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Abstract

This thesis aimed at exploring teacher cognition (attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and practices) in relation to the development of reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms at the elementary level in Norway. It further aimed to find out how teachers implement the *LK06* curriculum with regard to the teaching of reading. The data was obtained through a qualitative study based on interviews with eight 6th grade EFL teachers.

Reading is one of the basic skills in *LK06*, yet the curriculum does not say anything about how the teaching of this skill should be approached. Thus, teachers may make choices to do with reading materials and methods that to a greater or lesser extent are based on their cognition. The concept of teacher cognition includes teachers' practices, but also relates to the decisions they make in the classroom. Thus, to be able to address teachers' approaches to the teaching of reading, it is necessary to gain insight into what underpins teachers' practices and teaching-related choices. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and knowledge, together with the context of the teaching situation, are fundamental to teaching practices.

The study revealed that the teachers to a large extent had positive attitudes and beliefs towards using their textbook in the teaching of reading. They also regarded the textbook as a vehicle towards the implementation of the curriculum, and they used it on a regular basis. Their positive beliefs towards the textbook, and their regular use of it, suggest that the teachers' choices of reading materials corresponded with their cognition in this respect.

Working with texts was approached in various ways, generally in accordance with the teachers' cognition. The teachers varied to the extent that they, for example, promoted reading strategies, the development of schemata, and used activities such as reading aloud and dramatisation around texts. Very few promoted the use of self-assessment tools, such as the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

The findings of the study suggest that teacher cognition may take precedence over contextual aspects, such as curricular requirements. This became evident in teachers' departure from the textbook due to their beliefs and attitudes deviating from it. Thus, abilities that were assumed to be important in the development of reading skills were not necessarily addressed, despite the curriculum and the textbook attending to them.

The study showed that teacher cognition is challenging to research. The challenges commonly relate to two aspects: the entwined nature of teacher cognition makes the concept difficult to interpret and describe, and the terminology relating to this relatively new field of

research is not yet fully agreed upon. These difficulties also affect teachers' individual understanding of their cognition and how it relates to teaching-related decisions. It is therefore regarded necessary to provide teachers with tools to assist the development of their ability to reflect about and articulate their cognition. Thus, this study suggests that teacher education and focussed in-service courses have an important role in helping teachers to become more conscious about their practices and decisions, and thereby to be better equipped to approach the teaching of reading more efficiently.

1 Introduction

This thesis is a study of teachers' cognition and the development of reading in 6th grade¹ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Norway. Cognition refers to 'what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom' (Borg, 2003:81). The pupils in the 6th grade have come through the major transitional period from the 4th to the 5th grades², and should be well on their way towards reaching the learning objectives for the 7th grade stated in the current English curriculum (*LK06*). Because this target group represents the middle year at the intermediate level, it is considered to be an appropriate one to study for this thesis. The study is qualitative; the data was obtained by means of interviewing eight EFL-teachers from different schools who teach at the 6th grade level.

1.1 Background

There has of late been growing interest in Young Language Learners (YLLs). In this context, the term 'young' refers to children between the age of 5 and 13 (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:1). As a consequence of the interest in YLLs, a growing body of international research into this field has focused on theories and practices surrounding language learning at the lower levels of formal schooling (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:1). Not only across Europe, but also in other parts of the world, there seems to be both a public and political call for children to start learning foreign languages early in the course of their formal schooling, which has resulted in a general lowering of the onset age for EFL learning across Europe. The reason for this trend is assumed to be the common view that pre-puberty children learn foreign languages with greater ease than older learners (Cenoz, 2003:77; Drew, 2009a:101; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:1-4; Rixon, 1992:74; Rixon, 2000:6-8).

When the Norwegian National Curriculum was reformed in 1997, the onset age for EFL instruction was lowered from the 4th grade to the 1st grade (age 6). Furthermore, contrary to the preceding curricula, the *L97* curriculum, which was in effect between 1997 and 2006, put more emphasis on reading and writing. The introductory chapter to the *L97* English

¹ Approximately aged 11.

² The transition from the 4th to the 5th grades, which is a transition from the primary to the intermediate level, commonly entails an alteration of classroom methodology, practices and materials. In the EFL classroom the differences between these levels might involve teachers switching from using L1 to using English as the primary classroom language, or teachers using the textbook more frequently on the intermediate level than on the primary level (Drew, 2004:21-3).

curriculum stated that pupils across all grades of compulsory schooling should be provided with a variety of texts that can inspire and intrigue them, and that the range of texts should also include authentic ones.³ Moreover, the interrelation between reading and other linguistic and cognitive skills was acknowledged, if not overtly emphasised. In contrast, the two preceding curricula, *M74* and *M87*, which had much focus on the production of oral language, did not overtly recognise the connection between reading and the development of overall language proficiency.

Norwegian pupils have historically scored relatively poorly on basic skills, such as reading, in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Hellekjær, 2007:23).⁴ The first PISA survey in Norway in 2000 was a catalyst for a new curriculum that could address the unsatisfactory reading skills of the Norwegian pupils. The *LK06* curriculum was consequently implemented in 2006. This curriculum lists a set of five basic skills for English of which reading is one. Thus reading has in *LK06* gone from being a '[f]orgotten to a basic skill' (Hellekjær, 2007:23).

Reading in *LK06* is emphasised as a means to gain knowledge in and about other areas, such as history, traditions and cultures of the English speaking world. The reading activity is in addition recognised as a means to develop abilities to reflect upon a variety of texts and to express thoughts about different kinds of texts.⁵ This multiple concept of reading is evident in the following selection of competence objectives after year 7:⁶

[pupils should be able to]

- use listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies that are suitable for the purpose;
- read and understand texts of various lengths and in various genres;
- read and talk about English-speaking children's and teenage literature from various media and genres, including prose and poetry;
- be able to talk about some persons, places, and events from English speaking countries;
- compare people and content in a selection of children's books written in English.

The changes to the National Curriculum since 1997, and the intentions in *LK06* in particular, indicate that the Norwegian Ministry of Education has realised the role of reading

³ Ministry of Education, 1999:238.

⁴ The most recent PISA test (2009) suggests that the reading skills of Norwegian pupils have improved, as the Norwegian reading proficiency now levels with the OECD median of 2000 (Universitetet i Oslo: 'Resultater fra PISA-undersøkelsene').

⁵ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

⁶ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

in language and literacy development, in this case in English. The work of the Ministry of Education to encourage the use of *The European Language Portfolio (ELP)*⁷ in Norwegian schools, alongside the Ministry's efforts to adapt the *ELP* to the Norwegian school system, further strengthens the perspective that reading has become increasingly important on a governmental level.

1.2 The present study and its aims

Since reading has been emphasised in the context of EFL in Norway in recent years, an aim of this study is to explore to what extent teachers have implemented or are willing to implement the reading-related objectives in the *LK06* curriculum into their EFL teaching practices.

Questions about what kinds of texts teachers use, access to books, and the extent to which pupils partake in what, when and where to read, will hopefully reveal teachers' attitudes and beliefs relating to the development of reading in the EFL classroom. These questions will hopefully also reveal how teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs influence their planning, decision making, and teaching practices.

It is recognised that separating the cognitive constructs of teacher cognition (knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs) may prove difficult, as these are complex and overlapping components (Borg, 2003:86). It is also recognised that the relationship between the cognitive and practical dimensions is further obscured by contextual factors such as curricular requirements, student aptitude, and instructional time (Borg, 2003:89; Graden, 1996:387). The hope is nevertheless that the reported practices, attitudes and beliefs of the teachers in the present study, henceforth 'the teachers', will reflect a broad picture of their cognition. Research justifies this postulation, as studies have found that teachers' classroom practices largely reflect their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs relating to the teaching of reading (Collie Graden, 1996:387-390).

Research on teacher cognition has, however, indicated that discrepancies between teachers' practices and their cognitive dimension occasionally occur, due to for instance curricular demands and school conventions. Yet another concern is the extent to which teachers are able to provide an exact account of the basis for their occasionally subconscious classroom decisions in retrospective (Borg, 2003:98). Probing about the teachers' practices, attitudes, and beliefs, and considering these constructs in relation to one another may

⁷ A self-assessment document developed as a tool to help pupils to monitor their language development. The document was developed by the Language Policy Division, which is affiliated with the Council of Europe, and it was launched across Europe in 2000. See section 2.3 for further information.

nevertheless reveal possible discrepancies between the teachers' practices and their attitudes and beliefs on the other hand (Borg, 2003).

Trends in teaching practices in Norwegian EFL classrooms are of interest because the *LK06* curriculum does not mention classroom methodology. It thus says nothing about how teachers should approach the teaching of language and literacy skills, for example syntactical skills and the extension of vocabulary. It further does not state how teachers should teach their pupils about the wider context for the development of language and literacy, such as about culture and history of the English speaking world. Hence EFL teachers might find meeting with the requirements of the *LK06* curriculum a challenge.

The common practice in the Norwegian EFL-classroom has traditionally been to rely on the textbook to a great extent (Drew, 2004:20; Hellekjær, 2007:26). Relying exclusively or almost exclusively on the textbook does not necessarily lead to poor reading proficiency among EFL learners. Such an approach does, however, offer the learners fewer opportunities for differentiating, for variety and for extensive reading. Supplementing the textbook with other reading materials could therefore be advantageous.

In the beginning of the academic year of 2010 the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training published guidelines for the teaching of EFL reading, and thereby for the implementation of the reading-related learning objectives in *LK06*. The *LK06* Teaching Guidelines offer EFL teachers some methodological tools by providing them with a range of articles and information about approaches to teaching and learning EFL. They further offer concrete examples of activities that promote reading development in English, all within the framework of *LK06*.⁸

However, it is unfortunate that these guidelines were published so long after the implementation of the *LK06* curriculum itself. Established teaching practices are assumed to be difficult to change (Borg, 2003:81). Teachers may during the four years of not having any methodological guidelines have established teaching practices that are inadequate in terms of reaching the learning objectives, and which may already be resistant to change. The thesis thus addresses the following research questions:

- What knowledge, materials, practices, attitudes and beliefs form the basis of 6th grade EFL teachers' teaching of reading?
- How do 6th grade EFL teachers implement the *LK06* curriculum with regard to the teaching of reading?

⁸Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (e): 'Veiledning til læreplan i engelsk.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2, 'The teaching context', considers the teaching of reading in the EFL classroom in Norway after 1997. The chapter elaborates on the background for the recent curricular focus on the development of reading, implications for the teaching of EFL reading following the implementation of the current curriculum, the design of recent textbook series, additional resources, and the education of teachers of English in Norway.

Chapter 3, 'Theory and literature review', elaborates on relevant theory in relation to the development of reading skills. The main sections of this chapter present theory related to the reading skill, classroom approaches to the teaching of reading, and teacher cognition.

Chapter 4, 'Method', presents the methodological approach employed in the study, namely using interviews as a tool of qualitative research. This chapter includes theory about the qualitative method. It additionally presents the processes of selecting subjects, structuring and testing of the interview, and conducting the interviews.

Chapter 5, 'The teacher interviews', provides summaries of the individual interviews of the study.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the study, and Chapter 7 concludes about the findings and further points to suggested areas for future research in the area of EFL reading development in Norway.

2 The teaching context

2.1 The position of English in Norwegian schools

The expectations towards the development of Norwegian pupils' English skills are defined by national curricula, which are revised approximately every ten years. The current curriculum, *LK06*, has in concurrence with the previous curriculum, *L97*, a separate syllabus for English, while other foreign languages are grouped together into one common syllabus. This manifests the position of English as 'the first foreign language in Norway' (Drew, 2009b:109). The emphasis on English in the curriculum furthermore implies that the Norwegian Ministry of Education recognises that 'English has become an indispensable tool in personal, public, and occupational domains' (Hellekjær, 2007:23).

English enjoys a high status in Norway, and it is a compulsory subject on both the elementary and the lower secondary levels (Drew, 2009b:110). English is also compulsory in the first grade of upper secondary schooling for students taking general studies courses, and in the two first grades for pupils taking vocational courses (both course groups henceforth referred to as 'grade 11'). English thereafter becomes optional.

The *LK06* curriculum represents a shift in the educational system because it introduces a coherent curriculum across grades 1-11. The two preceding curricula, *L97* and *R94*, had separate syllabi for the elementary and lower secondary levels, and further did not include the upper secondary level. Including grade 11 into the same curriculum as the lower levels indicates a view on language development as a continuous process that is not easily divided into levels. *L97* and *R94* have come to be regarded as 'poorly coordinated' compared to the current curriculum (Hellekjær, 2007:23).

The *LK06* curriculum states that the total number of 60 minute lessons for grades 1-7 should be 366 (138 lessons for grades 1-4, and 228 lessons for grades 5-7), 227 for grades 8-10, and 140 for grade 11. However, schools are at liberty to organise the distribution of lessons given on each level according to their own assessment of what is most beneficial for their pupils. The duration of the school lessons is also subject to individual adjustments. Although school lessons in Norway are traditionally given in 45 minute units, schools are free to organise the length of EFL lessons in whatever way they consider best.

2.2 Reading and the *LK06* English curriculum

The two most recent curricula, *L97* and *LK06*, have put much emphasis on reading and EFL development. In addition, *LK06* has introduced basic skills and ambitious competence aims (Hellekjær, 2007:23). The inclusion of these elements into the national curriculum, applying already from grade 1, confirms the Norwegian focus on YLLs and their reading development. The widened perspective on reading in *LK06* is evident in its multiple approach to the development of reading. The curriculum requires that pupils develop a wide vocabulary, abilities to read texts of varying lengths and of different genres, appropriate reading strategies for different reading purposes, and, after year 7, abilities to critically select and use different sources.⁹

Contemporary Norwegian textbooks conventionally consist of a textbook containing a selection of shorter and longer texts, a connected workbook that includes tasks and activities related to the texts and topics in the textbook, a connected audio-CD with recordings of texts from the textbook, a connected Internet site, a teacher's book, and sometimes also games.¹⁰ The textbooks usually include easier versions of a selection of the texts, and some textbooks are further divided into levels of language proficiency. Textbooks are further designed to largely correspond to curricula. The individual school decides whether the complete textbook set or just parts of it are to be purchased.

Effective teaching of reading does not only depend on the quality of the textbook, but also on how it is employed in the classroom. The terms 'Intensive Reading' (IR) and 'Extensive Reading' (ER) are commonly employed in connection with the teaching of reading. IR indicates that pupils study a text on a detailed level. The text is often relatively short, and pupils study it line by line, translating, analysing, and focusing all the time on linguistic aspects such as grammatical features and vocabulary. ER, on the other hand, infers that pupils read many longer texts at high speed while they focus on the meaning of the text rather than its linguistic details (Day and Bamford, 1998:5).

Norwegian EFL teaching has traditionally to a large extent been based on an intensive rather than an extensive use of the textbook (Drew, 2004:36; Drew, 2009a:106; Hellekjær, 2007:26). An intensive approach to the textbook implies close study of such aspects as grammatical features and vocabulary, while an extensive approach implies the inclusion of activities such as the teacher reading texts aloud, pupils dramatising parts of a text, and

⁹ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

¹⁰ The teacher's book generally includes suggestions of methodological approaches, note sheets and lyrics to a selection of English songs, and stencils for the teacher to photocopy and administer to the pupils.

discussions evolving around the contents of the text into the reading classroom. Although the IR approach is considered to contribute to reading development, it could nevertheless prove valuable to the development of pupils' reading skills if an ER approach was also included into Norwegian EFL reading classrooms (Drew, 2009a:106). Inclusion of additional reading materials in EFL classrooms might offer more opportunities for instance for self-selection, and more experiences with texts of different lengths and genres (Drew, 2004:35).

Since the current curriculum for English emphasises the role of reading, schools are expected to have implemented reading as a core activity in their EFL classrooms by now. It nevertheless appears that schools implement reading to a lesser extent on the primary level than intended by *LK06* (Drew, 2009b:110). However, reading *per se* does not necessarily lead to improved reading skills. It is assumed that pupils also need to be taught how to read in an effective way. It is further suggested that a lack of focus on ER and a long-term neglect of efficient teaching of reading skills in Norwegian EFL classrooms to a greater or lesser extent underpin the poor reading skills among Norwegian pupils (Hellekjær, 2007:26-27). Thus, in order for pupils to be able to meet with the requirements of *LK06*, it may not be an adequate approach if schools simply implement reading as a core activity, as focus should also be on teaching pupils how to read in an efficient way.

Widespread use of IR in EFL classrooms may severely affect the development of reading skills. Learners who continuously are instructed to focus more on the form of the text than on its contents may develop lifelong and slow reading strategies that do not allow for rapid, native-like ways of reading (Bell, 2001; Day and Bamford, 1998:3-9; Hellekjær, 2007:26-27; Krashen, 2004; Parker and Parker, 1991:178-81; Susser and Robb, 1990). Reading in a native-like way implies effortless and efficient reading, consciously or subconsciously applying appropriate reading strategies for the reading purposes (Day and Bamford, 1998:10-5). The IR approach to the teaching of reading is generally believed to only partly support, or it may even hinder, readers' comprehension of a text. An IR dense approach to the teaching of EFL reading does therefore not seem to meet with the widened focus on reading in *LK06* (Hellekjær, 2007).

The *LK06* curriculum aims to promote the autonomous pupil. This focus runs through the entire curriculum, but becomes clear in the common main learning objective for grades 1-11: '[the pupil should be] able to assess one's own language use, define one's own needs and selecting strategies and ways of working are requirements for attaining this'.¹¹ In the *LK06*

¹¹ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

Teaching Guidelines, the *ELP* is suggested as a tool to help the pupil to assess their linguistic development.¹²

2.3 The European Language Portfolio (ELP) and The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a self-assessment document that has been developed to help pupils monitor their language progress. It is divided into three main sections: ‘Language passport’, ‘Language biography’, and ‘Dossier’. The respective sections offer language learners opportunities to record information about their level of language proficiency, reflect about and assess their own language development, and collect materials and documents that confirm ‘the levels mentioned and the experiences reported’.¹³ The *ELP* exists in two versions in Norway, one for ages six to 12, and one for ages 13 to 18. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, which encourages the use of the *ELP* in Norwegian schools,¹⁴ has adapted both versions of the portfolio so that the *LK06* learning objectives and the portfolios correspond. The framework of the portfolios thus runs parallel to the curriculum, for instance in their mutual aims to assist pupils in their development of abilities to assess their own language use and development, abilities to select appropriate reading strategies, and abilities to define individual needs.

The *ELP* is further divided into five different areas of focus: production of oral language, oral employment of language, listening, writing, and reading skills. Of particular importance in the context of this thesis is the reading section in the *ELP*, which focuses on skills that are involved in the reading classroom. These skills include the learner’s ability to screen a text for information, to understand texts of various lengths and genres, and to express one’s own thoughts and feelings. The correspondence between the *ELP* and *LK06* is evident, and the *ELP* thus represents a resource for EFL teachers in their implementation of *LK06*, and for learners to reach the learning objectives of the curriculum. The encouragement of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training to employ the *ELP* in EFL classrooms at all levels (1-11) underlines the curriculum’s focus on pupils’ skills to self-monitor their own learning processes.¹⁵ Such skills are not necessarily learnt automatically and could therefore be regarded as ambitious on the pupils’ behalf. EFL teachers should be aware that it is

¹² Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (f): ‘Elevmedvirkning’.

¹³ Goullier, F. 2006. ‘Council of Europe tools for language teaching: Common European framework and portfolio’.

¹⁴ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (f): ‘Elevmedvirkning’.

¹⁵ Requirements to develop skills in monitoring and assessing one’s own language development apply from grade 7.

believed that such skills may need to be taught to the pupils, and that opportunities for individual choices should be provided. Providing opportunities for individual choices is considered important to the development of pupils' metacognitive skills because pupils are encouraged to be active participants in their reading development, making continuous evaluations of their level of literacy proficiency against the level of the material (Day and Bamford, 1998:121-2; Krashen, 2004:87-8; Little, 2003). Allowing pupils to select their own material is furthermore a way for the EFL teacher to facilitate differentiation.¹⁶

A corresponding document for language teachers, *The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)*, exists alongside the *ELP*. The *EPOSTL* is intended to encourage teacher trainees to reflect about and assess their own didactic competences, and to monitor and record their progress during their education and later career.¹⁷ *EPOSTL*, like the *ELP*, consists of three main sections: 'Personal statement', 'Self-assessment', and 'Dossier'. The respective sections aim to help teacher trainees in the initial stages of their careers to reflect about questions related to teaching in general, and to assess and reflect about their own learning. It also offers opportunities for collection of 'evidence of progress and to record examples of work relevant to teaching'.¹⁸ The document specifies teacher competencies, for example in the teaching of reading. Examples of such competencies related to reading include:

- Being able to select texts according to pupils' needs, level and interests;
- Being able to help pupils develop different strategies for coping with difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary;
- Being able to select appropriate post-reading tasks.¹⁹

The document further includes a user's guide and a glossary, which offer teacher trainees useful input in terms of concepts and terminology to enable them to describe and reflect about their development.

2.4 The National tests

The National tests are a governmental initiative under The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The aim of the tests is to provide individual schools and school

¹⁶A wider account of the effects of EFL teachers allowing for pupils to select their own reading materials is provided in Chapter 3.

¹⁷Newby, D. 2007. 'EPOSTL – a reflection tool for language teacher education'.

¹⁸European Centre for Modern Languages. 'European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages: A reflection tool for language teacher education'. 75.

¹⁹European Centre for Modern Languages. 'European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages: A reflection tool for language teacher education'.19.

districts with information about the level of proficiency across groups of pupils. The pupils are tested thrice during their course of formal schooling: in grades 5, 8, and 9. The tests do not test pupils in subjects per se, but in basic reading skills and skills in mathematics across subjects. However, the English tests differ from the other tests, as they are only based on the learning objectives in English. The English tests therefore focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar. They are online tests, and the pupils are not required to formulate written answers to questions, but to highlight elements, to move pictures around, or to mark words, pictures, blocks of text, or the right alternative. It needs to be emphasised that the National tests are not the same as the international PISA tests, which provide information about pupils' degree of proficiency on national rather than local levels, and which compare pupils' scores between nations.²⁰

2.5 Fremmedspråksenteret (The National Language Resource Centre)

The National Language Resource Centre (Fremmedspråksenteret) is funded by the Ministry of Education, and is one of eight language resource centres in Norway. It was initiated in 2005 to promote quality in L2 teaching and learning, and offers schools and L2 teachers access to articles and research. It additionally provides information and guidelines relating to the teaching of reading in English. It further arranges courses for teachers in schools and higher education. Its focus is on research and projects involving Norwegian teachers and pupils, but it regularly cooperates internationally with other centres and organisations within the field.²¹

2.6 Teacher education

Despite the added focus on reading at the primary level since 1997, the intentions of the Norwegian Ministry of Education to improve the levels of English reading proficiency of Norwegian pupils had not for many years been followed up in the area of teacher training and education (Drew, 2009b:110; Drew, 2009a:103; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:18). Since English has been a core subject in the Norwegian school system over a significant period of time, and since thousands of pupils received their compulsory EFL education during this period, the lack of follow-up in the area of teacher education appears as something of a paradox (Drew, 2009a:103). The discrepancy between the political intentions signalled by the *L97* and *LK06* curricula, and the quality of teachers' training was especially evident since English was an optional subject for teacher trainees. The consequences of the lack formal

²⁰ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (c): 'Hva er nasjonale prøver?'.

²¹ Fremmedspråksenteret: 'Informasjon om senteret'. 2.

requirements toward English teachers were revealed in Lagerstrøm's (2007) survey about Norwegian elementary teachers' level of formal competence, which was published in 2007.²² The survey revealed that 69 per cent of teachers in grades 1 to 4 and 52 per cent of teachers in grades 5 to 7 had no formal qualifications in English (Lagerstrøm, 2007:18). Despite the fact that English was not a compulsory subject for teacher trainees, students who graduated with a Bachelor of Education were still frequently asked to teach English (Drew, 2009a:103, Lagerstrøm, 2007:18-20). Lagerstrøm's survey revealed that across all elementary grades there were fewer formally qualified English teachers teaching in 2005 than in 1999. Furthermore, the number of teacher trainees who chose English as one of their optional subjects was decreasing (Drew, 2009b:110; Lagerstrøm, 2007:19). It is reasonable to assume that the level of language proficiency of EFL teachers affects the language development of the language learner, and requirements for formal English qualifications towards English teachers are thus significant to the language development of Norwegian EFL learners. This assumption is emphasised by Lagerstrøm (2007:10), as he states that formal qualifications of teachers directly impact pupils' learning processes. It would thus seem appropriate to require formal qualifications from teachers of English on all grades.

