence" as an element of experiencing achievement and thus developing a positive self-image and secure identity (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019).

This interdisciplinary topic primarily highlights an individual perspective. “Democracy and citizenship”, on the other hand, is a topic concerned with pupils’ view of the world and ability to communicate: “By learning English, the pupils can experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world, regardless of linguistic or cultural background” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). The curriculum’s wording goes quite far in claiming that this experience may even help to prevent prejudices. Clearly, then, there are both individual and societal aspects included in these interdisciplinary topics.

Finally, and returning to the research question presented in the beginning, we can conclude that both concepts, multilingualism and intercultural competence, are well incorporated in the LK20 English curriculum, appearing in its text both separately and in tandem. The following figure visualizes our findings and shows how multilingual and intercultural aspects seem to contribute to a holistic, multilingual and intercultural competence (MIC) in the curriculum:

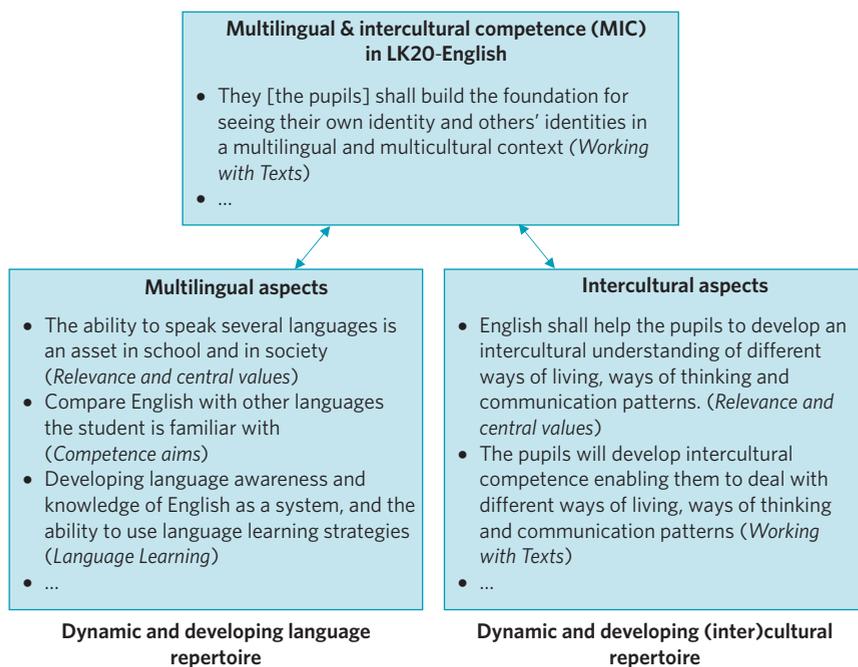


Figure 1. Model of Multilingual and Intercultural Competence (MIC)

According to these findings, English as a subject has the potential to be a catalyst for both multilingual and intercultural competence (MIC). The subject of English is presented as an important building block in pupils' dynamic and developing linguistic and (inter)cultural repertoire. More specifically, in English, multilingualism may be promoted by an active, metacognitive approach in the classroom, and through a validation and awareness of all students' multilingual identities (Fisher et al., 2018; Tiurikova et al., 2021). Different multilingual and intercultural repertoires should be valued equally; dialects and regional variants should also be included here. Intercultural competence in the English subject curriculum has a central position given that it encourages self-reflexive questions, moving perspectives in communication, and comparing cultures. It also includes attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Byram, 1997), providing a connection to students' identity development (Norton, 2013). Both concepts are also interlinked, as when it is stated that English "shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others' identities in a multilingual and multicultural context", and this shows the importance and opportunity that has been allotted to this particular subject. English is the first additional language studied by all pupils in school regardless of their home languages, and as such, it prepares the ground for more foreign languages to come.

Conclusions and future research

The aim of this study has been to answer the question: In which ways have the concepts of multilingual and intercultural competence been incorporated in English as a subject in Norway's latest educational reform (LK20)?