The importance of teachers' qualifications seems recently to have been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education, since the framework of teacher education was reformed in the autumn of 2010. Teacher trainees now specialise in either grades 1 -7 or grades 5 – 10. Of particular relevance to the education of English teachers is the requirement that teachers must now receive training in the subjects they will be teaching.²³ It may therefore be assumed that English teachers graduating from 2010 onwards will be better prepared to efficiently and appropriately teach their subject and meet with the *LK06* requirements. This does, however, not exclude the fact that many unqualified teachers will still be teaching EFL for the next decades. Thus the effects of the 2010 reform will be long in coming.

²² The survey was conducted by the Statistics Norway, and received financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Education.

²³ Ministry of Education: 'Om den nye grunnskoleutdanningen'.

3 Theory and literature review

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the present chapter is to examine issues related to the development of reading skills in a foreign language, and issues related to the teaching of reading. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 3.2 examines the age factor in relation to language learning and to L2 reading. The subsequent section, section 3.3, looks into different aspects of the reading skill, such as reading strategies, schemata, and vocabulary, and how these develop and relate to each other. Section 3.4 presents approaches to the teaching of reading, while the final section, section 3.5, considers teacher cognition, looking into constructs of teacher cognition, such as the impact of teacher education on classroom practices, and teacher cognition in relation to the teaching of reading.

3.2 The age factor in language learning

Since this thesis relates to EFL pupils aged approximately 11-12, it is considered relevant to address the age factor in language learning. Pupils who are currently in the 6th grade started learning English at the age of six, following the recent trend across Europe and other parts of the world to lower the onset age for the learning of foreign languages (Cenoz, 2003:77; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:1-4; Rixon, 1992:74; Rixon, 2000:6). The lowering of the onset age for EFL schooling in Norway to six in 1997 further adds to the relevance of addressing the age factor. The age factor in relation to foreign language learning has been an ongoing debate and a matter of controversy among scholars for decades. The focus here is, however, on recent research and theory connected to the age factor in language learning.

English is a foreign language in Norway as opposed to being a second language.²⁴ The main focus in this section is therefore on learning English as part of children's formal schooling, as opposed to through everyday situations. School-based studies of age and L2 learning are therefore the main sources of information in the present section.

The belief in young learners gaining advantages from formal language teaching is to a large extent founded on the perception that the apparent ease with which children acquire their L1 is transferrable to L2 learning situations (e.g. Cenoz, 2003:77; Lightbown and Spada,

²⁴ The concept of 'second language' implies that the language is acquired through natural settings, such as in the home, or in society, if the second language is recognised as a formal language by the state's government. The concept of 'foreign language', on the other hand, usually implies that the language is learnt in formal learning settings, such as in school. Speakers of a second language will typically encounter more texts in the target language compared to a foreign language learner. The use of the term 'second language' (L2) in this thesis refers to a learnt foreign language as opposed to a second language.

2006:73; Rixon, 2000:8; Singleton and Ryan, 2004:62). The belief that there is an optimal age for language learning prevailed among laypeople, language teachers, and scholars for decades, and it was further strengthened when the ‘Critical Period Hypothesis’ (CPH) was introduced by Lenneberg in 1967. The CPH argues that linguistic development is a process submissive to the neurological maturation of the brain. The central notion of this theory is the idea that ‘the human capacity for language acquisition [is] constrained by a critical period beginning at age two and ending around puberty’ (Singleton, 2003:4). Lenneberg (1967:176) argues that languages can still be learnt after entering puberty, but that the learning process would then be more laborious. He nevertheless asserts that language proficiency after entering into puberty can no longer develop from mere exposure to the target language.

Scholars have since 1967 largely fallen into two separate groups: those who believe that younger is better in language learning, and those arguing that the correlation between young age and language proficiency does not necessarily imply a causal relationship between the two (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008:3). The belief that there is an optimal age for language learning additionally still has a strong foothold among both language teachers and laypeople (Singleton and Ryan, 2004:61-2; Rixon, 1992:75; Pinter, 2006:28; Singleton and Ryan, 2004:198). This public belief in the CPH continues to have implications for school systems across Europe and the rest of the world as a widespread political will to reform school systems has consequently manifested itself, yet often contrary to research. The result is the widespread recent trend to lower the foreign language onset age of YLLs (Rixon, 1992:74-5).

One factor remains frequently cited in the debate concerning the relevance of age in foreign language learning, namely that exposure to the target language is essential for reaching high levels of language proficiency (Cenoz, 2003:77; Driscoll, 1999:11; Lightbown and Spada, 2006:68; Pinter, 2006:29; Rixon, 2000:8). This argument correlates with theory about Emergent Literacy, which essentially emphasises the importance of linguistic input in the developmental process of a child’s literacy skills (Dickinson and Beals, 1994; Hall, 1994; Lancy, 2004). The emphasis on the value of linguistic input in literacy development is further echoed in Extensive Reading theory, which claims that second language learners who read more develop higher levels of proficiency in reading and writing (e.g. Bell, 2001; Day and Bamford, 1998:37, Elley, 1991; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Hellekjær, 2007:28; Krashen, 2004; Singleton and Ryan, 2004:201-23).

Despite the assumed importance of exposure time, formal school settings seldom provide learners with enough lessons in the target language to create a learning environment that is similar to the L1 development setting. Research evidence suggests that older foreign

language learners, due to their superior cognitive capacity, learn quicker than YLLs in the initial stages of the language learning process. Thus it has been argued that in the context of formal language learning, '[o]lder learners may be able to make better use of the limited time they have for second language instruction' (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:74). This claim obtains support from other scholars (Singleton and Ryan, 2004:201).

There appears to be little conclusive research evidence on the basis of which to fully accept or dismiss the notion of a critical period in L2 development (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:75; Pinter, 2006:29). Still, it has been asserted that the lack of consistency across studies implies that there is no critical period for language learning. If there was, there should be no room for individual variation, which research suggests there is (Singleton, 2003:16). Faced with the lack of evidence promoting or contradicting the CPH, it has been suggested that the most adequate way forward, at least for the time being, may be a multiple approach to the age factor in L2 learning. A multiple approach involves paying attention to a range of factors rather than looking for one single factor, such as age, for successful L2 learning (Krashen, 1984:43-45; Singleton, 2003:18).²⁵

3.2.1 Emergent Literacy

The concept of 'Emergent Literacy' is relevant to the issue of age in literacy development. This concept takes into account the role of children's pre-school years in the development of literacy, i.e. children under approximately six years of age (Rixon, 2000:5). Emergent Literacy theory also takes into account the role of the home in literacy development, and further regards oral language activities to be important for the development of literacy skills (Dickinson and Beals, 1994:29-40; Hall, 1994:15-30; Lancy, 2004:1-19).

Before the 1970s, the development of literacy skills was largely considered as a process starting at onset of formal language instruction. Literacy skills have further traditionally been viewed as a matter for explicit instruction as opposed to skills that may develop naturally, therefore requiring an educated instructor, i.e. the language teacher (Hall, 1994:15-9). However, the works of scholars from the 1970s onwards, e.g. Smith (1971), Clay (collected in Clay, 1982), and Goodman (collected in Gollasch, 1982), brought about a paradigm shift in the view of the development of literacy in children. This paradigm shift redefined the view of development of literacy skills, which went from being considered as a perceptual process to also being considered as involving meaning-based and social activities.

²⁵ Adult language learners may for instance be more apprehensive and thus more reluctant to speak the target language compared to young children (Cenoz, 2003:77; Lightbown and Spada, 2006:68; Pinter, 2006:29).

The social dimension of literacy development includes talk about and modelling of activities to do with literacy (Hall, 1994:18-20; Lancy, 2004:1-5). Oral activities were thereby also included in theory about prerequisites that facilitate the development of literacy skills. Oral texts, which imply meaningful talk, are believed to introduce the child to the meaning potential in language, as well as to the structures, words, and sounds that manifest these meanings (Hall, 1994:18-23). Thus, more skilled family members are believed to provide the child with a bridge between the child's concrete life and abstract representations of life (Hall, 1994:18-23). Within this view of literacy, pretend play with peers, dinner table conversations, and especially bedtime reading (Barton, 2007:140-59) are all valuable linguistic encounters. Such oral texts are not only regarded to be important in order to promote knowledge about the world and linguistic structures, as they are also regarded to support the metacognitive development; thus supporting development of abilities to think about texts in abstract ways (Barton, 2007:140-59; Hall, 1994:18-28; Lancy, 2004:2-11).

A research project by Cambourne (1983) that involved immersing kindergarten children aged five in literacy events, such as environmental print and talk about writing, supports Emergent Literacy theory as it concludes that such literacy programmes '[seem] to have a great potential for leading young learners into literacy' (Cambourne, 1983:26).

This multiple view of the foundations for literacy development thus opposes the view of the early stages of literacy development as resting on systematic and sequential classroom activities, literacy development in itself being a neutral and value-free activity (Hall, 1994:16-9). With a view to history, the legacy of Vygotsky and his social-constructivism theory further becomes evident.²⁶

The new paradigm catalysed arguments that the development of literacy presupposes pre-knowledge about literacy, which children bring with them to their first class at school. The view that becoming literate is a continuous and social process further brought about interest in the role of environmental print,²⁷ in the role of oral language activities in literacy development, and the role of the home (e.g. Cameron, 2001:145-6; Dickinson and Beals, 1994; Gregory and Williams, 2000:33; Hall, 1994:18-23; Lancy, 2004:1-5). This emphasis on the home in literacy development has implications for children who grow up in non-literate or

²⁶ Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist who viewed children as active participants in their own learning processes. He argued that the social environment played a part in the learning situation. According to Vygotsky, help and support from a more skilled person would promote learning. For further reading, see Vygotsky's book *Mind and Society, the Development of Higher Mental Processes* (translated into English in 1978).

²⁷ I.e. printed text that the child encounters in its surroundings. Such print could include for example the advertisements in a department store, or the cereal box on the breakfast table.

less literate homes (Gregory and Williams, 2000:33). These implications will, however, not be examined in the present thesis.

Thus, to sum up, Emergent Literacy theory has extended:

- the timeframe for *when* literacy occurs: literacy is believed to start emerging long before the onset of formal language instruction;
- the view of *what* contributes to literacy development: oral texts and modelling assist in the development of literacy;
- the view of *who* contributes to literacy development: parents and other literates contribute prior to and alongside the language teacher.

Emergent Literacy theory may have implications for language classrooms. These implications relate to the potential for literacy development that lies in activities such as the teacher reading aloud to the class or the teacher discussing a text with the class. Such activities are generally considered to be enjoyable to the learners, which may in itself motivate the language teacher to employ them. However, on the basis of Emergent Literacy theory, they may also be considered valuable literacy events. The potential for the development of literacy that lies in oral activities is largely academically recognised, yet it is argued that schools and teachers frequently fail to recognise the possibilities for literacy development that lie in such activities (Lancy, 2004:3).

Literacy is furthermore assumed to emerge in fundamentally the same ways in L1 and L2 (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983:54). Emergent Literacy theory therefore has similar implications for L1 and L2 classrooms (Lancy, 2004:16). Young learners' potential for developing literacy skills in foreign languages has manifested itself not only in scholarly theory, but also in curricula across Europe, and other parts of the world. Following this trend, the two most recent Norwegian curricula, *L97* and *LK06*, have put emphasis on EFL literacy development from the very beginning of formal schooling.

3.3 The reading skill

Reading involves a number of different reading activities, purposes, and strategies. The dynamic, complex, and interrelating correlation between the cognitive and the interactive processes may be defined as follows: 'Reading comprises decoding of the written text on the one hand, and efficiently processing the information gained on the other' (Hellekjær, 2007:23). This definition obtains support from other scholars (August et al., 2008:144; Grabe,

2002;²⁸ Day and Bamford, 1998:12). Because the many facets that constitute the reading activity are closely intertwined, defining this activity may require a multiple approach. This section about reading therefore examines the reading skill from two angles:

- The cognitive perspective, which refers to the processes that happen in the brain when a person reads;
- The interactive (psycholinguistic) perspective, which refers to the various processes that together constitute efficient reading.

3.3.1 What does being able to read mean?

With regard to the cognitive perspective, the reading process involves the working memory (sometimes also referred to as the short-term memory), and the long-term memory. The working memory may be defined as the part of our memory where input is immediately processed and passed on to be stored in our long-term memory.²⁹ The working memory contrasts with the long-term memory, where material is stored permanently, as the working memory has a very limited capacity. It is believed that information cannot be retained in our working memory for more than 25 to 30 seconds, and that this part of our memory also has a limited capacity for storing information. It is generally assumed that the working memory only has the capacity to store between seven to nine ‘chunks’ of information (Hellekjær, 2007:23). Hellekjær (2007:23) explains that ‘[a]n analogy for “chunks” here would be that it is easier to remember a twelve-digit telephone number as six pairs of numbers than as a single, twelve-digit unit’. Thus, if a reader interrupts the reading process, for instance to look up or phonemically decode an unfamiliar word, what the reader has been reading immediately prior to stopping the reading activity will have dropped out from the working memory after approximately 30 seconds. The reader will then have to reread the passage (Day and Bamford, 1998:14; Hellekjær, 2007:23). With regard to the teaching of reading, it thus seems evident that teaching ELF learners reading strategies that frequently rely on the working memory would be unbeneficial.

The interactive perspective encompasses dynamic processes that together create the basis for efficient reading. Efficient reading, which is sometimes referred to as fluent reading, implies ‘to read with apparent ease and lack of effort, rapidly breezing through the material’ (Day and Bamford, 1998:12). It is argued that efficient reading to a large extent rests on a skill generally referred to as ‘automatic word recognition’ (Day and Bamford, 1998:12;

²⁸ Grabe, 2002. ‘Foundations for L2 reading instruction’.

²⁹ Flognfeldt, 2010. ‘Targeting vocabulary’.

Grabe, 2002; Hellekjær, 2007:23). This skill involves accurate, rapid, and automatic recognition of words, and is valuable in that it frees mental capacity for the reader's mind to attend to processes such as reasoning. It further frees mental capacity for the reader to attend to other aspects that assist comprehension, such as background knowledge, or 'pre-knowledge', about the topic and about the world. Pre-knowledge is assumed to be crucial for the reader to be able to construct meaning from what is being read (Day and Bamford, 1998:12). This aspect of efficient reading is called 'schemata theory' (see section 3.3.2).

It is assumed that efficient reading requires access to a wide general vocabulary, which consists of the words that the reader knows. Words that a reader is able to recognise automatically from their form are furthermore frequently referred to as 'sight vocabulary', which efficient reading is believed to depend upon (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998:12-8; Hellekjær, 2007:28). However, it is assumed that there is no causal relationship between a large sight vocabulary and comprehension. A large sight vocabulary nevertheless allows for lexical access, which implies a process of automatically retrieving the meaning and phonological representation of a word from the mind of the reader. Lexical access is crucial if a reader is to develop efficient reading skills, because '[t]he phonological representations of the words in a sentence hold the words in working memory long enough for comprehension to occur' (Day and Bamford, 1998:14).

A large sight vocabulary is assumed to develop by overlearning words, which implies frequently encountering the same words in various contexts to the point where these words are automatically recognised when read (Day and Bamford, 1998:16). Reading quantities of texts, i.e. reading extensively, is considered to be useful to reading development because the reader is offered repeated encounters with a wide range of words (Elley, 1991; Grabe, 2002; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Krashen, 2004:46-7).

3.3.2 Schemata theory and (EFL) reading

The focus of schemata theory is generally on the reader rather than on the text per se. The assumption is that the text itself does not carry meaning, but that meaning is rather constructed during a process that involves the reader relating what is read to the pre-knowledge that the reader brings to the reading task (Carrell, 1984:332-33). Knowledge about different text types and of the world is thus considered to be necessary to develop abilities to read in an efficient way, since it is upon such pre-knowledge that comprehension is based (e.g. Carrell, 1984:332-3; Day and Bamford, 1998:18-9; Grabe, 2002; Lugossy, 2007:77; Nunan, 1999:257).

Schemata are defined as a frameworks of pre-knowledge and expectations about the world that new information is integrated into (Carrell, 1984:332-33; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:556; Day and Bamford, 1998:14-5; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:79). Pre-knowledge is assumed to consist of ‘the reader’s knowledge of the language, the structure of texts, a knowledge of the subject of the reading, and a broad-based background or world knowledge’ (Day and Bamford, 1998:14). The reader attempts to make sense of new information by mapping it against their schemata (Carrell, 1984:332-33; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:556-61). When new information fits into the framework, comprehension occurs. Thus the more pre-knowledge the reader brings to the text, the better the comprehension (Carrell, 1984:332-33; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:553). The appropriate schemata must therefore exist in order for comprehension to occur, and the reader must also know how to activate them (Carrell, 1984:333).

A potential problem concerning second language reading is the occasionally culture-specific nature of schemata. Thus, the reader’s L1 schemata may not be transferrable to an L2 reading context (Carrell, 1984:340; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:562; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:205; Hellekjær, 2007:26; Nunan, 1999:258). L2 readers might therefore lack the schemata needed in order to accurately process and comprehend a text. For example, a reader who comes from a culture without a tradition for inviting people to coffee parties may understand little if reading a Norwegian text in which such coffee parties are occasionally referred to. The reader may believe that the characters sit in a room together and, for instance, taste coffee, or that they simply drink coffee for the sake of drinking it. If coffee is furthermore exchanged with tea or altogether dropped, and for no obvious reason, the reader might entirely fail to comprehend the text. A reader who is familiar with Norwegian social conventions and traditions would, on the other hand, most likely immediately deduce that the characters meet primarily with the intention to informally socialise or discuss important matters, whether or not coffee is actually served.

The Norwegian reader would understand such implicit concepts because the appropriate schemata exist and are activated. If compared to the foreign reader, the Norwegian reader would in this example to a larger extent be able to focus on the content of the text because mental capacity is not occupied with attempting to understand the concept of coffee parties. It has been suggested, although not with specific reference to Norwegian EFL classrooms, that L2 teachers frequently address such processing and comprehension problems by encouraging less proficient readers to work on their linguistic skills, for instance by expansion of vocabulary. However, although some comprehension problems may occur due

to deficiencies in the foreign reader's linguistic skills, it is assumed that they in some cases moreover relate to a shortage of L2 schemata in the reader (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:562, Nunan, 1999:258).

Two other concepts, 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing of text, also relate to schema theory and reading comprehension. Bottom-up processing of text refers to reading as the decoding of written symbols into words. Top-down processing of text, on the other hand, refers to reading as reconstruction of meaning (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:557; Nunan, 1999:252-3). Top-down processing implies that the reader 'makes general predictions based on ... schemata and then searches the input for information to fit into these partially satisfied ... schemata' (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:557).

In the efficient reader, these two processes would typically occur simultaneously (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:557; Nunan, 1999:254). Recent research, however, suggests that efficient reading is mainly a bottom-up process, resting on automatic word recognition and a large sight vocabulary (Hellekjær, 2007:23-27). Activities to promote schema-building in the L2 learner may still prove useful to enhance the learner's text comprehension (Nunan, 1999:260). Returning to the example about the Norwegian coffee party tradition, learners could for example read about the background for the coffee party tradition, or they could have a role play in which a coffee party was central.

Schemata theory is further considered in section 3.4.4. Additional examples of tasks and activities that could help to develop efficient reading skills are provided in sections 3.4.2, 3.4.4, and 3.4.5.

3.3.3 Reading strategies

A reading strategy could be defined as an action or a sequence of actions that the reader employs during the reading activity in order to construct meaning (Šamo, 2009:122). Reading strategies include the following (Hellekjær, 2007:23-6; Nunan, 1999:137-251; Susser and Robb, 1990):

- skimming: reading rapidly to get the general idea about what the content of a text is;
- scanning: searching for specific information in a text;
- receptive reading: automatic and rapid reading, for instance for the purpose of reading a narrative;
- reflective reading: frequently pausing the reading activity to reflect on content.

It is argued that the development of reading strategies is '[o]ne of the most important issues in L2 reading' (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:138). Reading strategies are therefore

considered vital to comprehension. Experienced readers are often strategic readers, which implies that the reader knows what reading strategies are and how to employ them (Grabe, 2002; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:18; Hellekjær, 2007:23; Šamo, 2009:122).

Speed is an element of the concept of reading strategies that is regarded to be crucial in text comprehension, as slow reading involves the working memory (Bell, 2001; Hellekjær, 2007:23). One implication of second language lessons that mainly focus on linguistic details as opposed to content is that learners frequently pause their reading to look up unfamiliar words. The learners consequently impair their comprehension of the text. One commonly suggested approach to avoid disruptions of the reading process is to approximate the meaning of or to simply ignore unfamiliar words where possible (Hellekjær, 2007:27).

However, reading at high speed does not equal comprehension. Appropriate employment of reading strategies may, on the contrary, sometimes involve slowing down the reading speed, for instance to decode an unfamiliar word that is essential to comprehension. It follows from this that the efficient teaching of reading strategies involves the teaching of abilities to adequately adjust the reading speed to the reading purpose (Bell, 2001). Some texts, for instance nutrition labels on groceries, may require reading at slow speed. Contrastively, some texts, for instance a novel, may be more efficiently processed if read at a high speed. The purpose for the reading activity thus partially forms the basis for the reader's choice of reading strategy, whether consciously or subconsciously. Hence, being able to identify the reading purpose is additionally regarded to be an important aspect of efficient reading (Grabe, 2002). The strategic reader is assumed to be able to automatically employ the appropriate strategy for the reading purpose (Grabe, 2002; Hellekjær, 2007:23; Šamo, 2009:122).

Finally, abilities to monitor one's own reading process are considered to be important to comprehension. The monitoring of the reading process implies that readers recognise problems concerning, for instance, concentration, memory, clarifications, and the establishment of coherence in text. These strategic skills are important aspects of efficient reading and comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:18). Abilities to draw on schemata and abilities to recognise schemata discrepancies also depend on self-monitoring skills, further underlining their importance (Šamo, 2009:128).

3.4 The teaching of reading

The present section examines the teaching of reading. First, Krashen's (1984:10-32) 'Five Hypotheses about Second Language Acquisition' are presented. Next, the issue of appropriate

reading materials for foreign language learning is considered. Thereafter follow presentations of three common classroom approaches to the teaching of L2 reading, the influence of reading on the development of efficient reading skills, and, finally, of reading-related activities.

3.4.1 Krashen's 'Five Hypotheses About Second Language Acquisition'

Krashen's (1984:10-32) five hypotheses about L2 acquisition have had a significant impact on the scholarly debate about the teaching of reading in L2 classrooms since the 1980s. It thus seems appropriate to include a short presentation of the hypotheses. The hypotheses are presented in the same order as Krashen arranges them, which is as follows: a) 'the acquisition-learning distinction', b) 'the natural order hypothesis', c) 'the Monitor hypothesis', d) 'the input hypothesis', and e) 'the affective filter hypothesis'.

Krashen (1984:10-2) regards his acquisition-learning distinction hypothesis as the most fundamental of the five hypotheses. Language learners who acquire a second language as opposed to learn it are argued to develop linguistic knowledge subconsciously; thus language fluency cannot be explicitly taught. Krashen further argues that the ability to acquire language, as children do with their L1, does not disappear around the time of puberty. On the contrary, adults can also acquire language. Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis is in this respect also a contribution to the debate concerning the age factor in language development. The remaining presentation of Krashen's hypotheses employs the terms 'learn' and 'acquire' according to Krashen's distinction.

The second of Krashen's (1984:12-5) five hypotheses, 'the natural order hypothesis', argues that language learners tend to acquire grammatical structures in a certain order. Research studies, for instance, suggest that the plural marker /s/³⁰ precedes acquisition of the third person singular /s/³¹ and the possessive /s/³² (Krashen, 1984:12). The order of L2 acquisition is not dependent on the order of L1, which according to Krashen gives evidence of the existence for a natural order of acquisition. Krashen argues that in L2 classrooms where acquisition rather than learning is the goal, grammatical sequencing of the lessons is not beneficial to the linguistic development.³³

Krashen's (1984:15-20) third hypothesis, 'the Monitor hypothesis', claims that spontaneous use of language, which is a hallmark of fluent language, can only occur if the language is acquired as opposed to learnt, because learnt language can only ever function as a

³⁰ E.g. 'two boys'.

³¹ E.g. 'he comes home tomorrow'.

³² E.g. 'John's dog'.

³³ I.e. deliberately teaching linguistic structures, often one at the time (Krashen, 1984:68). This concept largely corresponds to what is referred to as 'explicit language instruction' (ELI) in the present thesis.

‘Monitor’. The Monitor function is similar to an editor that makes corrections only after an utterance has been produced. Three conditions must be met before the speaker is able to employ the Monitor function: a) the speaker needs sufficient time to consciously think through the utterance, b) the speaker must focus on how the utterance is produced rather than the content of the utterance, and c) the speaker must know the appropriate linguistic rule. The requirement of these three conditions to be present limits the benefits of the Monitor function. Krashen nevertheless suggests that the Monitor function could be useful as an addition to the acquired language competence if the speaker knows how to employ the Monitor in an optimal way, that is, not too frequently, nor too seldom.

The fourth hypothesis that Krashen (1984:20-30) presents is ‘the input hypothesis’. This hypothesis is also linked to another of Krashen’s (1984:62) concepts: ‘Optimal Input for Acquisition’. The input hypothesis maintains that linguistic structures develop similarly in L1 and L2, that is, through sufficient amounts of comprehensible input. Reading material on an ‘i + 1’ level is assumed to be comprehensible. ‘i’ represents the learner’s current linguistic level, and ‘+1’ represents linguistic elements that are just beyond the learner’s current level, but which the learner still is able to understand from context (Krashen, 1984:20-21). Texts on an ‘i + 1’ level would thus be comprehensible to the language learner and at the same time facilitate for acquisition of language structures via approximation of the meaning and function of unfamiliar linguistic elements (see section 3.4.2).

The last of Krashen’s (1984:30-2) hypotheses, ‘the Affective Filter hypothesis’, relates to the affective dimension of language learning. The concept of an Affective Filter in connection with L2 development was first presented by Dulay and Burt in 1977. Krashen has further researched and developed the concept, concluding that performers with high motivation, high self-confidence, and a good self-image who are allowed to perform in a low anxiety environment tend to learn the target language more successfully. This conclusion is based on the theory that in situations where the affective filter is heightened, ‘the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition’, even if the input is fully comprehensible (Krashen, 1984:31). The affective filter might occur in the individual language learner or in a group of language learners, and it may occur due to personal or contextual factors. Teachers should therefore facilitate low-anxiety learning settings in order to promote successful language learning. In order to promote low-anxiety learning settings in the L2 classroom materials and classroom practices should not test what language learners cannot do, but rather assist them in reaching a higher level of proficiency. The L2 teacher should avoid pressuring individual learners to speak before they feel ready and avoid error

correction to the extent possible. Further relating to the matter of affections, Krashen (1984:73-6) argues that learners should also be provided with comprehensible input to avoid negative affections following failure to comprehend.

3.4.2 Selecting appropriate L2 reading materials

It is believed that readers need to know approximately 95 per cent of the word tokens they encounter during the reading activity, including proper names, in order for a high level of text comprehension to occur (Grabe, 2002; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:76-7). In relation to L2 reading, it is suggested that beginning readers should not encounter more than one or two unfamiliar words per page (Day and Bamford, 1998:121, 2002:137).

Reading materials that meet with these requirements are believed to offer developing readers opportunities for successfully guessing, or ‘approximating’, the meaning of unfamiliar words and the functions of structures from context (Day and Bamford, 1998:17-8; Elley, 1991:402; Krashen, 2004:13). This is assumed to be important for two main reasons. Firstly, learners avoid stopping up their reading sequence to look up words in a dictionary, and they thereby avoid impairment of comprehension. In this context, approximation functions as a reading strategy. Secondly, comprehensible reading materials may facilitate learning of new linguistic elements by approximation. In this context, approximation functions as a language learning method. According to theory, linguistic structures that occur at a high frequency will thus eventually be subconsciously learnt through reading (Hellekjær, 2007:27; Krashen, 1984:20-2, 2004:13-5). Krashen refers to such incidents of subconscious learning as ‘incidental learning’ (Krashen, 1984:20-2, 2004:13-5). In relation to Krashen’s acquisition-learning hypothesis, incidental learning correlates with acquisition as opposed to learning because there is no focus on language instruction, but rather on reading for meaning. According to Krashen (1984:24, 2004:13-5), Incidental learning thus refers to the way L1 is acquired, which is assumed to make it relevant also to L2 learning settings.

Incidental learning, or approximation, has been argued to be the most adequate method for expanding learners’ vocabulary and knowledge about grammar and syntax (Elley, 1991:388-409; Krashen, 1982:20-30; 2004:17). The rationale is that the context in which the structure appears allows the learner to ‘acquire considerable knowledge about its grammatical properties’ and the social conventions that are affiliated with it (Krashen, 2004:19). Such knowledge is claimed to be difficult both to teach and to learn through ELI (Explicit Language Instruction). Research additionally suggests that learners remember new words for longer if the words are learnt incidentally rather than learnt through ELI (Krashen, 1984:81,

2004:15; Lugossy, 2007:78-83). To promote automaticity of vocabulary, as opposed to expansion of vocabulary, Day and Bamford (1998:16-7) suggest providing learners with ‘i minus 1’ material. The ‘i minus 1’ material may contain some ‘i + 1’ elements, but not to the extent that the unfamiliar elements become distracting to the learner, i.e. not more than one or two unfamiliar words per page (Day and Bamford, 1998:16-7).

Krashen’s (1984:62) concept of ‘Optimal Input for Acquisition’³⁴ emphasises the importance of providing language learners with comprehensible reading materials. Day and Bamford (1998:53) argue that the reading materials for language learners should focus on the development of efficient reading skills and reading confidence and should therefore be on an *i minus 1* level. The requirement of comprehensibility and interest/relevance when selecting reading materials for L2 learners introduces the debate about what materials are appropriate for L2 learners. Bell (2001) argues that ‘an extensive reading program based on graded readers is much more beneficial to the development of reading speed than traditional reading lessons based on the close study of short texts’. This view challenges the scholarly view that has dominated the debate about appropriate reading materials for L2 classrooms since the 1970s, namely that reading materials, including for beginning learners of a foreign language, should be ‘authentic’ (Day and Bamford, 1998:54).

An aspect that has complicated the issue of authentic texts versus graded readers is the lack of agreement on what the terms ‘authentic’ and ‘graded’ imply. In this thesis, ‘authentic’ relates to texts whose primary purpose is to mediate meaning, the text appearing coherent, clearly organised, and meaningful. ‘Graded’ on the other hand relates to texts that take into consideration language learners’ limited linguistic skills and schemata. Graded texts may be either simplified versions of books, often classics, or they may be simplistic books written for the purpose of language learning. It is claimed that this consideration of the L2 beginning reader has frequently led to graded readers appearing comprehensible, yet uninteresting/irrelevant in terms of contents, which has further resulted in a common aversion against using such materials in L2 classrooms (Day and Bamford, 1998:53-62).

A current consideration of the authentic versus graded text debate is to include both in the L2 reading classroom because both types of texts have the potential of being appropriate reading materials for L2 learners. Authentic children’s books may for example be appropriate reading materials for beginning L2 readers. Thus, rather than focusing on the authentic-graded

³⁴ This concept asserts that learners’ material should be interesting and/or relevant, the material should not be grammatically sequenced, it should be comprehensible, and it should be provided in sufficient quantity (Krashen, 1984:62-73).

distinction, focus may more usefully be directed to using a variety of text, but which are carefully selected in order to avoid for example incomprehension, employment of inadequate reading strategies, and loss of motivation (Day and Bamford, 1998:53-62).

Failure to comprehend texts or continuous failure to reach a level of linguistic proficiency that allows for effortless reading may produce affective experiences commonly associated with low motivation and negative attitudes towards reading (Day and Bamford, 1998:25-31; Grabe, 2002). According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, negative affective variables in the language learning process, such as low motivation, low self-confidence, and high levels of anxiety, may prevent development of language (Krashen, 1984:31). Grabe and Stoller (2002:89) support the assumption that learners' affections impact on their linguistic development, as learners with high intrinsic motivation and learning goal orientation are assumed to be better at coordinating cognitive processes and strategies in reading. They also read more, which in turn may assist their development of reading skills.

In order to ensure that learners are offered comprehensible, interesting and relevant reading materials, it is suggested that L2 classrooms benefit from having easy access to a collection of texts that range over different levels of difficulty and interest, whether graded or authentic. The collection may consist of texts such as authentic children's books, newspapers, magazines, comics, young adult literature, graded readers, and translations of books from the learners' L1 into the target language (Day and Bamford, 1998:97-105). Still, it may be difficult to evaluate the level of comprehensibility of a text. One suggested approach is to monitor learners' dictionary use: too much *necessary* use of dictionaries implies that the text is too difficult. Too much *unnecessary* use of dictionaries implies that learners are not employing appropriate reading strategies, meaning they do not approximate the meaning of unfamiliar words (Susser and Robb, 1990).

Self-selection of materials is another suggested approach to ensuring that pupils read appropriate texts. Allowing learners to select their own reading materials further encourages learner autonomy and provides pupils with motivation and helpful tools for reading outside of school (Krashen, 2004:87-9). It is emphasised that before allowing learners to select their own reading materials, the teacher should underline that the goal is to build efficient reading skills not through embarking on difficult texts, but rather 'through much practice with easy texts' (Day and Bamford, 1998:92). Learners should furthermore be informed that they may have to tolerate 'less than total comprehension' (Day and Bamford, 1998:120), which is not to say that overall incomprehension should be tolerated.

3.4.3 Approaches to the teaching of reading

Efficient reading and text comprehension are interrelated L2 skills. Because of the efficient reader's ability to read rapidly and effortlessly, enough mental capacity is freed to accurately and efficiently process the text, which then becomes comprehensible to the reader. Scholars therefore claim that efficient reading skills are crucial to comprehension (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998:15; Grabe, 2002; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:17-29; Hellekjær, 2007:23-26). Efficient reading requires a large sight vocabulary, a wide general vocabulary, sufficient schemata, and abilities to select adequate reading strategies for the reading purpose (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983; Day and Bamford, 1998:12-9; Hellekjær, 2007; Lugossy, 2007; Susser and Robb, 1990). There exists a variety of classroom approaches to the teaching of L2 reading, but most of the approaches fit into one of the following categories: Explicit Language Instruction (ELI), Intensive Reading (IR), or Extensive Reading (ER).

Explicit Language Instruction (ELI) is a common approach to the teaching of foreign languages (e.g. Bell, 2001; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:70; Hellekjær, 2007:26-9; Olsen, 2004:32). One example of ELI is that learners memorise words from a vocabulary list, after which they are drilled through exercises and tests (Elley, 1991:377). L2 reading lessons also commonly include IR, which usually implies that the language learners read shorter texts, explicitly focusing on linguistic details (form). ER is frequently suggested as an alternative to ELI or IR. ER lessons mainly focus on the context of the text (meaning) rather than on its form. Some or all three approaches are commonly employed in combination, and yet more approaches may be added. The present section looks into the ELI, IR, and ER approaches in relation to the teaching of reading skills in L2 classrooms.

ELI is generally based on two processes: skill-building and error correction (Krashen, 2004:18). ELI lessons are furthermore frequently based on two methods to a greater or lesser extent combined: 'grammar-translation', and the 'audio-lingual' approach. The grammar-translation method generally consists of skill-building activities and exercises revolving around vocabulary lists and grammar rules. Learners do exercises to practise rules and vocabulary, and obtain corrections if errors are made (Krashen, 1984:127-32, 2004:18). The audio-lingual approach requires that learners mimic and memorise dialogue in the target language, and thereafter practise it (Krashen, 1984:129-30).

Intensive reading (IR) runs alongside ELI in its focus on form, as IR refers to reading with an overt focus on linguistic details (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:5). IR reading lessons thus treat texts as a means to present, practise, manipulate, and consolidate linguistic features (Bell, 2001; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:5; Susser and Robb, 1990). The texts that are read in IR

lessons are usually written for the purpose of language instruction and drilling of linguistic features (Elley, 1991:337; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:5). It is therefore argued that IR does not focus on reading per se, and that IR does not promote efficient reading skills (Bell, 2001; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:5; Susser and Robb, 1990).

Approaches to the teaching of reading that rely on ELI and/or IR to a considerable extent have received much criticism over the course of recent decades. Critics argue that the IR and ELI approaches do not reflect real life linguistic needs, such as being able to skim or scan a text searching for information (Beard, 1991:229; Hellekjær, 2007:25-6). ELI and IR are therefore teaching approaches that, due to their focus on instruction and manipulation of the target language, are suggested to frequently deviate from learners' motivation to learn the target language³⁵ (Day and Bamford, 1998:4; Krashen, 1984:127-32). These approaches are therefore assumed to fail to encourage motivation in the language learner (e.g. Krashen, 1984, 2004; Day and Bamford, 1998). Due to the heavy focus on form that these approaches keep, they may largely fail to facilitate sufficient reading skills for learners to be able to reach a high level of comprehension and reading efficiency. The rationale for the emphasis on meaning over form correlates with theory about Emergent Literacy, which argues that literacy development is an complex process that involves not only linguistic processes, but also cognitive and social processes. The context for learning development, i.e. the material and the purposes for the activity, should furthermore appear meaningful to the learners in relation to all three dimensions (linguistic, cognitive, social) (Day and Bamford, 1998:29-125, 2002; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983:56; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Hall, 1994:18-23; Parker and Parker, 1991:180). IR and ELI lessons are believed to include the cognitive and social processes only to a very limited extent (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1984, 2004).

In terms of the learning of vocabulary, it is asserted that L2 learners may learn a list of words through ELI and IR, but they might not be able to access the variety of meanings and conventions that the words encompass (Krashen, 2004:19). Hellekjær (2007:26-7) additionally questions whether these methods can to provide sufficient exposure to the target language for the L2 learner to be able to develop adequately sized general and sight vocabularies needed in effortless reading. IR is further believed to impair reading speed (Bell, 2001; Hellekjær, 2007:27-9). The relationship between reading and the development of reading strategies, motivation to learn the target language, expansion of vocabulary, and reading speed is further attended to in section 3.4.4.

³⁵ For instance for academic or conversational purposes.

To sum up about ELI and IR, scholars largely claim that these approaches do not in isolation promote L2 reading development and comprehension (e.g. Bell, 2001; Day and Bamford, 1998; Elley, 1991, Hellekjær, 2007; Krashen, 1984, 2004). Grabe and Stoller (2002:70) assert:

[L]earning to read does not fit well with a notion of learning rules and practicing them, or learning separate strategies and practicing them outside of the reading context; yet rule-based assumptions about language learning predominate much [L2] learning.

Extensive Reading (ER) is a widely recognised alternative to the ELI and IR approaches in relation to L2 reading development (e.g. Beard, 1991:237; Bell, 2001; Day and Bamford, 1998; Elley, 1991; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:70; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Hellekjær, 2007:27-9; Krashen, 1984, 2004, Lugossy, 2007; Susser and Robb, 1990). ER implies that the reader reads quantities of texts at relatively high speed, focusing on meaning rather than on form (Day and Bamford, 1998:5). Numerous L2 reading programmes largely correspond in their main foci.³⁶ These foci typically include learners reading for meaning and learners reading large amounts of comprehensible texts of high interest and/or relevance (Day and Bamford, 1998; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:4; Krashen, 1984, 2004; Lugossy, 2007:79; Elley, 1991:376). The term ‘ER’ is consistently employed throughout this thesis to refer to such reading programmes in general since it is frequently and widely used by scholars and others dealing with reading development, for example language teachers. The rationale for employing ER approaches is further discussed in the following section.

3.4.4 Reading in the context of language development

Efficient reading requires large sight and general vocabularies (see section 3.3.1). Efficient ER programmes are generally assumed to have greater potential for assisting expansion of vocabulary than IR or ELI schemes because the frequency of linguistic encounters is higher in ER programmes (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998; Elley, 1991; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Krashen, 1984:80-1). The amount of words needed for a learner to become an efficient reader is approximated to be 10-15.000 word families³⁷. It is assumed that such a quantity of words is too vast to be taught through ELI or to be learnt through IR (Hellekjær, 2007:27-8; Krashen, 2004:18).

³⁶ E.g. ‘Sustained Silent Reading’ (SSR), ‘Free Voluntary Reading’ (FVR), ‘supplementary reading’, ‘book-flood’, ‘whole language approach’, and ‘pleasure reading’.

³⁷ The term ‘word families’ implies ‘a base word and all its different forms and derivatives’ (Hellekjær, 2007:27).

The positive view on the value of reading in the building of vocabulary has, however, also been contested. Some scholars consider approximation as an inefficient vocabulary expansion method and an unreliable method for learners to achieve adequate text comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:72-4). The rationale for this claim is that efficient readers guess the meaning of words less than poor readers because they have a large sight vocabulary (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:72). Approximation is nevertheless widely recognised as a useful reading strategy (Day and Bamford, 1998:93; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:74-5; Hellekjær, 2007:27; Parker and Parker, 1991:182). Day and Bamford (1998:93) sum up the role of approximation in efficient reading as follows:

Part of fluent and effective reading involves the reader ignoring unknown words and phrases or, if understanding them is essential, guessing their approximate meaning. Fluent reading is hindered by a reader stopping to use a dictionary.

L2 learners' inabilities or reluctance to approximate is assumed to be a consequence of heavy IR focus in the L2 classroom, which often implies heavy focus on the form and meaning of vocabulary. Language learners who are primarily offered IR dense L2 reading lessons over a long period of time are believed to develop inadequate reading strategies as their default strategies. It is furthermore suggested that such reading strategies are resistant to change. Thus even advanced L2 readers may quickly revert to IR reading strategies when under pressure, despite having developed more sophisticated reading strategies (Hellekjær, 2007:26-7).

The claim that access to reading strategies and knowledge about how to employ them is essential to the development of efficient reading skills indicates that the teaching of such strategies in L2 classrooms may be important to learners' reading development. The teaching of reading strategies does not, however, necessarily mean that a teacher should teach 'a set of individual strategies', but that teachers should rather aim 'to develop strategic readers' (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:81-2).

Developing strategic readers is assumed to be a particularly challenging and time consuming undertaking, mainly due to two reasons: a variety of strategies and skills in combining reading strategies when reading needs to be developed. Abilities to select strategies while reading rest on subconscious decisions. This further complicates the teacher's task as subconscious skills can be difficult to address (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:82). Grabe and Stoller (2002:82-4) nevertheless argue that these subconscious processes should be explicitly taught and practised extensively until automatised.

Scholars additionally assert that learners' self-monitor skills are crucial in efficient reading, since self-assessment of comprehension encourages the reader to focus on the meaning of the text rather than on its form. Self-monitoring skills furthermore exercise the learners' skills in using formal and/or content schemata to repair discrepancies in their text comprehension.³⁸

Suggested approaches to help L2 readers develop reading strategies are, for instance, offering learners explicit instruction about what strategies are, for instance by comparing L2 and L1 strategies. It could also prove useful to build metacognitive awareness about reading strategies, for instance through verbalisation of, and reflection and discussions about, reading strategies (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:84-5). Once the learners have established an understanding of what reading strategies are and how they are employed, the strategies may be consistently practised through extensively reading comprehensible texts in different genres and in different text types (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:84-5; Hellekjær, 2007:28). Experiences with different genres and text types may also help expand learners' schemata.

Schemata may be divided into two sub-categories: 'formal schemata', which implies knowledge of text structures and genres, and 'content schemata', which implies knowledge about the world (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:560). Building schemata in L2 readers may accordingly be approached from different angles. Scholars generally argue that ER activities promote development of both content and formal schemata in L2 learners (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998:18-9; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:80-5; Hellekjær, 2007:28). Some scholars, however, claim that the ER approach is not sufficient, because although some learners may intuitively learn formal schemata through ER, the ER approach does not necessarily lead to the development of adequate formal schemata in all L2 learners (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:81). L2 learners may therefore also need explicit instruction to build formal schemata (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:80-1; Nunan, 1999:260).

Formal schemata instruction may include exercises in identifying, examining, and analysing characteristic features of different genres, for instance that a text that begins with 'Once upon a time' usually is a fairytale. Exercises in identifying, examining, and analysing linguistic features, such as grammar and vocabulary, could also be useful. The L2 teacher could approach these issues by highlighting the organisation of text information, for instance through graphic representations (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:80-1).

³⁸ Hellekjær, 2009: 'Lesing som en grunnleggende ferdighet: en utfordring for engelskfaget'.

Content schemata correspond to knowledge about the world. Approaches to assist expansion of content schemata may include learners reading 'longer, conceptually complete texts, rather than short, conceptually incomplete texts' (Carrell, 1984:339). The rationale is that reading a long text about one topic within the style of one author, perhaps even consistently encountering specialised vocabulary, facilitates building of formal and content schemata in the learner (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:566; Carrell, 1984:339). It could also be useful if the teacher provides the learners with intensive and explicit information about a topic (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:560-1). The learners' pre-knowledge about the topic could aid their understanding of and familiarisation with new structures (Carrell, 1984:339; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:560-1). Scholars even suggest that such pre-knowledge is generally more important to the readers' comprehension of a text than understanding of text structures (Nunan, 1999:257-60).

Having the appropriate schemata in place does not necessarily equal efficient reading, as the schemata must also be activated (Carrell, 1984:333). Activation of schemata is often connected to pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. Scholars regard pre-reading activities as a particularly effective way to activate learners' schemata (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:75-232; Nunan, 1999:259-60; Parker and Parker, 1991:180). Pre-reading activities may include predicting about the topic and/or structure of the upcoming text, guessing the meaning of key words in the text, discussions around the title of the text, a pre-view of the text, discussions around learners' related personal experiences, or discussions around the cover or illustrations (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:75; Parker and Parker, 1991:187-8). Pre-reading activities could also reveal gaps in pre-knowledge or lack of motivation to read the text, which would allow the teacher to take steps to repair the problems (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:75).

While-reading and post-reading activities are also claimed to be helpful in the L2 reading classroom (Day and Bamford, 2002:138; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:232-236; Parker and Parker, 1991:188). Such reading activities could include stopping the reading activity to make predictions about what will happen next, making wall posters or book illustrations, and dramatising the entire or parts of the text (Day and Bamford, 2002:140-55; Parker and Parker, 1991:188-9). The purposes of these activities are mainly to assess the learners' level of text understanding, and thereby also detecting any in- or miscomprehension, to develop learners' reflective and self-monitoring skills, and to make the learners responsible for their own reading. While- and post-reading activities may also offer teachers opportunities to provide learners with information to repair knowledge gaps before they continue the reading activity

or move on to other activities (Day and Bamford, 1998:140-55; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:232-236).

3.4.5 Reading-related activities

Emergent Literacy theory has increased researchers' interest in enjoyable learning activities in the YLL classroom. In the context of this thesis, 'enjoyable learning activities' refer to reading-related activities, such as dramatisation of texts or the teacher reading aloud.

Language teachers, especially teachers of YLLs, have traditionally intuitively employed such activities, despite not having been offered research evidence of the benefits of such activities in reading development. Teachers' intuitive practices have of recent obtained support from research studies, which appears to have catalysed an increased confidence and interest in reading-related activities in many L2 classrooms (Brewster et al, 2004:186; Rixon, 1992:82). Consequently, reading-related activities are currently 'recommended as memorable and pleasurable ways of presenting and practicing language with children, at least as part of a course if not as its entire vehicle' (Rixon, 1992:82). Reading-related activities also frequently provide opportunities for comprehensible input. Brewster et al. (2004:186-97) argue that:

- the environment supports understanding and learning: the responses to the text that the learner's peers display, e.g. laughter, may aid understanding and emotional development;
- the teacher supports understanding and learning: the teacher can emphasise points through for example making sound effects, gestures, intonation, or recitation of vocabulary;
- the situation supports understanding: the teacher may stop the reading session to collectively do while-reading activities, such as looking at illustrations and anticipating what will happen next;
- the mode supports understanding: the teacher reading aloud could help the transition from home to school through a familiar, predictable activity (for those children who have been read to at home).

The considerable number of reading-related activities prevents all being mentioned, thus only two selected activities of relevance to the present thesis are presented here, namely reading aloud and Readers Theatre.