Our analysis has shown that multilingualism and intercultural competence are promoted and represented both separately and in tandem in the English curriculum, and they are defined as goals for *all* students in the Norwegian state school system. Representations of both concepts include individual and societal aspects, such as identity, communication, intercultural awareness, and prejudice prevention. They prove to be quite close to the declared aims of the Council of

Europe policy presented in the introduction, i.e., language learning, language rights, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship, and social cohesion.

Our findings indicate that English, as the first additional language taught to all pupils from Year 1, has, according to the LK20 curriculum, the potential to be a catalyst for developing pupils' multilingual and intercultural competence. Whether it will be allowed to be this catalyst in practice will depend on teachers and school administrations' interpretations, competence, and attitudes.

Interesting paths for future research could be, firstly, to explore *how* English can be used as a catalyst for further language learning. This would mean looking at language and intercultural repertoires in a holistic perspective, including, and cooperating with, all languages taught in school and encouraging students to include their home languages. Secondly, exploring how the concept of identity in a multilingual and multicultural context is understood or conceptualized in the practice field would be a fruitful future research avenue. Thirdly, examining the question of how pupils themselves consider their linguistic identity and developing linguistic and intercultural repertoire (Fisher et al., 2018) would be an interesting path to follow, as students' perceptions on this topic receive too little focus in current research.

However, as previously mentioned, it is also important to employ a critical viewpoint (Berthel , 2021) when working in this area. Critical questions should be asked as to how these two educational concepts can be operationalized and assessed in language classrooms. To conduct empirical studies on how educational stakeholders, such as students and teachers, perceive and relate to multilingual and intercultural competence would assist us in gaining a deeper knowledge of these concepts in contemporary and future classrooms.

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Greetings to Ragnhild

Ragnhild Lund – a Dame of English didactics!

Ragnhild is a much loved teacher and a highly productive researcher. On a more personal note, I am deeply grateful for her generous support for my own work and writings, and I have often admired the enthusiasm with which she welcomes other, younger colleagues into the field. As she herself said when we interviewed her for our chapter in this book, she has belonged to the generation that could freely develop their academic and professional career based on what they believed to be most important and most interesting. Ragnhild has a real eye for where the subject is going, and where our attention should be. Here's hoping she remains active in academia for many years to come, as a benchmark writer in intercultural language issues and as an inspiration and guide in the field of English didactics.

Juliet (Munden)

Dear Ragnhild,

I have two special fond memories. The first is driving with you from Newcastle airport to the first meeting in Durham which became the beginning of our friendship. The other is just a few years ago when we met at the conference in Trondheim and took a walk together up the hill to the ruins. On both occasions we talked about our families – a strong reminder that our academic lives are not the only ones. I wish you a wonderful retirement with your family and whatever else the future holds for you.

Mike (Byram)

Dear Ragnhild,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your invaluable contributions to the research field of English didactics over all these

years. On a more personal note, your PhD thesis on culture and context in English language textbooks served as a great inspiration to me when I embarked on my PhD studies in 2012. Some years later, you acted as an opponent during my dissertation defence, and due to your ability to balance positive feedback with critical and insightful questions, this became a very rewarding experience that I look back on with fond memories to this day. Thank you! Wishing you all the best in your retirement – it is well deserved.

Kind regards,
Hild (Elisabeth Hoff)

Dear Ragnhild,
As a newcomer to Norway, I greatly appreciated your warm welcome and friendly introduction to Nordic perspectives. Thank you for your spirit of collaboration and generous sharing of insights into Norwegian teacher education. I am looking forward to many more meetings.

Janice (Bland)

Dear Ragnhild
As a colleague, you have always looked after us as a group, whether it be through providing excellent feedback on our research, showing interest in our welfare or baking cupcakes for our seminars. Thank you for being so open-minded, straightforward, quick-witted and inclusive. You have really set a high standard on how to be a unique combination of a compassionate academic and fellow human being! All the best for the future!

Warm regards,
Gro-Anita (Myklevold) and Heike (Speitz)

Dear Ragnhild,
No single person in Norway has had more impact on my research, teaching and supervision than you, Ragnhild. This influence stretches all the way back to your doctoral dissertation, which was both eye-opening and path-paving, and helped me to develop my own field in intercultural

learning and images. I have also been inspired by your style of scholarship and mentoring. In questioning or evaluating, you show genuine curiosity, and your rigor is blended with encouragement and a desire to lift up the work of others. In this you demonstrate the spirit of a true teacher.