Reading aloud activities may include the teacher reading aloud to the class, or shared reading, i.e. the teacher reads aloud while the pupils read the same text. The potential benefits of the teacher reading aloud are believed to be substantial. By watching and listening to the

teacher reading a text aloud, learners are introduced to such aspects of literacy as how to handle books, how books convey form and meaning, and the joy of reading (Barrs, 2000:275; Bearne and Cliff Hodges, 2000:256; Cameron, 2001:141). The input that reading aloud of texts offers may also increase learners' formal and content schemata, thus directly facilitating increased reading skills (Cameron, 2001:141). The experience of being read to is also believed to resonate better with boys' general preferences than the individual reading of texts. Thus such activities could help to minimise gaps in reading motivation and proficiency between boys and girls, which is often an issue in reading classrooms (Bearne and Cliff Hodges, 2000:259).

It is furthermore assumed that it is easier for learners to focus on the contents of a text if it is read aloud to them, especially if preceded by pre-reading activities. Reading aloud activities also provide ample opportunities for literacy events such as talking about pictures while reading, and talking about the form and meaning of the text as a while- or post-reading activity (Barrs, 2000:275; Brewster et al, 2004:186-7; Cameron, 2001:141). Discussions about texts and the reading activity are considered important to build metacognitive skills in language learners (Bearne and Cliff Hodges, 2000:262-4).

The second activity, Readers Theatre, is also believed to be a valuable activity in the reading classroom. Readers Theatre may be employed in different ways to suit the classroom. A common approach is that a group of learners take turns reading small parts of a text aloud.³⁹ Thus few materials are strictly needed. The Readers Theatre concept may further be described as follows (Stewart, 2010:80):

Readers Theater (RT) includes all the excitement of performing a play, but none of the hassles – no props to track down, no costumes to sew, no sets to build. Sometimes students memorize their lines, but more often they read directly from their script...Children are natural performers, and they love using their imaginations, so RT makes reading practice an adventure instead of a chore.

Learners may apply as little or much dramatic effects to their performance as they wish to. Thus Readers Theatre may be an enjoyable and dramatic reading-related activity, which also connects oral and written language.⁴⁰ Readers Theatre also provides opportunities for teachers to invite learners to actively partake in the reading activity and to introduce learners to reading for meaning. It additionally has the potential to assist expansion of learners' formal and content schemata, and is further believed to increase learners' mastery over such aspects of

³⁹ Drew, 2010: 'Using Readers Theatre in language teaching'.

⁴⁰ Drew, 2010: 'Using Readers Theatre in language teaching'.

language learning as vocabulary and comprehension (Drew, 2010⁴¹; Garrett and O'Connor, 2010:7-13; Stewart, 2010:80).

3.5 Teacher cognition

The present section examines the influence of teacher cognition in the classroom. Section 3.5.1 introduces the field of research of teacher cognition. Section 3.5.2, 'Constructs of teacher cognition', is divided into three parts, in accordance with Borg (2003): teachers' personal experiences as language learners, teacher education, and teachers' classroom practices.

3.5.1 Researching teacher cognition

Teacher cognition refers to 'what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom' (Borg, 2003:81). Emerging during the 1970s, teacher cognition is a relatively recent domain of research. Thus, research into teacher cognition is faced with multiple challenges, including (Borg, 2003, 2006; Sendan and Roberts, 1998):

- the majority of studies about teacher cognition and language learning have been conducted in first language settings. The majority of studies about teacher cognition in other language classrooms focus on second language settings as opposed to foreign language settings;
- the most frequent target language is English;
- most of the research focuses on teachers who are native English speakers;
- few studies focus on state-school settings, in which the teaching context may be different compared with, for instance, university or private school settings;⁴²
- there is a shortage of longitudinal studies;
- there is a shortage of global studies, hence research evidence may not apply across language settings;
- there are few systematic programmes of research;
- researchers have not yet agreed on a common terminology;
- the teaching of grammar and literacy is overrepresented as reference points for studies into teacher cognition, as opposed to the teaching of listening or oral skills;
- there are few studies conducted in classrooms of YLLs;

⁴¹ Drew, 2010: 'Using Readers Theatre in language teaching'.

⁴² The pupils may for example not be studying the target language voluntarily, classes might be of a different size, and material resources might be of better or poorer quality.

- few studies aim to replicate the results of previous studies.

The cognitive constructs that make up teacher cognition are unobservable elements in the classroom (Borg, 2003:81). Scholars nevertheless assert that these cognitive constructs manifest themselves in teachers' practices and classroom decisions (Borg, 2003:81). Borg (2003:83-98, 2006:35-40) points to some factors that are assumed to contribute to the complexity of researching teacher cognition.

First is the matter of the cognitive factors being personal, individual factors that are embedded in the teachers' minds. These factors may thus be difficult to access for research purposes (Borg, 2003:86). Next is the interactive relationship between the constructs. Since the constructs are generally considered as closely intertwined, the different dimensions may prove difficult to separate. It is assumed that the relation between teacher cognition and classroom practices is particularly complex. These two dimensions continuously affect each other throughout the career of the teacher, and are thus unstable constructs. For instance, the plans that the teacher makes prior to entering the classroom provide a framework for the lesson, while the course of the lesson might prompt the teacher to substantially revise and redirect the lesson (Richards, 1998:74).

3.5.2 Constructs of teacher cognition

Teachers' personal experiences as language learners

It is argued that '[b]eliefs established early on in life are resistant to change even in the face of contradictory evidence' (Borg, 2003:86). Some of teachers' beliefs may fall into this category, and they may further echo the teachers' own experiences as language learners. Borg (2003:88) refers to a research study that observed student teachers during a practicum. This study revealed that the teachers' behaviour was to a large extent based on their recollection of teachers, classroom methodologies, and materials from their own experiences as L2 learners.

Borg (2003:88) further refers to a study of practising teachers, in which one teacher who had been unsuccessful at learning French during years of ELI avoided formal instruction in his practice as a teacher. The same teacher had, however, learned French through six months of communicating with French speakers. The teacher had consequently established a belief that second languages are most efficiently learnt and taught through communication, as opposed to through ELI. It is argued on the basis of studies such as the above that L2 teachers may promote or avoid certain activities based on their own experiences as language learners. In sum, it is believed that teachers' own learner experiences form a model upon which their

initial conceptualisations are based, and that these experiences may continue to exert influence on their cognition. It is nonetheless suggested that these experiences may be altered during teachers' education (Borg, 2003:87-91).

Teacher education

The role of teachers' professional education in teacher cognition is a matter of controversy. The consensus is nevertheless that teacher education to a greater or lesser extent impacts on cognition (Borg, 2003:89; Richards, 1998:21-9). It is suggested that the aspect of teacher cognition that is the most influenced by teacher education relates to teachers' systems of concepts.

Abilities to reflect about own practices are considered crucial to the professional growth in the teacher, as such reflective abilities may 'help teachers move beyond a level where they are guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine' (Richards, 1998:21). This claim obtains support from research on teacher trainees, which suggests that trainees' cognition changes during their education in aspects such as knowledge of professional discourse, the dimension of timing, and trainees' metacognitive abilities to evaluate their own teaching (Borg, 2003:89).

Although the consensus is that teacher education influences teacher cognition, some aspects may be useful to consider when studying changes in teachers' practices and cognition during education. Firstly, in terms of cognition, the results within studies vary, which indicates that teacher cognition is an individual dimension in teachers. The dimension of individuality makes teacher cognition difficult to access, and therefore equally difficult to study for research purposes. Secondly, while teacher education may align teachers' practices within a group, individual teachers' cognition may still vary. Teachers' practices, therefore, do not necessarily reflect their attitudes or beliefs. This is assumed to indicate that teachers may change their practices in accordance with contextual demands, for instance school conventions, while they at the same time maintain their attitudes and beliefs (Borg, 2003).

Sendan and Roberts (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of student teachers over a course of 15 months, which revealed that although the student teachers did not change their individual cognition *contents*, their teacher education did nevertheless result in a change in their cognition *structure*, i.e. the hierarchical organisation of the content. This study thus suggests that student teachers during their education may add new constructs to their cognition, reorganise the structure of their existing cognition, establish flexible constructs, i.e.

clusters of constructs that varied according to different situations, and establish a stable overall structure. These findings are further supported by Richards (1998:73-81).

Teachers' classroom practices

Teachers' classroom practices are argued to be manifestations of their attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge. However, the teaching context, i.e. 'the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom' (Borg, 2003:94), is also assumed to influence teachers' practices. Teachers working in the same school may, for instance, implement 'a set of shared principles through diverse practices' (Borg, 2003:96). These agreed-upon practices may, however, not necessarily reflect the teachers' cognitions. It is suggested that such discrepancies between cognition and practice frequently occur due to contextual factors (Borg, 2003:94). The cognitive dimension of teacher cognition is nevertheless generally assumed to manifest itself in classroom practices in the form of the teacher's instructional choices, whether planned or improvised, in principles that the teacher wishes to implement, and in the teacher's thoughts in relation to various contextual factors (Borg, 2003:91; Richards, 1998:51-72).

Reasons for teachers' instructional decisions are assumed to include aspects such as concerns for learners' comprehension and learners' strategies to achieve comprehension, timing, and quality and quantity of 'teacher talk'. In addition come the decisions that teachers make 'in the face of unexpected difficulties' (Borg, 2003:93). Unexpected events may prompt the teacher to depart from the original plan for the lesson. Such departures are regarded to be a consequence of the continuous interaction between teacher and pupils. The teacher may, for instance, introduce an unplanned-for activity if the pupils are not able or motivated to carry out the planned activity. Improvised decisions thus reflect teachers' interpretations of classroom situations, and may further influence teachers' future decisions. If the decision results in a positive classroom experience, for instance if the teacher manages to calm a noisy classroom by introducing a new activity, the teacher may later opt for the same decision if faced with a similar situation. However, improvised decisions may similarly result in negative experiences, for instance if the teacher feels pressured to revert to classroom practices that are in conflict with their principles. Such negative experiences are also included into the teacher's cognition, and may thus influence the teacher's future decisions (Borg, 2003:92-3).

Teachers' classroom practices are further assumed to be influenced by contextual factors, such as requirements of parents, headmasters or curricula, society, resources, school

conventions and environment, or the physical classroom layout (Borg, 2003:94). In terms of the broader teaching context, teachers working with pupils who are perceived as frequently misbehaving may modify their classroom practices because of their pupils' behaviour.

Examples of contextual factors that influence teachers' practices include heavy workloads, shortage of time, large classes, unmotivated students, and a strongly conventional college.

Research indicates that teachers faced with such contextual factors may, for example, avoid experimenting with new teaching methods (Borg, 2003:94-5).

Research also indicates a correlation between length of teaching experience and teachers' beliefs. It appears that less experienced teachers more frequently embrace recent theories of teaching than more experienced teachers, who tend to align themselves with older theories of teaching (Borg, 2003:102, 2006:145).

Researchers largely agree that the relationship between attitudes, beliefs and knowledge on the one hand, and classroom practices on the other, is a dynamic one. Experiences from teachers' classroom practices are incorporated into their cognitions. Thus, when teachers later draw on their experiences, their decisions relating to which practices work and which do not work might appear intuitive, while they are ultimately manifestations of the teachers' accumulated classroom experiences and their cognition (Borg, 2003:95).

3.5.3 Teacher cognition and the teaching of reading

A study by Collie Graden (1996) involving six L2 teachers examined three common beliefs of language teachers: a) students need frequent opportunities to read; b) the target language should be the language of reading instruction; and c) reading aloud interferes with comprehension. All the subjects' believed that these three aspects of language teaching were important, yet all six practices deviated from these three beliefs. The subjects reported that their main reason for compromising their beliefs was the consideration of students who were unable or unmotivated to perform according to the expectations of the teachers.

Collie Graden's study suggests that learner aptitude and motivation are major concerns for language teachers. These factors are moreover the most frequent reasons for teachers' classroom frustrations, and teachers' departing from their beliefs (Collie Graden, 1996: 390). Collie Graden's study points to common challenges in the teaching of L2 reading. The study further indicates that the motivation of the students may take precedence over teachers' beliefs of what constitutes efficient teaching of reading. This in turn indicates that cognition is hierarchically structured (Collie Graden, 1996:389-94).

The findings of this study further demonstrate the complexity of research into the relationship between practices and cognitive constructs, as they are also influenced by contextual factors. Collie Graden's study thus support the general assumption following research into teacher cognition, namely that teaching practices are not a theoretical, static, and linear dimension, but rather a dimension within which the teacher continuously construct new practices on the backgrounds of new and old experiences (Borg, 2003; Richards, 1998:65).

Finally, Collie Graden (1996:394) suggests that it may be useful to address conflicts between cognition and context by teachers and teacher educators. By addressing such conflicts, 'new strategies to minimize conflict and to maximise preferred instructional choices' may be developed (Collie Graden, 1996:394).

4 Method

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter describes the methodology employed in the thesis. The method used for the collection of data, the semi-structured interview, is first presented. The subsequent sections describe the processes of planning the interview, selecting and obtaining subjects, and piloting, structuring, and conducting the interviews. The processing and presentation of the findings is finally presented.

4.2 Qualitative research

Because qualitative research is extremely flexible, there is no one way to conduct interviews (Lichtman, 2010:13). However, some distinct features of the interview are noticeable, especially compared to quantitative methods. One particular characteristic of qualitative studies is what they aim to establish. As opposed to quantitative research, which in general aims at testing hypotheses, qualitative research generally aims at ‘providing an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience’, which in turn involves describing and understanding ‘human phenomena, human interaction, or human discourse’ (Lichtman, 2010:12). The interview further allows for ‘collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals’ (Borg and Gall, 1989:446).

It is normally not required that the interview should ‘test hypotheses or ... generalize beyond the particular group at hand’ (Lichtman, 2010:12). Qualitative research is conversely expected to describe the results of a study, and to interpret this description (Lichtman, 2010:12). Interpretation and description together form yet another dimension of qualitative research, namely the possibility for several ways of interpreting the data. The researcher’s interpretation may thus be only one of many possible interpretations. It is consequently important for the credibility and legitimacy of the study that the data is collected, organised, analysed and presented in an appropriate manner (Lichtman, 2010:14).

4.2.1 Methodological concerns

There is a high risk of bias in qualitative research (Lichtman, 2010:13, 16). Firstly, bias in qualitative research is frequently related to communication between interviewer and interview subject. Such bias may affect how questions are asked and how they are answered (Basit, 2010:115). Thus, the flexible and dynamic nature of the interview is at the same time its strength and weakness (Borg and Gall, 1989:448).

Secondly, the central role of the researcher in qualitative research creates possibilities for bias in the forming of the study. This bias arises because it is often the researcher who controls the processes of selecting subjects for the study, defining what information the study aims to obtain, and deciding which instruments are going to be used for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data (Lichtman, 2010:16, 20).

Thirdly, personal involvement of the researcher may influence the results of a qualitative study. If the researcher develops a personal involvement with the interview subjects, or if the researcher possesses or during the process develops a political stance or agenda, the researcher may assume the role of an advocator and might try to improve the human condition of the subjects (Lichtman, 2010:12-3). In sum, to eliminate bias entirely in either interviewer or subject is assumed to be impossible in qualitative research (Basit, 2010:115; Lichtman, 2010:16).

Furthermore, a qualitative study like the present one has possible limitations in terms of stability of results over time. Due to the present study being based on a small number of subjects, and due to it not being a longitudinal one, it could limit itself to merely being a snapshot of Norwegian EFL classrooms. Consequently, the results may only be valid for a specific point in time and space. This aspect, on the other hand, is part of the nature of qualitative research. Since the qualitative study ‘does not seek duplication to claim reliability’ (Basit, 2010:70), there is furthermore no decisive reasons why the fluid nature of qualitative research should pose a major obstacle in obtaining valid research results. Eight subjects will hence hopefully prove a sufficient number for the purpose of the present study, namely to reveal certain trends about teachers’ beliefs, attitudes to, practices, and materials used in connection with reading development in the Norwegian intermediate EFL classroom.

Finally, teachers’ choices of classroom practices, which is assumed to largely be manifestations of teachers attitudes and beliefs, may moreover, be influenced by contextual factors, for example changes to the curriculum or a new headmaster. Thus, interpreting to what extent teachers’ choices are based on contextual versus cognitive factors may prove a challenge. This dimension is difficult to control for in a study like the present one. The choice of collecting data through a semi-structured interview will hopefully help to disclose whether it is contextual or cognitive factors that underpin the teachers’ reported practices and choices. Due to the stability that the structure of such an interview provides, and due to the possibilities for in-depth probing during the actual interviews, this postulation appears plausible.

4.2.2 The semi-structured interview

Lichtman (2010:13) asserts that '[t]here is not just one way of doing qualitative research'. The semi-structured interview is nonetheless the most favoured method for studies in educational research (Basit, 2010:103). The reason is that it permits the interviewer to 'obtain more data and greater clarity' (Borg and Gall, 1989:446). The semi-structured interview is furthermore considered as reasonably objective and it is also considered as the 'most appropriate for interview studies in education' (Borg and Gall, 1989:452), which makes it suitable for the purpose of collecting data for this thesis.

4.3 Selection of subjects

The informants for this thesis were eight randomly selected 6th grade teachers. Although a larger sample would have provided more data and to a greater extent prevented a biased sample (Borg and Gall, 1989:445), time limitations did not permit this.

The schools were randomly selected within the county of Rogaland, although an effort was made to include schools from different regional areas within the county. This effort was made in an attempt to ensure to a large extent as possible that the sample was representative of both urban and rural areas. However, a side effect of including smaller schools from rural areas was that there in some schools was only one teacher teaching English at the 6th grade level. Hence, in these cases there was no process of selection of one among several teachers. In the remaining cases the headmasters were initially approached. Each school was informed that the subjects' identities and the identities of their workplaces would be anonymised in the thesis. Once the eight respective headmasters had consented, possible subjects were randomly selected, where feasible, and subsequently approached. The eight subjects consented after having been approached by each school's respective headmaster.

4.4 Design of the study

For reasons mentioned in section 4.2.1, the semi-structured interview appeared to be suitable for the purpose of collecting data for this thesis. The interviewer followed an interview guide to ensure that the subjects were asked a common set of questions, which would help prevent the risk of a biased sample (see Appendix 1).

In terms of the timeframe of the interviews, the aim was to limit each interview to approximately one hour. A longer interview might have stretched the subjects' concentration, and/or the subjects' patience with the interview situation. An interview lasting for over an hour would also have produced too large quantities of data to analyse within the time restrictions of this thesis.

4.4.1 The piloting process

The interview was piloted twice to ensure that it was of a suitable length, and to ensure that the questions were unambiguous. The number of pilot interviews was, in accordance with Basit (2010:71-2), regarded to be sufficient for the present study. Neither of the subjects included in the pilot study were part of the actual study.

The piloting process was assumed to be of importance in detecting if any of the questions in the interview guide might be perceived by the subjects as leading,⁴³ and in revealing if the questions appeared to be comprehensible and clear to both subjects and the interviewer. In addition, the pilot study offered an opportunity to test technical facilities, such as lap top and recording devices.

The pilot interviews revealed no problems regarding comprehension or any of the questions being leading. It additionally revealed that the length of the interview was well within the stipulated time frame of one hour. The time spent on each pilot interview moreover allowed the subjects to ask questions and/or reflect on the interview questions, while not significantly exceeding the time frame. Hence, no alterations were made to the original interview before doing the eight interviews that would provide the actual data.

4.4.2 Applicability of the pilot interviews

Despite the positive outcome of the pilot interviews, the actual interviews themselves revealed that one of the questions in the interview guide was not as comprehensible to the subjects as predicted. The question in focus, question 4 in the ‘Beliefs and attitudes’-section (‘What do you think about the importance of reading skills compared to oral/written skills?’), seemed unclear to the subjects. However, this did not prove to be a major obstacle, as the subjects immediately understood the question once they was offered further explanation from the interviewer.

4.4.3 Structure of the interviews

To help ensure perception of the interview as logical and clear, it was divided into five sections (see Appendix 1):

1. *Background*, e.g.

- ‘For how long have you been teaching English?’

⁴³ A leading question could for example be one that initially refers to research evidence about a classroom practice, and thereafter asks what the subject thinks about this practice. Other examples may be starting a question with phrases such as ‘I suppose your attitude to this is ...’, or ‘I believe this to be likely, to what extent do you agree?’.

- ‘What qualifications do you have?’

The inclusion of this section was regarded as relevant because it has been asserted that ‘cognition not only shapes what teachers do but ... in turn [is] shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate’ (Borg, 2003:95). Hence, asking the teachers background questions, such as questions about their level of pedagogical training, the extent of their teaching experience, and questions about their formal education in English was considered as necessary in order to be able to evaluate their cognitions as precisely as possible.

2. *Materials*, e.g.

- ‘What texts do you use in the classroom?’
- ‘Who decides what materials you can have/use in your school?’

The intention of the materials section was to find out about materials that the teachers employed in their teaching of EFL reading, and to what extent they may partake in decisions about what materials to purchase and use in their schools.

3. *Practices*, e.g.

- ‘What do you think has influenced your teaching practices?’
- ‘How would you normally go through a text in class?’

The purpose of this section was to find out about the teachers’ practices when working with texts, and what their attitudes and beliefs relating to a selection of practices were. This section also allowed for probing about the teachers’ attitudes and beliefs towards the National test.

4. *Beliefs and attitudes*, e.g.

- ‘What are your attitudes towards using the textbook?’
- ‘What do you consider to be important when selecting texts for a class?’

The aim of this section was to obtain data from the teachers about their reflections relating to what constitutes appropriate materials and practices in the EFL classroom.

5. *Resources*, e.g.

- ‘Are you familiar with the *European Language Portfolio*?’
- ‘Have you received any information about how to implement the curriculum?’

The purpose of this last section of the interview was to probe about the subjects' attitudes towards the *LK06* curriculum, and about their familiarity with a selection of teaching resources.

4.5 Conducting the interviews

All the interviews took place in the respective schools, and they were all carried out in meeting rooms. Any noise or input from other persons than the subject was thus avoided. The secluded environment also helped avoid the subjects providing conformed answers, for instance due to perceived or actual internal school conventions.

The choice of conducting the interviews at the schools was considered the most practical as it allowed for the teachers not having to leave their workplace, which worked positively towards obtaining their consent to contribute to the study. The choice of interview location also allowed the teachers to bring their materials with them to the interview, so that they could be examined and discussed during the course of the interview. Having the opportunity to examine and discuss the subjects' materials was considered as helpful in terms of forming an exact and impartial impression of the materials that the subjects employed in their respective EFL classrooms. The opportunity to examine and discuss the materials was especially helpful with regard to other materials than the subjects' textbook series, since these materials were occasionally unique. It would therefore have been difficult to form an impression of the quality of the materials through verbal explanations only. Requesting opportunities to examine the materials at first hand also prevented the subjects spending time on explaining the contents and layout of the materials.

All the interviews were audio-recorded for the purpose of ensuring that no information was lost. The recordings also allowed for unlimited reviewing of each interview. At the same time as recording the interviews, quick notes, 'field notes', were taken to make sure certain data was registered should the recording device fail.⁴⁴ The field notes were consciously concise, as focusing much on taking notes would prevent attention being paid to nonverbal communication, such as the subjects' body language, and paralinguistic aspects, for instance tone of voice (Basit, 2010:114). Communicative aspects, such as body language and intonation, proved useful as I through such nonverbal communication was occasionally made aware of any problems the subjects had with, for instance, understanding a question. All subjects were informed that the recordings would be deleted when no longer needed. They all willingly agreed to their interviews being recorded.

⁴⁴ The recordings of the interviews were all successful.

Six of the subjects employed English during the interviews, while the remaining two employed Norwegian. All the questions were nevertheless asked in English. Some information was sporadically communicated in Norwegian by both interviewer and subjects for the purpose of clarification or elaboration.

4.6 Processing the interviews and presentation of results

The audio-recordings have been reviewed several times in an attempt to discover corresponding and/or diverging dimensions across the interviews. Summaries of each of the eight interviews have been written, since it would be too extensive a task to transcribe all the interviews within the timeframe of this thesis. However, important elements from the interviews have been transcribed in detail so that they can be included, where appropriate, in the presentation of the findings. The recordings allowed for several listenings for the purpose of ensuring that the summaries and the transcriptions were as accurate as possible. The summaries were written while listening to the audio recordings and conferring with the field notes. They are presented in Chapter 5.

5 The teacher interviews

5.1 Introduction

The present chapter presents summaries of the interviews with the eight teachers, henceforth ‘the teachers’. The teachers are anonymised, and all names in the section are thus pseudonyms.

Each summary initially informs about the educational and professional background of the teacher. Due to the freedom of individual schools to organise the required amount of minutes of English teaching into units to suit internal plans and structures, information about the schools’ organisation of their English lessons in the 6th grade is also provided.

The summaries of the interviews do not strictly follow the structure of the Interview guide (see Appendix 1), as the individual interviews did not always progress correspondingly. The reason for this is the conversational nature of the semi-structured interview.

5.2 The interviews

Martha (age 65)

Martha had worked as a teacher for 38 years, and she had taught English for the whole time. She had a BA with a major in English, and a Bachelor of Education.⁴⁵ She had attended in-service courses to do with reading. Martha taught two 45 minutes lessons of English a week.

Before starting the interview Martha showed me her work desk, and all the personal materials that she had gathered over the course of her teaching career, in addition to materials that the English teachers collectively had access to.

Martha had brought with her to the interview her textbook, *Stairs*, which she used every lesson. Martha was generally content with the textbook series, although she also found it ambitious. It included too many difficult texts, which made it a challenge for the pupils and for the teacher. This being said, Martha felt she had to go through every text in the textbook, which in turn took up much of her time. The feeling of always being short of time added to Martha’s perception of the textbook being ambitious. Martha highlighted the grammar-sections in *Stairs* as being particularly useful. She also expressed that she in principle was positive towards having access to a textbook, as it relieved her from much of the burden of planning her English lessons and of making sure that her English lessons met with the requirements of the *LK06* curriculum.

⁴⁵ Martha’s total number of credits was 360.

About twice a month Martha would use additional materials, such as authentic pamphlets and artefacts that she had brought back with her from her travels abroad. She regretted that she felt she did not have the time to use additional materials as often as she would have liked to because this would have ‘stolen’ time from her teaching from the textbook. Just having returned from a trip to London, where she had come by some underground maps, Martha gave an example of her dilemma:

‘I thought – if I use either the overhead or I thought I were going to make it into a sort of work for – pair work or something – how to find your way around London, how to use the underground ... And – but that would take the whole lesson, and I feel – can I put this aside and use my own lesson, what should I do with the textbook? I’ll get behind in the textbook, according to my plans, on the other hand, this is much more fun, and I think they would learn a bit from it, too’.

Martha had used additional materials on a regular basis for most of her career. Just two or three years previously, she felt she had enough time to use graded readers, magazines, and newspapers. She believed that her pupils missed out on important English input due to the lack of time to use other materials. I asked her if it was explicitly required that her pupils read all the texts in the textbook. Martha responded: ‘No – but *I feel* I have to get through it, yes, unfortunately ... I don’t always like it’. She would typically go through all the texts on levels one and two, and she would pick out the ‘fun ones ... that would give you something’ on level three for her pupils to read and work with. She regarded level of interest and relevance to the pupils to be the crucial factors when she selected texts for her pupils to read.

Martha had used to read selected chapters from authentic English books aloud in class.⁴⁶ She had additionally had her own personal class library of books in English containing stories or fairytales that the pupils were already familiar with in Norwegian. Her pupils had been allowed to select books to read themselves, and they had also been allowed to bring the books home with them. Martha stated that at that time she ‘had some very keen readers ... and they enjoyed it. I liked it’. There was a school library at Martha’s school, which included English books. However, Martha hardly ever used it. She had furthermore almost completely abandoned reading texts aloud to her pupils or allowing the pupils to read silently to themselves in class at all anymore, again due to time-constraints. Martha expressed a degree of ambivalence towards her practices as she stated that ‘perhaps it’s wrong, perhaps I should – but I haven’t got the time to sort of let them sit down and read’. Martha regularly explicitly

⁴⁶ Such as books by Roald Dahl.

encouraged her pupils to pay attention to any English text that they encountered in their everyday lives, even if it was only the contents of a tube of toothpaste.

When I asked Martha what she thought were the benefits of the teacher reading aloud to the class, she emphasised that she regarded reading in general to be important. Sustained Silent Reading and the teacher reading aloud were both methods that she considered helpful to develop the pupils' concentration span. During reading aloud sessions, the teacher would furthermore have the opportunity to highlight certain aspects of the text, such as its form or content. Martha also emphasised the joy of being read to as important. She had been careful to select texts she thought would be interesting and relevant to the pupils, so that her reading aloud sessions would not appear as English language lessons. Had she had the time to let her pupils read books, Martha would have liked a 'reading corner' in her classroom, so that pupils could have had somewhere nice to sit and read their books silently to themselves. She would have preferred her pupils to do their silent reading in small groups, as she anticipated that the poorer readers would need her assistance. She would have allowed her pupils to select books themselves according to their interest.

Martha had a set of bilingual dictionaries available in her classroom, which her pupils may use to look up unfamiliar words they encountered in the texts. She would always point out to her class if she was unfamiliar with a word and had to look it up in the dictionary. She did this in order to contribute to a low-anxiety learning environment. Martha's class also sometimes used dictionaries on the Internet. Martha employed ICT in her EFL classroom to a small extent, as she had limited access to a computer-room. When she used ICT it was mainly to access the *Stairs* Internet site.

The English teachers at Martha's school would collectively discuss their opinions about different textbook series if the school planned to purchase a new series, and the teachers would inform the school administration about their opinions. The administration would take the teachers' opinions into consideration. Martha believed it would be pointless to ask the administration to purchase any additional materials, due to lack of financial resources. The teachers at Martha's school had a strong tradition of cooperating about materials and practices, even though there was only one teacher teaching English on each level.

When I asked Martha what she believed had influenced her teaching practices, her initial response was her own reading and travels abroad, which contributed to her enthusiasm towards to the subject. Martha furthermore recollected her own 6th grade English teacher and

the impact she had made on her.⁴⁷ She did not know to what extent her teacher training had influenced her teaching practices, as she had completed her education a long time ago.

Martha emphasised the role of the home and the parents in relation to pupils' motivation to appreciate any classroom activity, including reading. She used to encourage the parents to listen to their children when they read their homework. This was important to ensure that the pupils practised their English, but it was also important because the parents in this way showed they were interested in their children's school work. The parents hence acknowledged the importance of the subject, which was important to the pupils' motivation to learn English.

When going through a text in class, Martha would normally first play the text from the connected audio-CD while the pupils simultaneously read it. Martha thereafter read the text aloud to the class, stressing aspects of importance and explaining difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary. She would then talk about the text in English, and try to explain the meaning of it. Her class occasionally then listened to the audio-CD again, or the pupils sometimes read the text in chorus. Finally, the pupils would read it for homework.

The class would then go through the text again at school, and the pupils would read aloud individually in class or in pairs. Providing pupils with opportunities to read aloud was important in order to put focus on their pronunciation. Many of the pupils also enjoyed reading aloud and felt proud when they had done so. This was even the case for many of the less proficient readers, because there was a culture in Martha's class of the pupils backing each other, which in turn encouraged or helped maintain positive feelings towards the reading aloud of texts. After having read a text, they would typically discuss it, and Martha would ask her pupils to try and express their feelings towards and opinions about the subject matter. They would also do related tasks in the workbook, such as guessing the ending of a story or writing about what they had just read.

Martha frequently provided her pupils with 'a pattern', which was an outline that her pupils, especially the less proficient ones, could use as a starting point when they were to write about what they had read or give an oral presentation.⁴⁸ Martha monitored her pupils reading progression by listening to them while they read aloud. She further evaluated their general English development by assessing them when they had oral presentations following individual or group projects.

⁴⁷ Martha described her own 6th grade teacher as follows: 'We had a very good English teacher, in fact. She was a linguist, she liked Italian and she used to sing a lot with us... She was good!'

⁴⁸ The least proficient pupils could fill in words in 'the pattern', while more proficient pupils may not use it at all.

Martha perceived reading to be a way of providing contextual structures that could help the pupils to understand and process new words and linguistic features. She expressed some degree of frustration about parents' focus on and demand for tests and vocabulary lists, as she feared for the pupils' motivation if they did not live up to their parents' expectations. She did, however, regard vocabulary lists as useful to some extent, as they could assist in the building of vocabulary. Reading was to Martha still the best means of vocabulary expansion, as it facilitated subconscious learning of new words, in addition to facilitating consolidation of the meaning and form of the words that the pupils had learned from their vocabulary lists. The reading of texts was also considered important for gaining knowledge about the cultures connected to the English language, and for learning the difference between different genres. She did not explicitly teach her pupils different reading strategies. Martha would discuss, for instance, how to write a letter in English with her class. She further thought reading influenced other language skills, such as writing.

Martha was ambivalent towards the 5th grade National test; she questioned if it could reflect the depth or breadth of the pupils' English proficiency. She perceived the test as being quite difficult for the pupils, and was concerned about the impact experiences of failure could have on their motivation.

Martha was sure that the implementation of *LK06* had affected her teaching, but she did not know how. She was positive towards the *LK06* curriculum, but she also thought it was quite demanding on the teachers. For this reason, it was useful to have access to a textbook series that corresponded closely with the curriculum. She also had a plan for each week in order to make sure her teaching met with the learning objectives of the curriculum.

Martha was aware about the new *LK06* Teaching Guidelines to the curriculum, but she had not read them. She was also aware about the *ELP*, the *EPOSTL*, and The National Language Resource Centre, but she had not used any of them.

Carl (age 28)

Carl had worked as a teacher for ten years, whereof seven and a half without formal education. He had taught English for two and a half years. Carl had a Bachelor of Education and a one year higher education course of English.⁴⁹ He had attended some in-service courses, but none concerned with the teaching of reading. Carl taught one double English lesson a week.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Carl's total number of credits was 240.

⁵⁰ The double-lesson consists of 2x45 minutes.

We opened the interview by discussing the materials that Carl used in his EFL classroom.⁵¹ He had brought with him the textbook that he used, *Stairs*, and informed me that he used it together with the related audio-CD and workbook every lesson. He did not use the related Internet site, and he seldom included ICT in his English lessons. He would sporadically use some other materials, mainly supplementary grammar handouts. Carl had a positive attitude towards having access to and using a textbook series. He was in general content with the quality of *Stairs*, and he was especially positive towards the differentiation of the texts and the related tasks.

When presenting an unfamiliar text to his class, Carl would begin by playing the upcoming text from the related audio-CD. The pupils would simultaneously read the text silently to themselves to ensure that they received the input ‘via their ears and their eyes’. This was in turn important in order to introduce the pupils to the pronunciation of difficult or unfamiliar words. The pupils would thereafter read the text themselves, either in smaller groups or pairs, or the whole class would read it in chorus. Carl tried to vary his approach towards working with texts as often as possible, as he regarded all approaches to have their distinct strengths. For example, pupils reading aloud in class would enhance each pupil’s focus on their own and their peers’ pronunciation. Sustained Silent Reading, on the other hand, relieved apprehensive pupils of a stressful situation.

It was important to Carl that pupils did not feel anxious when they were working with a text because such feelings tended to prevent comprehension and therefore, in turn, learning. Carl preferred to have the pupils read the text in pairs. This allowed him to pair pupils who were on the same proficiency level, and thus helped prevent the reading activity becoming stressful to less proficient readers. Moreover, reading in pairs encouraged the pupils to initiate spontaneous discussions amongst themselves relating to linguistic or topical aspects of what they had just read. Carl hoped such unprompted discussions would encourage his pupils to work with the texts on a deeper level without him overtly telling them to do so. Since such discussions would be of a voluntary character, the pupils were more likely to enjoy the experience.

Pairing pupils according to their levels of language proficiency was a way for Carl to differentiate his EFL teaching since it helped ensure that there was time enough for all the pupils to read the text aloud. This approach further built courage in the poor readers to dare to read aloud. Carl trusted *Stairs* to provide him with sufficient quality and quantity of

⁵¹ Carl answered all my questions in Norwegian, thus all the quotes are my translations.

differentiated texts and related tasks and activities. Concerning the additional handouts that Carl sporadically administered, all his pupils would do the same tasks, but at their own speed. When encountering difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary in a text, Carl told the pupils the meaning of the word or he encouraged them to look the words up in a bilingual dictionary.

Carl had previously read English books aloud to his pupils during their lunch break. Over time, however, he sensed that the pupils came to regard being read to by their teacher as childish. Because he did not want to ‘push it’, he quit this activity. He currently read texts from the textbook aloud to the class about once every month. Carl believed that the teacher reading aloud helped less proficient readers to understand the meaning of the text because they did not have to concentrate on its form, because he read with more fluency and because they did not have to attend to the deciphering of words. Another positive aspect of reading aloud to the class was that the whole class would complete the text simultaneously. This was useful to Carl if he had planned for his class to work on the same task and finish it within the same time frame.

Knowledge about different reading strategies was not a priority to Carl. He did have this focus in his Norwegian lessons, and he entrusted his pupils to know how to transfer such knowledge from one language to another. To some extent he encouraged his pupils to look for keywords, and he furthermore stated that he often underlined the importance of focusing on the meaning of the text rather than on its form.

Teachers in Carl’s school cooperated about both materials and practices. The school’s administration would make the final decisions about what materials to purchase and use, but Carl supposed that teachers were welcome to voice their opinions.

Carl had access to a school library, but he hardly ever used it since there was no librarian working there. Carl felt that the lack of a person with formal responsibility for the library affected his motivation to use it, although he used the school library regularly in his Norwegian lessons. Even though he thought it was important that pupils read texts of personal interest or relevance to them, he was negative towards allowing the pupils to select books themselves. In his experience they frequently opted for texts of an inappropriate level. The school would organise an annual guided excursion to the city public library, which he felt motivated his pupils to read. Further, in terms of motivation, Carl would explicitly encourage his pupils to read, emphasising good reading skills as valuable in all areas of life.

Carl regarded oral and written skills to be equally important to the development of language proficiency. He furthermore regarded reading to be important to pupils’ overall

linguistic development. The pupils generally received large quantities of oral input,⁵² which resulted in most of them having very good oral skills. Despite the positive effect that such input had on pupils' oral skills, this was not reflected in the pupils' written work, as many of Carl's pupils would occasionally write out words phonetically. Carl felt that quantities of written input assisted the pupils' orthographic understanding, and that linguistic features, such as grammar or syntax, became clearer when they appeared in written as opposed to oral texts. Carl did not view different themes and genres as important to 6th grade pupils' EFL development. He did, however, think that using texts of different genres may prevent the pupils from feeling bored.

When I asked Carl what he felt influenced his classroom practices, he responded: 'My own personality, and how I feel I want to meet pupils, and how I feel I myself would have felt most comfortable in a classroom setting, and then I sort of adjust this from experience'.

Carl had not taught during the period of the previous curriculum and therefore felt he could not comment on whether his teaching had been affected by the implementation of *LK06*. He nevertheless expressed positive attitudes toward the current curriculum, especially with regard to its methodological freedom. The teachers at Carl's school worked out term plans for how they were going to meet with the learning objectives. Carl relied on the textbook to provide him with materials that would help his pupils meet with the learning objectives.

Carl mainly assessed his pupils' reading progress by listening to them when they read aloud, either individually or in pairs, and also through monthly chapter tests. He was positive towards the principle of the National test, but he felt that the questions and the intentions of it were occasionally difficult for the pupils to understand. He supported the use of National test if it was administered as a means to assess pupils' reading skills, but not if it was used to rank schools.

Carl was unfamiliar with all the additional resources I mentioned to him.

Anna (age 41)

Anna had worked as a teacher for 17 years, and had taught English the whole time. She had a Bachelor of Education, and some qualifications in English.⁵³ She had attended many in-service courses, and some of these also included courses about the teaching of reading. Anna

⁵² Through such media as TV, or TV-/Internet-games.

⁵³ Anna had completed a six-month course as a further education course offered by the University of Stavanger to teachers in the area of Jæren. Her total number of credits was 330.

taught two English lessons of 45 minutes a week. Approximately every 30 weeks, the pupils were offered ten additional weeks of English lessons, which Anna also taught.⁵⁴

Before we started the interview, Anna guided me to her work desk and showed me her extensive collection of personal materials. We began the interview by discussing the materials she used in her EFL classroom. Anna had brought the textbook she used, *A New Scoop*, to the interview, which she was generally very content with. She furthermore expressed positive attitudes towards having access to a textbook series, as it provided her with a starting point for her teaching. Having a textbook series to rely on removed some of the ‘burden’ of finding appropriate materials for all her pupils. Anna stated that she would never be without it, but she strongly emphasised that she was not a ‘slave of the books’ (i.e. the textbooks).

Anna used her textbook regularly, approximately three weeks a month, mainly as a starting point for discussions about different topics and linguistic features. When selecting texts from the textbook for her class to read, she picked the texts she felt were useful and fun, and disregarded the rest. If Anna sensed a drop in the motivation or concentration of the class, she would quickly depart from the textbook and offer her pupils work with other materials. She further elaborated on her attitude to using the textbook: ‘the book is not important at all to me ... the learning is important’.

Anna would include ICT activities into her lessons about twice a month, especially in connection with the teaching of grammar. Her classroom was equipped with a Smartboard, but she was not comfortable using it, and preferred the school’s computer room instead. She further had access to a range of graded readers and some authentic books from the school library. She would typically arrange for her pupils to spend two weeks every academic year in the school library. Her pupils were allowed to select books according to their own interests, but with guidance from her.

Teachers in Anna’s school cooperated about materials and practices. English teachers in Anna’s school had much influence on decisions relating to the purchase of new materials, including textbook series. Final agreements concerning materials were generally a result of cooperation between teachers, the team leader, and the school’s administration.

Anna’s class would usually start their work with a new text by first listening to it on the related audio-CD. The class would thereafter talk about the text, frequently using the connected illustration as a starting point for the discussion. All the pupils would say

⁵⁴ The school had a rotation system which offered the pupils ten weeks of additional 65 minutes lessons in gymnastics, then in ICT, and lastly the pupils could select to have additional lessons in either mathematics, Norwegian (L1), or English (L2).

something about the illustration, and/or they would talk about their anticipations about the upcoming text. Anna regarded talk about illustrations to be important because all her pupils would be able to say something about the illustration, irrespective of their level of English proficiency. This was one of the ways that Anna practised differentiated teaching. Anna would then address difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary. The class would either look at the glossary in the textbook, or Anna would translate the unfamiliar words into Norwegian. Anna would also pronounce the words. She would overtly point out to the class if there was a word she did not know, in order to lower the level of anxiety among the pupils. The pupils would thereafter read the text, and sometimes also do related tasks, for homework.

Back at school, the pupils would normally read the text aloud in groups of four or five. The reading groups often consisted of the same pupils every time. Anna pointed out that she felt such reading groups were the most adequate way of going through a text as pupils appeared less self-conscious and thus enjoyed it more. Anna would seldom ask individual pupils to read aloud in class. After having read the text in groups the pupils would do related tasks. Anna would explain or translate unfamiliar vocabulary, or the pupils were encouraged to confer with a bilingual dictionary, either a conventional book, or online on Anna's computer.⁵⁵ The most valuable aspect of reading, besides oral practice when reading aloud, was to learn new vocabulary. She emphasised that learning vocabulary should not be an overt purpose of reading activities, and that focus should be on the texts being fun and interesting. Anna's class would go through a text by means of Readers Theatre for two weeks once during their 6th grade.⁵⁶ Readers Theatre was a valuable method for including all her pupils in a motivating and fun EFL exercise, while also practising pronunciation.

Anna had frequently read aloud to her pupils in the past, but her eyesight now prevented her from doing this. She regretted that she could no longer do this, as she believed 'children *should* be read to'. The teacher reading aloud provided an opportunity for the teacher to stop the reading to explain or elaborate on linguistic or topical matters. It also offered an opportunity to share a common experience, and to make reading a 'cosy' experience. She furthermore believed that it was important to present pupils who were not read to at home with the feeling of being read to, and to traditional core central texts.⁵⁷ Anna did not have the impression that being read to from an audio-CD presented an opportunity for

⁵⁵ The pupils wrote down all the words they found difficult and then lined up to use Anna's computer.

⁵⁶ I.e. every 2nd year, as Anna would teach a class in their 5th and 6th years. The class would present the text to another class in school, often a class of older pupils. Less proficient readers would read a shorter part of the text, while the least proficient readers may read in chorus.

⁵⁷ Such as traditional Norwegian fairytales.

the same experience, although the pupils seemed to like listening to the audio-CD too.⁵⁸ She tried to make sure her pupils were read to in their Norwegian lessons.⁵⁹

Anna employed the *ELP* as a means for her to assess her pupils' reading progress, and as a means for pupils to monitor their own language development.⁶⁰ In order to assess her pupils' reading progression, Anna would walk around the classroom and listen to the pupils read when reading in groups, and she would sometimes ask all the pupils to read to her individually to assess their reading progress.

In terms of the National test, Anna felt it increased the pupils' level of anxiety, especially in the case of less proficient readers. Anna was therefore largely negative towards it. Furthermore, she did not approve of the strong focus on reading in the test, which she stated 'is not important'. On the contrary, she believed oral skills should be in focus, as 'that's what we need on holidays'. She thereafter stated that reading is important to overall language development, but that oral skills were more important, at least in the lower grades of compulsory schooling. Anna was concerned about the fact that pupils needed to be proficient users of computers in order to be able to perform well on the National test. Some pupils would put a good deal of effort into trying to get excused from it. The fact that it was up to each school district to decide who would be exempted from the test added to Anna's negative attitudes toward it because the criteria for exempting pupils could differ among school districts. Anna was thus concerned that the test would not reflect reality.

Anna did not feel the current curriculum had greatly affected her teaching. She perceived her teaching to be aligned with *LK06*, but she believed the curricular development had moved closer to her teaching rather than vice versa. She expressed positive attitudes towards the current curriculum, although she did not frequently confer with it.

When I asked Anna what she thought had influenced her teaching, she quickly referred to the further education course she had recently attended. She then elaborated on her perception of how the course had affected her teaching:

I think I'm more aware of *why* I – not *how* – I think I've been a good teacher all the time – but maybe *why* I do my choices – *why* did I choose that piece, *why* did I choose that story, or that game.

Anna believed that she consciously or subconsciously chose practices that she herself would have liked. This personal dimension formed the basis for her choices, and she then adjusted

⁵⁸ When Anna read aloud, pupils were allowed to sit on her lap as she was reading. The audio-CD offered fewer opportunities for such classroom experiences.

⁵⁹ Which were not taught by Anna, and in which teacher reading aloud activities could therefore be included.

⁶⁰ Anna employed the Norwegian version in order for all her pupils to understand the document.

her practices as time and pupils changed. She explained that she would always try ‘to get into their – into the students’ *heads*: what do they like, what do they need, where do they go?’. She emphasised that some of her practices were nevertheless fundamental and thus to a great extent stable across time. She did not specify which parts of her practice or cognition were included in her fundamental framework.

In terms of familiarity with additional resources, Anna was familiar with the *ELP*, which she used on a regular basis. She was also familiar with the corresponding document for teachers (*EPOSTL*), but which she did not use. She was not familiar with the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines. She was familiar with The National Language Resource Centre and their Internet site, which she had used on occasion.

Louise (age 59)

Louise had worked as a teacher for 36 years, and had taught English the whole time. She had two years of teacher education, and she had qualifications in English in the form of a one year higher education course.⁶¹ She had attended several in-service courses, but none of these were related to the teaching of reading. Louise taught two 45 minute lessons of English a week.

Louise had brought with her the textbook that she used, *That’s It!*, which she used one lesson a week on average. Louise was largely content with her textbook series, and she was moreover in principle positive towards employing a textbook series in her EFL classroom. Louise would in addition use previous textbook series, graded readers, handouts, ICT, board games, and magazines.

Louise’s class normally approached an upcoming text by anticipating what the text would be about. Louise thereafter translated difficult vocabulary, in addition to highlighting linguistic features that would be in focus for the next week or couple of weeks. The pupils then either listened to the text being read aloud by Louise or off the related audio-CD, or a pupil read it, if any of them volunteered to do so. Louise emphasised that she would never force any of her pupils to read aloud in class if they did not want to. She elaborated on this issue: ‘it’s not like it used to be, when you forced them to read, whether they like [sic] it or not’. The pupils therefore mostly read in pairs or in groups. Louise sporadically had each individual pupil read to her in a separate room. She consciously varied the approaches of going through a text, thus she had no ‘usual’ way of doing it. She added that ‘I ask them and I beg them to read to someone adult at home. I’m not sure they do it, but I tell them I would

⁶¹ Louise’s total number of credits was 210.

like them to do it'. She thought it was important that her pupils practised reading aloud to avoid feeling awkward when they spoke English.

Louise employed while-reading and post-reading activities. The class would for example talk and reflect about the text and its linguistic features. Furthermore, they occasionally dramatised a text. This activity was carried out by the pupils being granted a few minutes to rehearse a small part of the text, before gathering to read their parts. Louise stressed that they should perform the text rather than just read it.