With immense gratitude,
Jena (Habegger-Conti)

Dear Ragnhild,

On behalf of the University of South-Eastern Norway library, I would like to thank you for your collaboration. We have had the great pleasure of working with you over many years. Active patrons influence and improve the library's collections and services. A university library does not operate alone; it needs good liaisons in faculties and departments to develop and flourish. In you we have had an interested and engaged partner. We pride ourselves on having you as a friend of our university library.

Kristin Østerholt (head librarian, University of South-Eastern Norway library, campus Vestfold)

Dear Ragnhild,

You were in fact part of the scientific committee when I applied to work at Høgskolen i Buskerud in 2007. Since then, our university colleges have merged, and we have been close colleagues the last 7–8 years. It has been a pleasure. You're easy to get in touch with, both for colleagues and students. I'd like to thank you for your sincerity, professionalism, and encouragement, Ragnhild! Wish you all the best with your future endeavors!

Tony (Burner)

Dear Ragnhild,

You have been a wonderfully generous colleague as well as friend to us since we first came to Vestfold. Whether popping by to ask for advice, vent frustration, or simply share a nice experience, you have always met us with a warm smile, genuine interest and lots and lots of good humour. We hope that you enjoy your retirement as much as you have enjoyed your

work, and that we keep seeing each other to share more good moments together.

All best,

Maria (Casado Villanueva) and Christian (Carlsen)

Dear Ragnhild,

You are a guiding force in English language teacher education in Norway, Ragnhild! You meet teachers with such honest respect, while encouraging them to learn and grow. Your mentorship and collaboration inspired me to believe that I had something worthy to contribute. Thank you for your genuine support and for your endless contributions to the field!

Most sincerely,

Theresé (Tishakov)

Dear Ragnhild,

Thank you for being such a wonderful colleague and section leader! I genuinely appreciate you. I've known you for about a year, but I feel like I've known you for ages. I'll always remember the snowdrops on 1 March, your encouraging smile and uplifting words, and the fact that you've called me a linguist! I hope you have a lovely retirement, and that we can keep collaborating in some shape or form.

Delia (Schipor)

Dear Ragnhild,

Thank you for your guidance and support during our first years at USN. Your straightforwardness is refreshing and guides us in the right direction. You are always interested in what we are up to, which makes us feel very welcome and appreciated.

- Thank you for trusting me with your KfK students; I've had a great time teaching that course.
- Thank you for giving honest feedback on my gaming article, I hope it's easier to read now!

We hope to one day possess the same kind of knowledge as yours.

All the best,

Viktoria (Sjølief) and Sara (Barosen Liverød)

Dear Ragnhild,

I feel happy and privileged to know you and work with you. You are truly inspirational. I wish you the best of everything in the future.

Asli (Lidice Göktürk Saglam)

Dear Ragnhild,

You are a role model and an inspiration to the entire academic community: knowledgeable, adept, creative, diligent, and always well-prepared. What really makes you stand out, however, is your love, care and support for fellow colleagues as well as your ability to build a great working environment. Seeing you retire now is like watching a parent leave: Who is going to fill your shoes?

Henrik (Bøhn)

Dear Ragnhild,

During the past decade you have been my colleague, my superior and my PhD advisor. The latter role is often referred to as a supervisor, but the term advisor is closer to how you conducted this role. I have learnt a lot from you on many levels. Whenever I have submitted a manuscript, you have been a true critical friend. Nine times out of ten, your feedback inspires me to once again have a go at those dreaded revisions. The tenth time, even if I am sure that you must have misunderstood my excellent writing, it turns out that you were right after all. “Keep it simple” is one of your mantras, and whenever I am writing, I can hear your voice in my head. As a writer you excel at making complex issues comprehensible to your readers, an ability which the rest of us can only seek to emulate.

I believe another mantra of yours may be “Keep calm and carry on”. As a first-year PhD student, you told me that I had to learn to live with chaos. Being a busy academic who willingly takes on responsibility when needed, in addition to being a mother of four, must have given you plenty of practice in this respect. You are aware that life does not always turn out as planned and

exercise your tolerance of ambiguity when required. Your calm demeanour and long experience are qualities I greatly appreciated as your PhD student. You are also very humble and repeatedly offered to step aside should I find a more suitable advisor. Luckily, this was a piece of advice I did not follow!