Approximately once a month, Louise read aloud a text to her class, for instance a fairytale. She felt the pupils enjoyed this very much, especially if they were allowed to make illustrations on the blackboard, or if they were allowed to make illustrations on paper.⁶² She also had the impression that it was often easier for her pupils to understand the text if it was read to them. During these sessions of reading aloud Louise would also emphasise to her pupils that 'it is not necessary to understand every word as long as you get the meaning of it', and she further elaborated: 'and when they get the meaning of it, you can see the joy in most of them' (i.e. the pupils' faces).

Louise was not sure who decided what material she could have or use. She presumed that the teachers would talk amongst themselves and voice their opinions to the administration, which would then accept or decline the requests. Louise further stated that English teachers would nevertheless have the same books 'for years and years', due to financial reasons. Other teachers sometimes bought materials that they paid for themselves, but Louise did not practise this. Teachers at Louise's school cooperated about materials and practices when they felt it was necessary.

When asked what she thought had influenced her teaching practices, Louise first expressed that she had been teaching for so long that she no longer remembered the reasons for her decisions about classroom practices. She then added that she probably employed practices that she herself would have liked, and that she also sometimes implemented ideas from colleagues. Louise felt her long career as a teacher might have left her practices less flexible than they used to be, because she frequently did not want or feel able to change her practices according to new formal requirements or trends. She felt she had a sense of what worked in the classroom, and often saw no reason to change her practices. She exemplified by explaining how she approached unfamiliar vocabulary: '[I] give them all the words, go home, write them, learn them, and I give you test'. She felt her pupils were comfortable with this

⁶² Louise would occasionally have one of the pupils, who was particularly good at drawing, draw illustrations on the blackboard as she was reading to the class. This was especially popular with the pupils.

method, and furthermore concluded that ‘I think I’ve seen it work, so – why change it?’ Louise’s fellow English teacher,⁶³ who was much younger than her, approached the teaching of vocabulary differently, but that she chose to continue teaching the way she had always done. She did, however, believe she had improved her classroom practice on one particular point, namely that she would now to a larger extent initiate conversations instead of relying almost exclusively on written tasks and exercises.

Louise frequently departed from the textbook to tell stories to her pupils, which would typically be related to something the class had just encountered in the textbook. She highly valued these digressions, and felt her pupils enjoyed her stories too. Louise furthermore felt that her habit of telling stories motivated pupils to read, even if they just read the assigned text in order to lure her into telling a story. She furthermore explicitly told them that it was important to be able to read in order to understand, for instance, signs when they were travelling abroad. She nevertheless ranked oral skills higher than skills in reading and writing, at least in the 6th grade, because they would need oral skills more frequently to make themselves understood when travelling, compared to skills in reading or writing. However, Louise at the same time regarded linguistic skills to be closely intertwined. She believed that reading was particularly important in terms of increasing pupils’ vocabulary, their understanding of linguistic structures, their general knowledge, and their reading confidence. She regarded pre-knowledge to be significant to pupils’ abilities to comprehend texts.

When selecting texts for her class, Louise mainly focused on the degree of comprehensibility and relevance. The relevance of a text was considered in relation to their plan for the week. She did not talk about or teach different reading strategies. There was a school library in Louise’s school which included mobile class sets of graded readers that Louise would bring with her to class on occasion. She allowed her pupils to select their own books to read, but she thought it was very important ‘for the kids to find something that they can manage’. Louise would therefore guide her pupils when they were to select their own reading materials. She explained that this was important in order to prevent her pupils from experiencing failure to comprehend the text they had selected. She also tried to make sure that the range of books was extensive enough for the pupils to be able to select a book that would be of personal interest to them. Providing pupils with opportunities to select their own reading materials and then sit down and read them to themselves was an important approach, as this

⁶³ This was one of the smaller schools, thus Louise had only one fellow English teacher.

allowed for pupils at all levels of proficiency to experience success in reading. This was thus a way for Louise to differentiate her teaching.

To assess the pupils' reading progress and level of comprehension, Louise would talk to her pupils and listen to them reading, or she would ask them to have a conversation or give a presentation about a specific topic.

Louise's impression of the National test was that parts of it were too difficult for her pupils. She felt she would have to refocus her teaching in order to prepare her pupils for the test. Although she currently emphasised meaning over form, the refocusing of her teaching would involve a strengthening of this emphasis

In terms of the current curriculum, Louise expressed a weary attitude towards the regular implementations of new curricula. She felt *LK06* was too vague, and she seldom conferred with it. When she did, it was to make sure that her teaching largely met with the curricular learning objectives. To some extent she also connected her teaching to the school's year plan, which had defined the objectives that at all times should be in focus.

Louise was not familiar with either of the resources I mentioned to her.

Perry (age 31)

Perry had worked as a teacher for six years, and he had taught English the whole time. He had some qualifications in English, and he had a Bachelor of Education.⁶⁴ He had attended in-service courses, some of which included the teaching of reading.⁶⁵

Perry had brought with him the textbook that he used, *Stairs*, and informed me that he used it every week. He taught two English lessons a week, and would typically use the textbook for one of the two lessons. He also frequently used the connected workbook, Internet site, and audio-CD. He was generally content with *Stairs*. Perry's class read graded readers approximately once a month, but he would have liked to use graded readers more frequently. However, he did not have access to enough graded readers to do so. When the pupils read graded readers, they would read silently to themselves.

Perry regularly supplemented his English lessons with texts from the Internet, which he adapted for Readers Theatre. Perry would reserve time for Readers Theatre twice every academic year, and each Readers Theatre period would last for approximately two weeks. He occasionally also used magazines and authentic books. He still ranked the textbook as 'the most useful resource that you have'.

⁶⁴ His total number of credits was 360.

⁶⁵ In Norwegian (L1).

When I asked Perry how he would usually go through a text, his response was:

I do think variation is – is very important, but what is most important is that we do pre-reading before they get their assignment at home. Homework is not supposed to be, you know, it's really important that you pre-read with them, and what I mean by pre-reading is that you go through – you look at the headlines, you look at the pictures, you look at the – you find difficult words, together with the kids ... so that they know how to go about it when they're back home.'

During their pre-reading activities, Perry's pupils would look at the pictures connected to the upcoming text and anticipate what the story would be about. They would then read the text silently to themselves while writing down difficult/unfamiliar words, which they would thereafter 'talk about' in plenary. They would also practise the pronunciation of some of the difficult words. Finally, Perry would discuss the meaning of the text with his pupils. Perry emphasised that his 'main goal is that when they walk home that – that day, they know what the text is about, and they have also, at least – at least studied some of the difficult words'. The pupils would read the text and work with related questions for homework.

Back at school they would usually read through the text in pairs. Perry would walk amongst the pupils, listening to them reading and in that way monitor their reading progress. He occasionally did 'the old-fashioned *who wants to read?*', which was also a method for him to assess his pupils' reading progress. He underlined that this activity was voluntary and that he never required that his pupils read aloud in class. Apprehensive pupils would be allowed to read to him in a separate room. Perry would assess his pupils' reading progress also by means of organising the classroom into work stations, which he would do about four to six times a year.⁶⁶ At the teacher's station, Perry would typically ask the pupils to read to him individually from a graded reader while he made comments on a checklist that he had prepared. Perry informed me that the work station-method 'works very good. The pupils really love it. And you get very good quality time with each pupil'.

Perry had a set of dictionaries (mono- and bilingual) available for the pupils in the classroom, which they would use when necessary. They additionally employed online dictionaries. The graded readers were situated in a teachers' common materials station.

⁶⁶ 'Work stations' refers to a classroom approach to working with texts. The pupils are divided into homogenous groups, and the classroom is organised in stations, or 'learning centres'. The groups of pupils work with different exercises at each learning centre. The teacher is stationed at one of the learning centres. This approach allows for the teacher to interact with a small group of pupils at a time.

Perry allowed his pupils to select books to read themselves, but he underlined that ‘I give my recommendations’. There was also a school library in Perry’s school, but neither the school library nor the teachers’ materials station had a satisfactory selection of English books. In Perry’s opinion there were not enough books for all his pupils to read at their own level and according to their own interests to the extent he would have liked. Had the selection of books been satisfactory, Perry would ideally have initiated ‘projects’, allowing for his pupils to only read books for a longer period of time, for instance for a month at a time. The Deputy Head at Perry’s school decided what materials to purchase, but it was up to the individual teachers to decide what materials to use. Teachers were welcome to make suggestions about new material for the school to purchase. The only limitation as to what would be purchased or not, was the school’s financial resources. Perry had voiced his opinion about the insufficient selection of graded readers, and the school had now decided to purchase some more that same year.

When I asked him what he thought had influenced his teaching practices, Perry answered:

‘I think there are three major aspects, and – of course you always carry your luggage from ... the teachers you had when you were young. But what I think has influenced me most is my ... colleagues ... But of course also my ... education at the university’.

Teachers at Perry’s school cooperated about both materials and practices.

In terms of motivating his pupils to read, Perry explained that reading was regarded to be so important in general at his school, pervading all subjects, that the importance of reading did not have to be explicitly explained or justified. He did on occasion state to his pupils that it was important to read, and he also talked to them about why it was so.

Perry had experience with reading longer texts aloud to his pupils, although ‘with mixed results’. He would do this approximately four to five times per semester. He found reading additional texts aloud somewhat difficult because he felt many of the pupils struggled to follow the story when he read to them despite his conscious efforts to select books that he anticipated would be comprehensible and interesting to all his pupils. He had nevertheless experienced success when he had had pupils dramatise parts of the story in front of the class while he read aloud. He believed that the visual support that the acting provided the other pupils with, aided their comprehension. This approach required the pupils to be active participants in the reading activity, which in turn made them more attentive. Irrespective of its rate of success, Perry believed that the teacher reading aloud ‘is good for them’, i.e. the

pupils. Perry had some experience with organising the pupils of his class according to their level of language proficiency,⁶⁷ which he felt made activities such as the teacher reading aloud easier for the teacher and more useful to the pupils.

Perry's pupils would read texts from the textbook in pairs about three times a month, and aloud in class about twice a month. He believed the differences between the pupils reading aloud and the pupils reading silently to themselves to be the focus that reading aloud placed on pronunciation. The benefit of the pupils reading silently, on the other hand, was that it facilitated higher reading speed. The benefit of the teacher reading aloud was that it aided the pupils' awareness of pronunciation, and it also allowed the teacher to stop the reading to explain or highlight features to do with the language or with the content of the text.

Perry would differentiate his teaching by allowing pupils to read texts together with a peer at the same level when they read in pairs, by allowing pupils to select graded readers themselves, and by using the different levels in *Stairs*. He would also provide very proficient readers with specially selected books, as a way of 'stimulating good pupils'.⁶⁸

Perry was ambivalent towards the National test. He questioned the aspect of some teachers rehearsing for it with their pupils, while others did not. Perry was positive towards measuring the quality of the teaching in schools by way of testing the pupils. On the other hand, he did not think that it was necessarily a good thing to make the results public, as there was a potential for it to become a competition between schools rather than a test of pupils' reading proficiency.

In Perry's opinion the intention of reading texts in the 6th grade EFL class was to expand the pupils' vocabulary and understanding of linguistic structures, although he underlined that some pupils preferred learning vocabulary from vocabulary lists. Genres and world-knowledge were regarded to be more important in the 7th grade. Different language skills were considered to be interrelated, but pupils' reading skills were considered a better indicator of a pupil's general level of proficiency than, for example, their oral skills. There was a significant focus on developing reading strategies in Perry's classroom. These strategies included writing down difficult words so pupils could look them up after they had read the text, making mind-maps, skimming and scanning texts, discussing headlines, and looking for keywords.

⁶⁷ In the past, he had divided his class into four groups according to level of proficiency.

⁶⁸ Perry would not do this in front of the rest of the class, but rather during teacher's conference with the actual pupil.

With regard to the *LK06* curriculum, Perry did not feel that it had significantly altered his teaching. He believed that he would have worked towards the same learning objectives whether or not they were formalised in the curriculum. At their meetings, the English teachers at Perry's school would make sure their plans concurred with *LK06*, but he did not confer with the curriculum on a regular basis. The school's strong focus on reading and reading strategies was established prior to the implementation of the *LK06*. He could not recollect if he had received any information about the implementation of *LK06*. Perry was not familiar with the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines, but he was familiar with The National Language Resource Centre, the *ELP*, and the *EPOSTL*, all of which he had briefly used. He had also received information about how to use the *ELP*, but only as a student teacher, not from his employer.

Celia (age 62)

Celia had worked as a teacher for 25 years, and she had taught English on and off for all 25 years. She had no higher education qualifications in English or in any other subject, including teaching. Her only education in English was from upper secondary school. She had attended several in-service courses, some of which were courses about the teaching of reading. Celia taught approximately 120 minutes of English per week.⁶⁹

I began the interview by asking Celia about what materials she used in her EFL classroom. Celia informed me that she used a textbook series, *Stairs*, which she had also brought with her to the interview. She would employ the textbook in at least one lesson a week, and she was overall very content with the textbook series. She was also in principle positive towards having access to a textbook. Celia found the division of *Stairs* into areas of focus to be particularly useful, in addition to the differentiation of the material. The related tasks provided her with useful pre- and post-reading activities, such as the pupils anticipating the ending of a story. Celia additionally found the texts in the textbook to be relevant and interesting to her pupils according to their age. She used ICT to a small extent, and when she did, it would mainly be to access the *Stairs* Internet site.

In addition to *Stairs*, Celia used various handouts on a regular basis, especially to provide her pupils with lyrics to English songs they were going to sing in class, which they

⁶⁹ The school that Celia worked in had an intricate system: the pupils in the 6th grade received three fixed lessons of English a week: 45 minutes every Monday and Tuesday, and 30 minutes every Thursday before lunch. The pupils were additionally allowed to work with English tasks and exercises, or read books that they had selected themselves for 40 minutes every Thursday after lunch. A few Friday lessons per semester were also reserved for English. The Friday lessons were meant for pupils to prepare for various tests, or to read silently to themselves.

would frequently do. She would also use graded readers, board games, or fairytales approximately one week every other month.⁷⁰ Celia had access to class-sets of graded readers that, together with other additional materials, were situated in a materials station that was available to all the teachers at any time.⁷¹ There were also class-sets of graded readers in the classroom. There was a library in the school, but Celia was unsure if it included any English books. She used the school library on a weekly basis in her Norwegian lessons, but never in her English lessons.

Approximately once a month Celia would read a graded reader aloud to her class. She was unable to provide a direct answer when I asked her what she thought were the benefits of her reading aloud to the class, but later during our interview she stated that it was important to her that her pupils were able to understand the meaning of the text that she was reading to them. To ensure that every pupil understood what the text was about, she would accompany the text with illustrations for the class to discuss. She also taught reading strategies, such as locating keywords, discussing headlines, or comparing the text to the pupils' own lives. Later in the interview Celia also stated that she thought being read to could be beneficial in terms of pupils' pronunciation.

Before Celia's class started working with a new chapter, they would talk about the introductory illustrations in *Stairs* in plenary. Celia would also probe about the pupils' pre-knowledge about the theme. Her class often discussed their predictions about what the upcoming chapter might be about. Celia normally went through a text by first having the class listen to the text on the related audio-CD. She thereafter pronounced difficult words, such as polysyllabic words, and had the class repeat the words after her. She then attended to unfamiliar words. She approached this aspect either by asking the class to guess the meaning of them, or by asking the pupils to look the words up in mono- or bilingual dictionaries, which were kept available in the classroom. She would point out to the class when a word was unfamiliar to her, or even pretend a word to be unfamiliar to her. She did this to facilitate a low-anxiety learning situation. The form of a text was also from time to time subject to discussion in Celia's classroom, and they would for instance discuss characteristics of different genres. The class would thereafter read the actual text aloud in chorus. Celia had

⁷⁰ The fairytales that the pupils read in the English lessons were already familiar to them in Norwegian.

⁷¹ The school had a cupboard of materials that the teachers could use at any time. This materials station was organised by a designated teacher who was employed by the school to purchase materials. The coordinator was also required to attend courses and seminars on teaching, and to inform the school's administration and the teaching staff about the information that was obtained.

chosen this method to ensure that every pupil 'is speaking, is saying something'. The pupils then read the text for homework.

Back at school, the pupils would continue working with the text by reading it in pairs, or individual pupils would be asked to read parts of it aloud in class. Celia perceived her pupils to be comfortable with reading aloud to their classmates, but this was too time-consuming a method for her to employ on a regular basis.

After having read the text, the pupils would work with related tasks and exercises, such as discussing what they thought could have happened next, had the text continued. Celia's class would frequently discuss how the text compared to their own lives, and voice their opinions about the text. They further frequently dramatised texts or parts of texts. Celia underlined that she encouraged classroom talk as much as possible. She furthermore always required her pupils to translate the texts into Norwegian to make sure that they had understood what they had read.

Celia's pupils were generally positive towards reading, and thus she did not see any necessity to overtly motivate them. She was nevertheless conscious about praising her pupils when she found it appropriate, as she felt this helped to maintain their motivation. The class would furthermore occasionally discuss 'How can you be (a) good reader of English, what's important?'. The class would begin every new week by looking at the learning objectives of the upcoming lessons, and make a plan of how they could work towards the objectives. Explaining to the pupils what they were going to do and why was important to their motivation. They could, for instance, discuss why they regarded reading skills or knowing English to be important. Celia might, for example, initiate a discussion about this aspect by asking her pupils about their attitudes towards the reading activity. Celia believed that these discussions also helped to motivate her pupils.

When the reading of graded readers was on the schedule, Celia's pupils would be allowed to choose books themselves from a range of books within the same topic. Celia would help her pupils to select books at their individual levels. Her attitude was that 'if you read a lot, you get better', i.e. more proficient in English in general. She regarded reading as crucial to the development of a wide vocabulary, a good writing style, and for spelling. She also thought reading to have a positive impact on oral skills. Celia regarded textual context as important for pupils' understanding and internalisation of linguistic features. She ranked reading and listening as more important than speaking and writing.

Celia would mainly monitor her pupils' reading progress by listening while the pupils read aloud, either individually or in pairs. She would also occasionally have the pupils do peer

assessments, which involved asking the class to comment on individual pupil performances after having read aloud in class.

The English teachers in Celia's school convened approximately thrice a year to decide on learning objectives for each grade, and to decide how to implement the curriculum. She expressed some frustration about teachers having to spend time defining learning objectives for each grade. She based her teaching on the curriculum to a great extent, every week making sure that she had covered all the required learning objectives in the same manner and order decided during the meetings of the English teachers. At the same time, Celia was unsure if *LK06* had influenced her teaching practices.

Celia did not seem to understand when I asked her what she thought had influenced her teaching practices, thus no clear answer to this question was obtained. She did, however, inform me that she adapted her teaching practices to each group of pupils when necessary. With regard to selecting teaching methods or materials, Celia stated that 'I know what works and what not works' on the background of her long experience as a teacher.

With regard to the National test, Celia stated that 'we did pretty good', and she was therefore positive towards the test. The teachers at the school nevertheless found preparing their pupils for the National test stressful, as they did not know exactly what tasks the test would include.

Teachers at Celia's school cooperated about both materials and practices, and there was a culture for teachers to voice their opinions about materials. The materials coordinator would make the final decision about what materials to buy and when, but the coordinator cooperated closely with the teachers. Celia had heard about the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines and the *ELP*, but she had never used either. She was unfamiliar with The National Language Resource Centre.

After we had finished the interview, Celia took me to the materials station for language teachers (a cupboard) and showed me the extensive range of material that was available for teachers to choose from at any time.

Steven (age 38)

Steven had worked as a teacher for four and a half years, and he had been teaching English for two and a half years. He had a teaching certificate, but no formal qualifications in English.⁷²

⁷² Steven's total number of credits was 420.

Steven had not attended any in-service courses. Steven's school organised the lessons into 60 minute units, and Steven taught two English lessons per week.

Steven had brought with him the textbook that he used, *Stairs*.⁷³ Steven used the textbook on a weekly basis, but usually only in one of his lessons. He was in principle positive towards having access to a textbook series, and he was fairly content with *Stairs*. He did, however, point out that he often found the texts on levels one and three inappropriate. Many of the texts on level one were short texts that related to different topics, while Steven would have preferred longer, yet easy texts within the same topic. Steven believed that reading many texts within the same topic would help the less proficient readers, as it would be easier for them to focus on the content of a text if the topic was to some degree familiar to them. Similarly, the texts on level three were often too difficult for many of his proficient readers, thus the textbook failed to bridge levels two and three.

Steven aimed to 'bathe' his pupils in English texts. The textbook was thus an insufficient resource in his EFL classroom. Steven's solution to this problem was usually to find texts for his less and very proficient readers elsewhere, for instance in prior textbook series that the school had kept available to the teachers. Level of interest was the criterion on which he based his selection of additional texts, as interesting texts encouraged the pupils to read for meaning. He did not focus on genre knowledge, and did not believe that his pupils benefited linguistically from reading, for instance, poetry. When reading a text, it was important to Steven that his pupils got 'an understanding. I feel that's what they learn the most from'.

When introducing a new text, Steven would read the upcoming text aloud and thereafter translate it to the class. This provided him with the opportunity to pronounce and explain the meaning of difficult or unfamiliar words. Steven's reading aloud of the text ensured that the pupils were familiar with the text and difficult words before they read it for homework. The pupils would read the text and do related exercises for homework. Back in class, the pupils would typically work in pairs, reading and translating it two to three times. This was important to ensure that all the pupils were given several opportunities to read the text, and to ensure that pupils had opportunities to practise their pronunciation. As a post-reading activity, Steven would often discuss the contents of the text with the class, encouraging the pupils to articulate their opinions about the text. He would also highlight linguistic features in it. Approximately once a month Steven would require his pupils to read

⁷³ Steven answered all my questions in Norwegian, thus all the quotes are my translations.

and translate small parts of the text aloud in class. This stimulated the pupils to focus on their pronunciation, in addition to providing Steven with a basis for evaluating his pupils' reading progress.

Steven never read books aloud to his class, but he did on the other hand arrange for his pupils to dramatise texts on a regular basis, approximately once a month. Working in pairs or in small groups, Steven's pupils would either adapt a text for the stage themselves, or they would work with a dialogic text that immediately allowed for dramatisation. This activity was usually connected to a topic that the pupils had been working with in advance. This was the single most motivating and fun EFL activity that Steven's pupils did, and he also felt it motivated his pupils to read, as they willingly read a text they knew they would later dramatise.

The *Stairs* workbook was an inadequate resource in terms of grammar, as many of the exercises were too easy for the average pupils, who made up the majority of the class. Steven also felt that the selection of grammar and vocabulary exercises was too narrow, and thus became repetitive. During grammar lessons, the class would therefore regularly access the Internet, and the pupils would solve grammar exercises either individually or in pairs on individual computers, or in plenary by employing the Smartboard that was available in the classroom. His pupils enjoyed these activities, much due to their interactive character. Steven used ICT mostly in connection with grammar lessons.

Teachers at Steven's school were at liberty to choose what materials they would like to use in their classrooms, and they could furthermore request the administration to purchase additional materials, if they were not too costly. The decision about which textbook series to employ at the school was made on the county level.⁷⁴ Teachers at Steven's school cooperated closely about materials and practices.

The school included a school library, which Steven had access to. He nevertheless largely employed class sets of graded readers, which he kept available to his pupils in their classroom. Steven's pupils were allowed to select books themselves, but at the beginning of each school year Steven would guide his pupils to ensure that they choose appropriate books for their levels of proficiency. This was a way for him to train his pupils to evaluate their own language proficiency. In addition to providing his pupils with opportunities to read quantities of texts, this was also a way for Steven to ensure differentiation. Steven's classroom had a reading corner with red and blue poufs where pupils could sit and read books silently. Steven

⁷⁴ The larger schools in the county had collectively decided on *Stairs*, and the smaller schools, which included Steven's school, had then decided to align.

had a fixed system that allowed for his pupils to silently read their graded readers in school for 30 continuous minutes every other week. The Norwegian and English teachers had furthermore together allocated additional time for their pupils to read silently.⁷⁵ The pupils were also allowed to read their books if they had finished their work and when time permitted they do so, the nature of these sessions thus being of individual and irregular character.

Steven administered vocabulary lists for his pupils to learn every week. He had an unofficial agreement with the least proficient pupils in his class, which allowed them to learn fewer words. The number of words was thus adjusted to their level of proficiency. When pupils encountered difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary, Steven would ask them to look up the words in bilingual dictionaries, which were available in the classroom, or via online dictionary resources.