I secretly admire your career in a feminist band, and think you are one tough chick! Many a time, I have enjoyed your hospitality and excellent cooking, and, in the years to come, I hope we will still share the odd glass of wine and discuss the state of the world!

Sissil (Lea Heggernes)

Dear Ragnhild,

After slowly taking in that you are in fact retiring from your work as an English teacher educator at the end of this term, I happily accepted the invitation to contribute to a Festschrift in your honour. A while ago now, you and I decided to co-author a book for pre-service and in-service teachers, introducing them to the basics of English language structure. With chapters on vocabulary, grammar, phonology, and varieties of English, our book *English for Teachers and Learners* was the concrete result of our ambition. We shared the question, “What do they need to know?” as our guiding principle. Of course, the writing process was not entirely without challenges, and we did not always agree on different language phenomena, but we made it! And our editor said she really enjoyed listening to our arguments over content and wordings. Our textbook, now in its second edition, is used as a set text in many English courses in initial and further teacher education. I truly appreciated and took your insightful feedback to heart along the way. It was always to the point, helpful, and contributed to making our text accessible to our target readers.

It turned out we had some things in common in our private lives: four children, and mothers with careers as classical singers. The sad thing now is that the two of us never found the opportunity to sing that duet together. Be that as it may, please accept all my best and thankful wishes for the years to come, Ragnhild!

Musically yours,

Mona (Flognfeldt)

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Janice Bland is Professor of English Education, Nord University. She focuses on English language and literature pedagogy and her research interests are concerned with creativity in ELT with elementary and secondary school children: creative writing, children's literature from picturebooks to young adult fiction, visual and critical literacy, global issues, interculturality and drama methodology. Professor Bland leads the *Nord Research Group for Children's Literature in ELT* and is editor-in-chief of the diamond open-access journal *Children's Literature in English Language Education* (CLELEjournal). Among her publications are two monographs and three edited volumes; one of the latter, *Teaching English to Young Learners – Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3–12 Year Olds* (2015), is used as core reading on teacher education programmes at universities worldwide. Her latest book *Compelling Stories for English Language Learners: Creativity, Interculturality and Critical Literacy* will appear with Bloomsbury Academic in 2022.

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Vilde Smeby Hammershaug has a Master of Arts in Educational Sciences for Teacher Education from Oslo Metropolitan University. Her main research interest is self-regulated learning and learning strategies. In 2021 she delivered her MA thesis, which presents a qualitative study on language learning strategies, based on perspectives from the national curriculum and lower-secondary teachers’ beliefs and experiences.

Sissil Lea Heggernes is an associate professor at Oslo Metropolitan University, where she teaches literature and culture. Her PhD study from 2021 explores how interaction with texts can foster English language students’ intercultural learning, with a particular focus on the role of picturebooks. She is currently involved in a project on how engagement with picturebooks and news reports can foster critical thinking in young learners. She has also published work on intercultural learning and the role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in the Norwegian English language curriculum. Heggernes has worked many years in primary and secondary schools. Her research interests include children’s literature, intercultural learning, critical thinking, reading, dialogic learning, and language teachers’ professional development.

Hild Elisabeth Hoff is Associate Professor of English didactics at the University of Bergen (Norway), where she teaches and supervises student teachers of English. Hoff's research focuses on the intercultural dimension of language teaching and learning, and her work on intercultural competence and literature studies has been published internationally.

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Catharine Veronica Perez Meissner is Assistant Professor at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. She has taught at and worked with teachers in secondary schools in Norway, and she currently teaches English didactics to student and in-service teachers. Her research interests lie in the field of English didactics and literacy, particularly in the assessment of writing.

Juliet Munden is docent emeritus at Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. She has taught English at secondary schools in Norway and Kenya, and worked with teacher education in Norway, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Eritrea and Zambia. She is the author of workbooks, a textbook series for English learners in primary school, and three professional textbooks in English didactics for teacher education. Her PhD and research publications have focused on reading didactics and on curriculum development in a national and comparative perspective.

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