Steven did not teach his pupils about different reading strategies for different reading purposes. He regarded reading as significant to overall linguistic development, and, furthermore, that reading encourages the development of pupils' writing skills because it helps bridge the gap between oral and written output. Reading was especially important in terms of English structures. The link between these different language skills was the single most important reason for Steven to provide his pupils with as many text encounters as possible.

Steven was neutral to the value of the National test.⁷⁶ He pointed to the possibility for schools or individual teachers to practise for the test to obtain better results, which undermined the value of it. Steven furthermore did not believe that the National test produced 'more proficient pupils or ... more proficient teachers'.

Steven did not teach during the *L97* curriculum, so the question whether the current curriculum had influenced his teaching practices thus did not apply. He was positive towards *LK06*, especially in terms of its methodological freedom and its focus on development of language as a continuous process. He based his teaching on the curriculum to a great extent. Steven presented his pupils with a new week plan every week, on which he stated the learning objectives of that week. This helped to ensure that he and his pupils met with the requirements of *LK06*. Steven additionally had a checklist that was worked out internally, and which he employed when assessing his pupils as they read in pairs or aloud in class.⁷⁷ This assessment form was the basis for his conferences with the parents, and the parents would also obtain a

⁷⁵ The pupils could then choose between their Norwegian or English SSR-books.

⁷⁶ Steven's school was too small for the results of the National test to be published in the national register of results, but the results were nevertheless published within the county.

⁷⁷ Steven's school had worked out checklists in mathematics, English, and Norwegian.

photocopy of the checklist. By the end of every week, Steven's pupils would additionally assess their own progress by filling out a checklist that was worked out internally. The checklist was organised in 'I can ...' statements, and the pupils would indicate the level of abilities by ticking off accordingly.⁷⁸ The pupils would be tested in English every other week, and the results of the test were then compared to the pupils' self-assessment form.

When I asked Steven what he thought had influenced his teaching, he immediately stated his own experiences as an EFL learner. When he started working as a teacher he had planned his lessons according to his recollections of his own EFL lessons, which were IR and ELI dense. However, through his classroom experiences Steven discovered that this was not an adequate way to teach English, as it was too teacher-centred and did not include enough opportunities to read. This experience, together with input from his colleagues, had prompted him to adjust his teaching. Steven considered the one-year higher education teacher training course he had attended to be irrelevant to his classroom practices, as he thought the quality of the course to be poor.

Steven was not familiar with any of the teaching resources I mentioned to him.

Karen (age 31)

Karen had worked as a teacher for five years, and she had been teaching English the whole time. She had a one year higher education course in English, but had no formal qualifications as a teacher.⁷⁹ Karen had not attended any in-service courses. She taught one 60 minute and one 30 minute lesson of English every week, and every second week she taught one additional 60 minute lesson of English.

Before we started the interview, Karen showed me her work desk where she kept her materials, and I was allowed to look through them. Karen brought her textbook series with her to the interview. Karen used the *Stairs* textbook series, which she would typically use every week, but not every lesson. She was content with having access to a textbook, as it provided her with a basis for her teaching. She was nonetheless of the opinion that *Stairs* was not extensive enough, as she was usually left with time to spare at the end of each academic year. She therefore used a wide selection of additional materials, such as previous textbooks series, grammar workbooks, various booklets, and the Internet, which she employed extensively. She had a Smartboard in her classroom, which facilitated access to the Internet and allowed for interactive teaching on a frequent basis. There was also a bookcase with a selection of graded

⁷⁸ The pupils had the following alternatives: a smiley, a neutral emoticon, and a sulky emoticon.

⁷⁹ Karen's total number of credits was 300.

readers and authentic books in her classroom, and pupils were allowed to select books to read if there was time to spare. Karen also used bilingual dictionaries,⁸⁰ especially with the most proficient readers, who did not have available to them a glossary connected to the step-three texts.

Karen was generally content with *Stairs*. She appreciated the purpose of dividing the textbook into three steps, but at the same time found it hard to employ the textbook accordingly. The individual differences between the pupils made it difficult for Karen to divide her class into three groups of proficiency. She would therefore often provide some of her pupils with individually selected materials, especially the least and the most proficient readers in her class. The most proficient readers in Karen's class would generally be provided with a book or chapters of a book to read instead of reading the texts in the textbook.⁸¹ They were also allowed to bring the books home. Karen would provide these pupils with new reading materials approximately every second week, and give them a week to finish them. The reading of books thus constituted half of the English lessons of the most proficient readers. Providing these pupils with individual material did not represent a problem to Karen with regard to the follow-up of homework because:

The step-three pupil [sic] are those who really – you know, they are eager to do a good job, so I don't have to follow them up ... I don't have to ask them to write an essay about what they've read or something ... 'cos I do trust them – I do trust that they read it, and I have an agreement with their parents also to kind of – so they are really – they do their job. It's the one [sic] in the – on the step-one level I have to follow carefully.⁸²

The least proficient readers amongst Karen's pupils were not able to even follow step one, and Karen thus also provided these pupils with individually selected materials. The least proficient readers would also regularly be taken out of class as a group and receive additional English lessons.⁸³ The majority of Karen's pupils would nevertheless be step-two pupils, and they would normally follow the course of the textbook. However, when they had time to spare, Karen would also provide the average readers with additional materials, for example copies of a chapter or a section of a novel.

⁸⁰ Each pupil had their own dictionary.

⁸¹ Such as books by Roald Dahl.

⁸² The agreement with the parents involved Karen providing the pupils with additional materials, while the parents would follow up their children and report to Karen if the workload became too big, if the materials were too challenging or not challenging enough.

⁸³ In the academic year when this interview was done, three or four out of a group of 35 pupils were considered to be below step one. Additional English lessons might consist of activities including translations or phonetics.

Every new week would start with Karen's pupils listening to the upcoming text from the related audio-CD. Karen would then translate the text into Norwegian, and pronounce difficult words and have her pupils repeat the words after her. The pupils would then read the text for homework. Karen would instruct her pupils to read and translate the text to an adult, and to learn a list of difficult or unfamiliar words that appeared in the text. Back at school the pupils would read the text aloud. They usually read individually, but if time constraints so demanded, they would read in pairs. Apprehensive pupils were allowed to read individually to Karen instead of to the class. Karen emphasised that she would never send her pupils home to read a text for homework that they were completely unfamiliar with. After having read a text, they would sometimes do written activities related to it, but most often they would do oral activities, such as talking about it.

When working with vocabulary and the contents of a text, Karen had developed her own practice consisting of two approaches: 'read and understand' and 'listen and understand'. The first approach required the pupils to read a text and thereafter answer questions to do with its content. If the text was very difficult, the pupils would be allowed to use their dictionaries. The second approach required the pupils to listen to Karen as she read a short text aloud. Karen explicitly told her pupils that they should ignore words that they did not understand and rather focus on the meaning of the text that she was reading. Karen would do this approximately every second month. If pupils asked her about the meaning of a word during other activities, she would usually explain it to them right away. She explained that she would have preferred to tell the pupils to look the words up themselves, but that she did not prioritise for her pupils to spend time on the consulting of dictionaries.

Karen's school had a school library, and pupils were occasionally allowed to go to the library and select books according to their individual interests. Since Karen's school was situated in a rural area, it was not possible for the pupils to visit a public library. The librarian of the region, however, put together selections of books for each class to have in bookcases in their classrooms. These bookcases for the most part consisted of graded readers. The authentic books in the bookcases were donations from English teachers who had purchased them when in English speaking countries. The bookcases were organised in three sections according to levels of difficulty. Karen often let her pupils select books themselves, and the organisation of the books into sections made this process less time-consuming and more manageable for her. This was also a method for Karen to ensure that all the pupils read texts at their individual levels, and they would thus be able to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and focus on the content of the text, rather than consulting with the dictionary. Karen's class would therefore

not use dictionaries at all during sessions of Sustained Silent Reading. The pupils most often read books silently to themselves. Karen emphasised that in order to motivate her pupils to read, especially the least proficient readers or uninterested pupils, who were often unable to pick appropriate books to read, she would make suggestions about books she thought would be of interest to them. The least proficient readers might occasionally be allowed to listen to a recorded book from an audio-CD instead of reading it. Karen would sometimes play a section of the book to the class in order to provide all her pupils with a preview of it, which she felt could motivate them to read. She would sometimes also read a chapter aloud for the same purpose. Karen would furthermore talk to each pupil individually and ask them what she could do to help motivate them.

Time permitting, Karen would also read books aloud in her class. She had a list of books that she had read aloud with success. They might also watch the film version of a book after having read it. Karen read books aloud to her pupils three to four times a year. Rather than reading for parts of several English lessons, Karen would read the book in one turn, thereafter to return to the textbook. Karen regarded reading aloud to her pupils as useful for developing her pupils' sense of pronunciation and linguistic structures, and for encouraging them to focus on the meaning of the text she was reading. She also believed it was encouraging for poor or unwilling readers to experience that they could comprehend a text. In her experience, pupils were more inclined to voluntarily read after having been read to.

Karen regarded reading as a fundamental means for learning language:

‘There are a lot of positive things about using texts ... I think – just to get a sense of the language ... Reading ... is the main source of learning. That’s why I choose to spend a lot of time with the texts in the textbook also, I mean – I don’t care if we don’t get through all the activities in the ... activity book’

Karen was nevertheless unsure about the link between reading and oral skills. She believed that pupils in the 6th grade benefited more from a strong focus on oral skills. Karen used texts also as a ‘source of information’. She would, for instance, ask her pupils to write a short text about a topic that they had just read about. This was also the way in which she introduced different genres. Karen focused on teaching her pupils how to respond to a text, mainly by discussing the text with them, and encouraging them to express their opinions and reflections about it. The only reading strategy that Karen taught her pupils was to scan a text for keywords. She did, however, have a strong focus on reading strategies in her L1 lessons.

Karen's pupils would read aloud in class every week. This was first and foremost a way for her to assess her pupils' reading progress, but it was also a way for her to evaluate her own teaching. This was furthermore a way for pupils to learn to accept other pupils' and their own mistakes when reading, and an opportunity for them to practise the target language. Karen would additionally take each pupil out of the classroom four times a year and ask the pupil to read aloud and translate an unfamiliar text to her. This was a method for Karen to assess her pupils, but also a method for her to evaluate her pupils' needs. She could subsequently decide if they belonged at a different level in terms of reading materials.

In Karen's school, the English teachers and the school administration cooperated when purchasing new materials. Teachers at Karen's school also cooperated closely about materials. There was a designated teacher who organised a materials section, and who would also update the other teachers about new materials that could be of interest to them. The teachers at the school also cooperated about practices, although sometimes there was only one teacher teaching at each level. Decisions about the additional materials that Karen employed in her English classroom were on the other hand made solely by her.

Karen believed that her university education had influenced her teaching practices, although she did not specify in what ways. She found it difficult to identify what factors had influenced her practices, and she elaborated on the unclear nature of factors that might or might not have influenced her teaching:

It's really hard to say 'cos we do have a teachers' guide, you know, to *Stairs*, I never use them. It comes natural, I can't – I can't explain it. I did have a teacher in – when I was in junior high, who was really, like – I think she was the one who saw in me a potential for something and she came, you know, and she brought me all the extra material ... She was my role model ... and I kind of look back and think: how did she do it ... I don't copy so much, but I kind of find her as a role model still.

In terms of the National test, Karen was critical towards the way it was organised, as she would only be teaching her pupils during the years between tests. She felt the line of continuity between test results and her teaching was thus broken. She had no opinion about whether the test was positive or negative for her pupils. She did not feel that the *LK06* curriculum had altered her teaching practice, and she only consulted it occasionally. She relied on the textbook to make sure that her teaching was aligned with the current curriculum.

Karen was unfamiliar with the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines, The National Language Resource Centre, and the *ELP*.

6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses the findings of the teacher interviews. Interesting findings from the individual interviews are interpreted, although trends that appear across the interviews are the main focus of the discussion. Dimensions within and between the interviews are furthermore considered in relation to theory about L2 reading development, and in the context of *LK06*. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and practices are the elements that together constitute teacher cognition; the cognitive dimension of the teaching of reading is therefore an implicit factor throughout the discussion.

The discussion is arranged thematically. However, as inconsistencies appear between the interviews in order of questions and answers, due to the nature of the qualitative method, the order of this section does not follow the organisation of the interview guide (see Appendix 1). The present section is divided into three main sections: 'Materials', 'practices', and 'the role of teacher education'. A section about limitations of the study follows at the end. Due to the complex nature of teacher cognition, there is some overlapping between the sections in the discussion.

6.2 Materials

All the teachers fundamentally based their teaching of reading on their textbooks, and they were all in principle positive towards employing textbooks in their EFL classrooms. The teachers employed their textbooks on a regular basis, and the frequency ranged from approximately three out of eight lessons to every lesson. Between the eight teachers, three different textbook series were employed.⁸⁴ There were some minor yet not fundamental differences in design between the three textbooks series, and all eight teachers were generally content with the one available to them. The predominance of textbook use found in this study was not a surprising finding, as there is a long tradition for Norwegian EFL teachers to employ their textbooks to a large extent (Drew, 2004:20; Hellekjær, 2007:26). The study nevertheless found that this textbook tradition does not necessarily result in homogenous practices. This aspect is returned to in section 6.3.

The single most important reason for the teachers' contentment with their textbooks was that they noticeably reduced the burden of the planning of lessons, especially with regards to differentiation, grammar instruction, and meeting with the requirements of *LK06*.

⁸⁴ Which were, as reported in the interview summaries, *Stairs*, *That's It!*, and *A New Scoop*.

Despite the teachers' overall contentment with their textbooks, they nevertheless referred to certain aspects of their textbooks with which they were dissatisfied. Steven, for instance, had negative attitudes toward some of the step one-texts, and he also found parts of the grammar sections to be repetitive.

Across the interviews, the aspect of differentiation was at the same time the feature of the textbooks with which the teachers were the most satisfied and the most dissatisfied. This ambivalence within and between teachers might indicate that differentiation is a difficult element in the practice of EFL teachers, and that it is further difficult for one single textbook series to accommodate all pupils' and teachers' needs for differentiation at all times. This ambivalence may further indicate that a system of differentiation based on textbooks may best be perceived as a starting point for successful differentiated teaching rather than as an absolute formula.

The teachers' positive attitudes towards and regular use of their textbooks did not exclude similarly positive attitudes towards and regular employment of additional materials, which the majority of the teachers to a greater or lesser extent employed on a weekly basis. Martha and Carl employed additional materials only to a marginal extent. However, Martha and Carl's limited use of additional materials was not based on negative attitudes towards using other materials than the textbook. Carl appeared content with the textbook to the extent that he perceived employment of additional materials to be unnecessary for his pupils to reach an adequate level of English proficiency.

Martha's case was quite the contrary to Carl's, as she strongly regretted that she did not have enough time to employ additional materials to the extent she would have liked. Thus, the study revealed a discrepancy between Martha's beliefs about what constitutes appropriate EFL materials and her choice of materials. This is interesting as the discrepancy in the case of Martha supports arguments that contextual factors can influence teachers' practices to the extent that teachers compromise their personal beliefs about what constitutes the efficient teaching of reading (Borg, 2003:94, Collie Graden, 1996). Martha's case therefore serves as an example of the complex relationship between classroom dimensions, i.e. knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices. The discrepancy between Martha's beliefs and her decisions about materials further serves as an example of the difficulties that are commonly affiliated with research into teacher cognition, as the visible dimensions of the classroom do not always reflect the cognitive dimensions (Borg, 2006:15).

Neither the remaining six teachers nor Carl reported any such conflicts between their practices and choices, and their beliefs and attitudes. Comparing these seven teachers to

Martha, it seems reasonable to infer that the differences in choices concerning materials might rest as much on Martha's cognition as on contextual factors. This inference is justifiable as all eight teachers were faced with corresponding curricular demands, corresponding external tests (i.e. the National test), and as most of them used the same textbook as Martha. The school where Martha taught was furthermore of average size, although information about the number of teachers per pupil was not obtained from any of the subjects. Martha also had no less access to additional materials compared to the group of teachers who employed such materials. This is not to say that contextual factors, for example pupils' aptitude, did not influence Martha's choices, but it appears that other cognitive factors at least partially have initiated changes to her decisions about what materials to employ in her classroom. Her feeling of not having enough time to employ other reading materials than her textbook seemed to be based on attitudes and beliefs more than presently having less time than two or three years prior to the study. Her belief that she had to go through the entire textbook was a perceived requirement, rather than a formal one. The cognitive dimension relating to Martha's beliefs nevertheless remain covert, but might also include factors such as Martha's interpretation of colleagues' or parents' expectations to her approaches to the teaching of reading, and lack of information about the teaching of reading.

The learning objectives in *LK06* require pupils at the intermediate level to develop abilities to 'read and talk about English-language literature for children and young people from various media and genres, including prose and poetry' and 'express himself/herself creatively, inspired by English literature from various genres and media'.⁸⁵ It seems plausible that EFL pupils would benefit from access to a minimum of additional reading materials in order for them to meet with these learning objectives. It might therefore be useful to teachers who do not employ such materials, and to their pupils, if awareness was raised about reasons for including additional materials in EFL classrooms, and how to employ them.

It might also be useful to teachers if EFL teacher collegiums discussed employment of additional materials to raise awareness and confidence about their decisions. For example, the administration could organise in-service courses about the teaching of reading, or arrange meetings where the administration and the EFL teachers were provided an opportunity to articulate and reflect about their respective cognitions relating to the decisions they make in their classrooms. Taking such steps to address EFL teachers' choices of materials in relation to the teaching of reading might further assist in the implementation of *LK06*.

⁸⁵ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. 'English subject curriculum'.

6.3 Practices

Although the teachers' approaches to working with texts varied, the ways that they typically approached work with textbook texts were fundamentally alike. All the teachers prepared their pupils for the upcoming text by ensuring that it was read aloud to them, whether it was played off the connected audio-CD or the teachers read it themselves. Linguistic aspects, such as the meaning and pronunciation of difficult and unfamiliar vocabulary, were thereafter attended to in explicit manners. The pupils would then in the large majority of the classrooms discuss the contents of the text, before finally reading it for homework.

Four of the eight teachers, Martha, Perry, Celia, and Anna, activated pupils' schemata through pre-reading activities, such as pupils talking about pictures, pupils making predictions about the text, guessing the meaning of words, or exploring pupils' knowledge of the topic before embarking on the reading of the text. These four teachers additionally expressed that they believed pre-reading activities to be highly important to pupils' text comprehension. The teachers' abilities to explain why they regarded pre-reading activities to be of importance varied among them. Thus the fact that pre-reading activities were employed in these four classrooms does not necessarily mean that teachers knew the relevance of pre-reading activities. The motivation for their practices may moreover, at least partially, rest on the suggested pre-reading activities offered by their primary teaching resource, the textbook.

The teachers' pre-reading practices could also to some extent rest on intuitive decisions, i.e. they 'feel' that pre-reading is important. The intuitive element is, however, assumed to be unarticulated cognitive systems. This implies that teachers may decide on practices on the basis of attitudes and beliefs that are covert even to the teachers themselves. Such covert attitudes and beliefs are nevertheless assumed to form on the basis of teachers' own experiences as language learners, their accumulated classroom experiences from their teaching career, and their teacher education (Borg, 2003; Richards, 1998:66-7). Richards (1998:21) suggests educating teachers in articulating and reflecting about their practices in order to 'help teachers move beyond a level where they are guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine'. With regard to the four teachers in the study who employed pre-reading activities, such education may help consolidate their practices due to a clearer understanding of the role of such activities to pupils' reading development. With regard to the four remaining teachers, such education might initiate the inclusion of pre-reading practices.

While-reading activities were seldom employed. All the teachers' practices, however, included post-reading activities, although Carl only practised these to a very limited extent. The reason for this practice was mainly that it allowed them to assess pupils' text

comprehension. It is further possible that the teachers' assessment of pupils' comprehension intuitively was also a method to maintain or increase pupils' reading motivation, as ensuring comprehension frequently promotes motivation to read (Krashen, 1984, 2004; Day and Bamford, 1998). The teachers did not report that pupils' motivation was part of their rationale for their post-reading practices. However, a strong concern for the effect incomprehension could have on pupils' motivation appeared across the interviews; thus this assumption appears plausible.

Further, relating to post-reading activities, five of the eight teachers reported that they would prompt their pupils to express their feelings and thoughts about the text they had just read. This approach corresponds to *LK06*, which in the learning objectives for the intermediate level, i.e. grades 5 to 7, require that pupils develop abilities to 'express an opinion on various topics', 'read and talk about English-language literature for children and young people from various media and genres, including prose and poetry', 'compare characters and content in a selection of children's books written in English', 'express his/her own reactions to film, pictures and music', and 'express himself/herself creatively, inspired by English literature from various genres and media'.⁸⁶ These curricular requirements in turn echo theory about the development of reading proficiency. Theory asserts that metacognitive abilities, such as abilities to think about texts in an abstract way, that is, knowing how to talk about texts and language, is crucial to overall language development (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:18; Hall, 1994:18-28; Lancy, 2004:2-11).

However, as the textbooks offered suggested post-reading activities, the situation may again be that teachers' practices were not fundamentally rooted in attitudes or beliefs relating to post-reading activities, but rather in attitudes and beliefs relating to the textbook. This suggestion seems plausible since all the teachers reported that they regarded their textbooks to be their main source of appropriate materials and activities.

Only two of the teachers in the study, Celia and Karen, explicitly taught their pupils about genres. Considering that theory about the development of reading skills assumes that formal schemata are significant to text comprehension, there appear to be some room for improvement in this aspect of the teaching of reading (e.g. Carrell, 1984:332-3; Day and Bamford, 1998:18-9; Grabe, 2002; Lugossy, 2007:77; Nunan, 1999:257). Carl and Perry further did not believe genre knowledge to be of importance to 6th grade pupils at their stage of reading development. Steven regarded poetry to be uninteresting to his pupils, which

⁸⁶ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. 'English subject curriculum'.

caused him to spend little time on it or to leave most of the poems in his textbook out of his reading lessons. Martha used the reading of texts as an implicit means to introduce her pupils to different genres. She also provided her pupils with 'a pattern', which may fill some gaps in her pupils' formal schemata. Should the pupils be able to realize and internalise the structure of this 'pattern', it may provide them with increased formal schemata. However, as Martha did not teach about genres in her classroom, providing her pupils with a framework without explaining its relevance or function may not be sufficient to ensure increased formal schemata with all her pupils. Grabe and Stoller (2002:81) assert that although some pupils may be able to expand their formal schemata subconsciously through simply encountering them several times, many language learners need to be explicitly instructed about their characteristics in order to develop the schemata. In terms of the learning objectives in *LK06* for the intermediate level, they require that pupils should be able to read and understand texts of different genres. Pupils should further be able to read and talk about English literature of different genres, including prose and poetry.⁸⁷ It seems reasonable to assume that explicit instruction about genres could be crucial to the development of formal schemata in many 6th grade EFL pupils. Since the textbooks include texts of different genres, they provide opportunities for the teaching of formal schemata.

Despite the apparent lack of focus on some elements of formal schemata, the majority of the teachers focused on the building of content schemata. However, when asked if they regarded knowledge about the world to be an important purpose of the reading of texts, the majority of the teachers reported that they did not consider this to be so. Since the textbooks offered the teachers a framework for increasing their pupils' topical knowledge, the pupils presumably received relevant information on the basis of which to arrive at comprehension. The topical knowledge that the teachers nevertheless provided their pupils with appeared not to be conscious efforts to increase pupils' content schemata.

However, the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs concerning pupils' content schemata appear less significant if applying an instrumental view to this discussion. An instrumental view would imply that the role of the teachers' attitudes and beliefs in relation to their focus on knowledge about the world are inferior to their practices, as the main concern is that the pupils are in fact provided with opportunities to expand their schemata. It could still prove beneficial to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of content schemata in order to help them recognise the importance of this element in the development of reading

⁸⁷Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

proficiency, thus helping them ‘move beyond a level where they are guided ... by impulse, intuition, or routine’ (Richards, 1998:21). The teachers may thereby gain insight into the role of content schemata and thereby become better able to address gaps in pupils’ content schemata, for instance through explicitly teaching pupils about a topic.

Reading strategies are also argued to be crucial to the development of efficient reading skills (Grabe, 2002; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:18-138; Hellekjær, 2007:23; Šamo, 2009:122). *LK06* is in line with theory in its focus on reading strategies, as it states in its learning objectives for the intermediate level that pupils should develop abilities to ‘use listening, speaking, reading and writing strategies that are suitable for the purpose’.⁸⁸ Despite the scholarly and curricular emphasis on reading strategies, Perry and Celia were the only two teachers who explicitly addressed reading strategies in their classrooms. Karen and Carl addressed reading strategies in their Norwegian lessons, and appeared to entrust their pupils to be able to apply this knowledge in their process of developing English reading proficiency. Despite that the majority of the teachers largely avoiding to consciously attend to development of reading strategies, all the teachers believed it was important to focus on meaning rather than on form when reading. Celia, Perry, and Karen further occasionally employed activities that explicitly required the pupils to approximate the meaning of unfamiliar words. This implies that the pupils were to some extent encouraged to approximate or ignore unfamiliar vocabulary, which is further regarded to be a valuable reading strategy (Day and Bamford, 1998:93; Grabe and Stoller, 2002:74-5; Hellekjær, 2007:27; Parker and Parker, 1991:182).

Self-monitoring skills are closely linked to reading strategies and are assumed to be important for text-comprehension and thus to reading development (Šamo, 2009:128). The assumed importance of self-monitoring skills is further echoed in *LK06*. The general section in the English curriculum states that pupils should develop strategies for language learning, abilities to determine how to adequately develop their language proficiency, and abilities to assess their own language development.⁸⁹ The learning objectives for the intermediate level further require that pupils develop skills to be able to identify and use various situations to expand their linguistic skills, describe their own work towards developing their language, and use the appropriate reading strategy for the reading purpose.⁹⁰ Self-monitoring skills and pupil autonomy are assumed to be related, and to be crucial dimensions of reading development in

⁸⁸ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (d): ‘Kompetanse for kvalitet. Strategi for videreutdanning av lærere’.

⁸⁹ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): ‘English subject curriculum’.

⁹⁰ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): ‘English subject curriculum’.

the L2 classroom (Day and Bamford, 1998:166; Little, 2003⁹¹). The autonomous pupil is furthermore emphasised in the general focus of the current curriculum.⁹²

It seems clear from the fact that only two of the teachers, Anna and Steven, had implemented a system of self-monitoring that the development of such skills was not a priority among the teachers. This further implies that the majority of the teachers did not recognise the potential for reading development that follows from self-assessment skills. Anna was the only teacher who employed the *ELP* for her pupils to monitor their own reading progress. However, Steven employed a similar self-assessment form for his pupils to monitor their own overall language development. It is assumed that self-evaluation not only facilitates language learning by helping pupils focus on their linguistic development and metacognitive skills, but that self-monitoring of reading development additionally promotes motivation to read because it helps turn the pupils' linguistic development into an individual endeavour (Day and Bamford, 1998:166; Little, 2003). Scholars additionally argue that in order to increase pupils' perception of their development of reading skills as an individual process, it could be useful to allow them to select their own books to read.

Six of the eight teachers in the study allowed their pupils to select their own reading materials, and all of the six teachers guided their pupils through the process. The building of self-monitoring skills and pupil autonomy did not appear to be the main purpose for teachers to employ self-selection, whereas motivation to read and differentiation were the reported reasons for the practice.

All the teachers were attentive towards the negative consequences that experiences of incomprehension could have on pupils' motivation to read. Pupils' motivation was the common reason for guiding pupils in their selection of reading materials. Although the teachers may be unaware or only subconsciously aware of it, in guiding their pupils, the teachers nevertheless assist the building of their pupils' self-monitoring skills. It is assumed that such guidance over time increases pupils' abilities to select their own materials, and, by time, to take charge over their own selection of reading materials and reading development (Day and Bamford, 1998:121). According to Krashen (2004:88) this could only be a successful approach if pupils are allowed to select interesting, relevant and comprehensible materials.

The positive attitude towards self-selection of materials among the majority of the teachers was an encouraging result of the study. Martha did not employ this approach as her

⁹¹ Little, 2003: 'Learner Autonomy and second/foreign language learning'.

⁹² Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (a): 'Den generelle delen av læreplanen'.

practices currently did not include additional reading materials. The other teacher who did not practise self-selection of materials was Carl. He was additionally the only teacher who expressed negative attitudes towards pupils being allowed to select their own reading materials, mainly due to logistic factors. It might have been valuable to Carl to receive information about the potential for differentiation, and increased motivation and metacognitive skills that self-selection of materials offers (Atwell, 1998; Little, 2003⁹³). Thus, an in-service course might have inspired Carl, and also Martha, to employ such an approach. Such a course might also help the teachers who already employed this approach to articulate and reflect about their practice. Increased awareness about the potential benefits of allowing pupils to select their own reading materials may further encourage schools to expand their book selections.

Relating to the process of selecting materials, Borg (2003:94) argues that the context of the teaching situation, which includes access to materials, impacts on classroom practices. The fact that the library at Carl's school was unstaffed seemed to some degree to discourage him from including pupils' self-selection of books into his English teaching practice. Following the strong focus that the Ministry of Education and Research has put on reading, reducing library resources appears paradoxical. The fact that the six teachers who practised self-selection of materials all had easy access to books, graded readers in particular, may further serve as an indicator that the teaching context significantly influences teachers' practices, and that access to materials may encourage more reading.

For pupils to be able to meet with curricular requirements, it appears important to provide them with access to a range of reading materials. Providing language learners with a range of materials might, for instance, help expand their lexical access, build formal and content schemata, and encourage the joy of reading through encounters with a varied selection of texts. Establishing the joy of reading is also an aim in *LK06*, as the general section in the curriculum states that pupils across all grades of formal schooling should receive opportunities to develop the joy of reading through experiences with literature ranging 'from nursery rhymes to Shakespeare' [sic] sonnets'.⁹⁴ The learning objectives for the intermediate level further require that pupils should be able to comprehend texts of varying lengths and genres, read and talk about English children's and young adults' literature from different media and of different genres, compare persons/characters and contents from a selection of

⁹³ Little, 2003.: 'Learner Autonomy and second/foreign language learning'.

⁹⁴ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

English books, and express themselves in a creative way, inspired by English literature of different genres.⁹⁵

It seems unlikely that any one textbook could provide sufficient comprehensible, interesting and relevant materials for all the pupils in a class to develop the joy of reading, or enough experiences with texts to be able to compare the contents of different English children's books. An exclusive use of textbooks additionally makes it difficult for teachers to provide opportunities for self-selection of texts. It thus appears important that teachers are offered access to a range of additional reading materials, and that they are instructed about how to employ such materials in an efficient way. The National Language Resource Centre and the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines could prove helpful for this purpose, as could in-service courses held by external actors, or school initiatives such as regular courses about the resources and reading materials in the school library, and meetings with the school librarian.

Oral reading-related activities, for instance the teacher reading aloud and Readers Theatre, are 'recommended as memorable and pleasurable ways of presenting and practicing language with children, at least as part of a course if not as its entire vehicle' (Rixon, 1992:82). Emergent Literacy theory asserts that oral activities facilitate reading development because such activities promote realisation of the connection between concrete and abstract dimensions in literacy, such as between written and spoken words and structures (Hall, 1994:18-23). The *LK06* learning objectives for the intermediate level further state that pupils should be able to express their own reactions to film, pictures and music, and to be able to express themselves creatively, inspired by English literature from various genres and media'.⁹⁶ Reading-related activities may require few resources in terms of access to reading materials, as one copy of for instance a book would often be sufficient to be able to employ the teacher reading aloud-activities, and Readers Theatre.

Despite strong arguments for the potential for linguistic development that oral activities encompass, it is assumed that L2 teachers in general fail to recognise the potential for overall literacy development that lies in such activities (Lancy, 2004:3). With regards to Norwegian practices in the teaching of EFL reading, concerns have been voiced that the lack efficient reading skills that the Norwegian 2000 PISA test revealed might be an effect of a strong focus on IR activities in reading classrooms (Hellekjær, 2007). In spite of these concerns, five of the eight teachers in the study regularly organised for their pupils to dramatise parts of or entire texts, either as a post-reading activity or as an activity in its own

⁹⁵Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

⁹⁶Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (b): 'English subject curriculum'.

right. The teachers and their pupils all appeared to value this activity extremely highly. It further seemed that the main purpose for initiating dramatisation of texts was to motivate pupils both to read and to practise their oral skills, and, besides, to create a good learning environment, which is also assumed to be an important factor in the development of reading skills (Krashen, 1984, 2004).

To further add to these positive findings, and to some extent balance out to concerns about IR dense teaching practices, the majority of the teachers had exclusively positive experiences with reading longer texts, such as fairytales, aloud to their pupils. Louise had additionally developed a habit of telling stories in her EFL classroom. Although the majority of the teachers were enthusiastic towards this approach, only four of the teachers' practices presently included reading-aloud of longer and enjoyable texts. The fact that the teachers generally thought linguistic skills to be closely intertwined suggests that they may employed reading-related activities intuitively as a means to assist their pupils' reading development. Should this be the case, it would imply that their teaching practices were in line with their attitudes and beliefs.

The practices of Carl and Martha only included a marginal employment of additional materials. Furthermore, neither of them read aloud to their pupils, nor did they employ dramatisation in their reading classrooms. They had nevertheless previously used to read longer texts aloud to their pupils, but they had stopped this activity due to time constraints and negative classroom experiences as teachers. In-service courses that inform teachers about the potential for language development that lies in dramatisation and that further inform about how to organise such activities in the classroom could provide teachers such as Carl and Martha with sufficient knowledge to become confident about the legitimacy of such approaches, in addition to providing them with the tools to implement reading-related activities in their reading classrooms.

In order to assist the teachers' in their teaching of reading, and to ensure that *LK06* is implemented, it might be useful to increase their familiarity with and use of additional teaching resources such as The National Language Resource Centre and the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines. One could imagine several possible channels for the communication of such information. English team leaders, or other members of staff working closely with the EFL teachers in their decisions about materials and practices, such as school librarians, might be able to provide teachers with information about such teaching resources. However, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training states that the responsibility for teachers'

further education lies with the school owners.⁹⁷ In the context of this study, that would mean that the respective municipalities, through the schools' administrations, hold the responsibility to ensure that teachers are updated about the subjects they teach. As both The National Language Resource Centre and the *LK06* Teaching Guidelines are available on the Internet, making teachers aware of their existence need, however, not be costly financially nor in terms of time and effort spent on obtaining the information.

6.4 The role of teacher education

Celia was the only teacher who did not have formal qualifications in English or in teaching, and she further appeared to have some problems with comprehending and articulating abstract notions. She did for example not understand the question 'What do you think has influenced your teaching practices?' and had difficulties with answering some of the questions concerning her attitudes and beliefs. This might imply that teacher education impacts on teachers' abilities to reflect about and articulate their cognitions.

Despite her lack of any formal qualifications, Celia frequently read aloud to her pupils, her pupils frequently dramatised texts, she taught genre knowledge and reading strategies, she discussed with her class why it is important to be proficient English readers, and encouraged her pupils to voice their experiences from a text or the reading itself. She also employed pre- and post-reading activities and a range of additional materials in her classroom, and allowed her pupils to select their own books to read under her guidance.

Similarly to Celia, Karen also employed several activities to do with reading, in spite of not having any formal qualifications as a teacher. For example, she read aloud to her pupils and allowed self-selection of reading materials, and she had further developed exercises to encourage her pupils to approximate the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Carl and Martha were both formally qualified teachers. It would therefore be reasonable to expect that they employed activities to do with reading to the same extent as Celia and Karen. The study nevertheless revealed that this was not so. Of the activities, approaches, and foci mentioned to them, Martha and Carl generally only employed pre- and post-reading activities. Neither of them, for instance, attended to such matters as genre knowledge or reading strategies, and neither of them anymore read aloud to their pupils.

Thus, of these four teachers, the two teachers with no teacher education, Celia and Karen, employed a wider range of materials and practices to do with reading than the two teachers who had teacher education, Carl and Martha. Celia and Karen also attended to a

⁹⁷ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (d): 'Kompetanse for kvalitet. Strategi for videreutdanning av lærere'.

wider range of reading skills, such as schemata and reading strategies, than Carl and Martha. All these four teachers further employed the same textbook series, and therefore had access to the same information and suggestions about exercises and activities.

When asked what they thought had influenced their teaching practices, the answers across the study frequently related to personal experiences as language learners, input from colleagues, and classroom experiences from their careers as teachers. A few of the teachers believed that their education in English or in teaching had influenced their practices. The remaining teachers were largely neutral towards whether their education had influenced their practices, although Steven stated that he believed his practices were entirely unaffected by his teacher education. The study suggests that teachers with initially positive beliefs towards, for instance, the teacher reading aloud can be influenced by for example negative experiences in the classroom to the extent that they abandon their practice. The study similarly suggests teachers whose initial cognitions do not include activities such as the teacher reading aloud might be influenced by colleagues or in-service courses to the extent that they include such practices into their cognitions. It may therefore be inferred that teachers' cognition is partly unstable and may be equally or more influenced by colleagues, pupils, in-service courses, and personal experiences as language learners than by teacher education.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The study is limited by the number of subjects and its methodology. The small number of subjects that were interviewed in this study does not produce a basis for generalisations to be made about the entire population of teachers. Had the sample been larger, the picture could have become more complex, or the trends could have appeared clearer. Thus, only tentative conclusions and impressions about the teaching of reading in Norwegian intermediate EFL classrooms can be drawn.

The interview was furthermore the only research tool employed to obtain data. It is likely that additional methods, such as observing lessons, or interviewing pupils or administrative staff, could have verified or supplemented data collected from the teacher interviews. However, time constraints prevented inclusion of both a larger sample of subjects and employment of other methods to collect data. Despite the study being too small to provide conclusive research evidence, it is still believed that the eight interviews provided sufficient data for the trends pointed out in the present discussion.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has aimed at exploring the teaching of reading proficiency among elementary EFL teachers in Norway. The study was based on the following two research questions: ‘What knowledge, materials, practices, and beliefs form the basis for 6th grade EFL teachers’ teaching of reading?’ and ‘How do 6th grade EFL teachers implement the *LK06* curriculum with regard to the teaching of reading?’

The first research question refers to the concept of teacher cognition, which implies teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and knowledge, and the way they relate to classroom practices, in the present context on the teaching of reading. The second research question, concerning the teachers’ implementation of the *LK06* curriculum, was considered important since the curriculum defines reading as a basic skill. Since the curriculum does not state how the learning objectives of the curriculum should be approached, the teaching of reading may be approached according to individual teachers’ cognition.

Interviews with eight 6th grade EFL teachers from randomly selected schools within the county of Rogaland provided data for the thesis. A one-hour interview with each teacher was conducted, which allowed for an in-depth study of the teachers’ cognition relating to the teaching of reading and the implementation of *LK06*. The geographically scattered locations of the eight schools made the gathering of data a time-consuming undertaking, although at the same time ensuring that schools from both rural and urban areas were included in the study.

The teachers approached reading materials and working with texts in a variety of ways and to varying extents. The textbook was the most predominant reading material in the case of all of the teachers. They all generally had positive attitudes and beliefs towards using their textbooks, and did so regularly. The majority of the teachers also had positive attitudes and beliefs towards employing other materials than textbooks, and thus had included supplementary materials into their teaching of reading, graded readers in particular.

Although the teachers’ cognition and reading-related decisions regarding reading materials largely corresponded, the study nevertheless revealed that the teachers’ approaches to working with texts varied. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers were positive towards and used pre- and post-reading activities. However, only a few of the teachers in general attended to aspects of reading such as the development of reading strategies, schemata, and pupils’ self-assessment of reading development, despite the inclusion of these aspects in the textbooks and in *LK06*. On the other hand, over half of the teachers were positive towards and further encouraged pupils’ reflection about texts, self-selection of reading materials, and

focusing on meaning rather than on form while reading. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers across the study had positive attitudes and beliefs towards reading-related activities, such as the teacher reading aloud books and the dramatisation of texts, and more than half of the teachers included such activities into their practices on a regular basis. However, there was a noticeable discrepancy among teachers in this respect, as the number of teachers that were positive towards reading-related activities was higher than the number of teachers actually employing such activities.

In terms of the implementation of the curriculum, the teachers appeared to consciously use their textbook to ensure that their teaching of reading met with the learning objectives in *LK06*. A few of the teachers were further careful to align their teaching of reading to the curriculum, and therefore conferred with it on a regular basis by way of weekly plans for their teaching. All of the teachers appeared to entrust their textbook to provide them with the appropriate texts and activities. The textbook appeared thereby to be a vehicle for reading-promoting activities, such as pre- and post-reading activities, to be included in the practices of the majority of the teachers. It nevertheless appeared that the majority of the teachers would disregard aspects of reading or activities that they had negative attitudes towards or did not believe to be important, such as genre knowledge and reading skills, despite these aspects being addressed in the textbook.

This hierarchical structuring of the teachers' cognition was moreover also the case with teachers who reported that they employed weekly plans to ensure that their teaching met with the requirements of *LK06*. Steven, who was one of the teachers who worked according to such plans, did not, for example, teach about aspects such as genre knowledge or reading strategies, although these are aspects of reading development that are emphasised in the learning objectives for the intermediate level, and that are facilitated in the textbook. These findings imply a strong relationship between the constructs that together make up teacher cognition, and further imply that teacher cognition may to a larger degree than other factors, such as contextual aspects, influence teachers' decisions.

Although there appeared to be a strong relation between cognition and classroom decisions in the case of the majority of the teachers, the study also revealed the ambiguous nature of teacher cognition, and therefore also the challenges that research into teacher cognition is faced with. For example, Martha reported that she believed that pupils selecting their own books and reading them silently to themselves was positive. However, despite her positive attitudes and beliefs to self-chosen reading, she did not offer pupils opportunities to select and read books. To further complicate the picture, she had previously practised self-

selected reading, but had departed from this practice, although her attitudes and beliefs apparently had not changed. She had, however, over the course of the last two or three years, established a belief that she had to go through the entire textbook, despite this not being an explicit requirement from her school. Martha reported that she regarded the textbook as being particularly useful in the implementation of *LK06*. Her belief that she had to go through the textbook therefore may be a manifestation of her consideration of the textbook as crucial in order to meet with contextual demands. She no longer felt that she had the time to allow for the reading of self-selected books. Thus, Martha revealed a hierarchy of beliefs and attitudes, which in turn ultimately caused her practices to deviate from her beliefs about what constitutes the efficient teaching of reading.

The discrepancy between teachers' cognition and teaching-related choices complicates the understanding of and research into individual and personal processes that nevertheless influence what goes on in classrooms. The findings of this study thus support the notion that teachers' practices and choices do not necessarily reflect their attitudes and beliefs, thereby underlining the complex nature of teacher cognition.

Adding to the complexity of teacher cognition, as it became evident through the study, accumulated experiences from the classroom together with contextual factors continue to influence teachers' cognition. The result is that some of the constructs may become unstable, which appeared to be the case with Carl when he decided to quit his reading-aloud activity. Although he believed that his reading aloud of books was beneficial to his pupils, negative experiences had led him to depart from this activity. These experiences had affected his attitude towards reading books aloud in his classroom. In this way, dimensions of teacher cognition may continuously and fundamentally change following classroom experiences.

The boundaries between the constructs of teacher cognition, i.e. attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and practice, are sliding ones. The terminology relating to teacher cognition is further ambiguous and not yet fully agreed-upon among researchers. The consequence of a lack of clarity in terminology and the complexity of the relation between the concepts in teacher cognition is that the understanding, interpretation and description of the processes that underpin the visible dimensions of the classroom, the teachers' practices and decisions, become a challenge for both researchers and teachers.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study suggest that having the cognitive tools to be able to reflect about and articulate cognitive dimensions are important for teachers to understand their practices and classroom decisions, thus bringing their teaching to a higher level of consciousness. The impact of being provided with such tools became particularly

evident in the case of Anna, who reported that she believed that certain aspects of her teaching had always been the same, but that she was more conscious of the rationale for her practices and decisions connected to reading after having attended a further-education course. It was also through the course that she learnt about the *ELP* and started using it.

Martha's example would appear to have implications for the institutions that educate future teachers, as these institutions would usually be the most likely channel for the communication of such knowledge and understanding. Nevertheless, taking into account that some of the teachers reported that their attitudes and beliefs were still unstable or even consciously unaffected upon leaving teacher education programmes, focussed in-service courses may be an equally appropriate channel for such knowledge and consciousness-raising among teachers.

Teacher cognition is a relatively young field of research, and it has been suggested that there is a shortage of international studies of teacher cognition in relation to YLLs who are taught by non-native speakers of the target language in a state-school setting (Borg, 2003, 2006; Sendan and Roberts, 1998). These aspects together have made up the context for this study, and have thus hopefully contributed to research in the field. Although research into YLLs in Norway has grown recently, this study has hopefully contributed to the field by focussing on reading and teacher cognition in elementary EFL classrooms.

As teacher cognition is a dimension that influences all language classrooms, it would be useful for further research in Norway to be conducted at the lower secondary and upper secondary levels. It may additionally prove valuable to the field if future research included other methods for the collection of data. Questionnaire surveys, for example would reach out to a larger proportion of the teaching population, while observing and video-taping teachers and pupils in their classrooms would offer opportunities for the researcher to receive a first-hand impression of teachers' actual practices and teaching-related choices. Such research may further contribute to broaden the basis for the understanding of teacher cognition how it relates to the foreign language classroom.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

Opening Remarks

The purpose of this interview is to obtain data for my MA thesis. The interviews are anonymous; neither the names of the schools or the informants will be revealed. The interview will be recorded in order for me to be able to accurately transcribe important parts and keep focused on the interview situation.

My focus is not to find out if the informant is doing things right or wrong with regards to his/her teaching, but to find out about, in connection with reading in English in 6th grade, what materials the teacher actually use, what the teacher's thoughts about different aspects of EFL teaching are, and how the teacher practices the teaching of EFL, and also how the implementation of the current curriculum (*LK06*) has affected his/her thoughts about teaching and/or teaching practices, if at all.

Background

1. (If you don't mind me asking,) How old are you?
2. When did you start teaching?
3. How many years of English teaching experience do you have?
4. What qualifications do you have?
 - a. Do you have a teaching certificate or a bachelors' degree in teaching from a teachers training college or a university?
 - b. Do you have qualifications in English?
 - c. How many credits/months/years?
5. Have you attended any in-service courses?
 - a. Did they include the teaching of reading?

Materials

1. What materials do you use?
2. Do you use a textbook?
 - a. How often?
 - b. What do you think of the quality of the textbook?

3. Do you use other materials?
 - a. What?
 - b. How often?
 - c. Do your pupils use graded readers?
 - d. Do your pupils use authentic texts/books?
 - e. Do your pupils use magazines or newspapers in English?
 - i. How do they use these texts or books? Do they read silently to themselves, together in groups/pairs
 - f. Do you use dictionaries? What type? (Mono-/bilingual?)
 - g. Do you use ICT in your English teaching?
4. Do you have a class library/do you use the school library?
5. Who decides what materials you can have/use in your school?
 - a. What influence do you have?
6. Do teachers in your school co-operate about materials?

Practices

1. What do you think has influenced your teaching practices?
2. How do you motivate your pupils to read?
3. Do you read books aloud in class?
 - a. What kind of books?
 - b. How often?
 - c. What do you think are the benefits of reading aloud to the class?
4. Do the pupils read loud in class/read to each other in class?
 - a. How often?
 - b. What do you think are the benefits of the pupils reading aloud in class/to each other?
5. How do you approach differentiated learning?
6. How do you assess/check your pupils' reading progress?
7. In your opinion, is the National test positive?
8. Do teachers in your school co-operate about practices?
9. Do you have any other practices to do with reading that you would like to mention?

(Working with texts)

1. How would you normally go through a text in class?

2. What do you think the purpose of using text in English teaching is?
 - a. Vocabulary?
 - b. Structures of language?
 - c. Learning about other cultures?
 - d. Learning about different genres?
 - e. Learning to reflect upon/give responses to a text?
 - f. What do you think about the link between reading and written and oral skills?
3. Do you help your pupils in developing different reading strategies for different purposes?
 - a. How?
4. What activities, if any, do you do in class to prepare your pupils **before** reading a text?
5. What activities, if any, do you do in class **while** reading a text?
6. What activities, if any, do you do in class **after** having read a text?

Beliefs/attitudes

1. What are your attitudes towards using the textbook?
2. What are your attitudes towards using other materials?
3. What do you consider to be important when selecting texts for a class?
4. What do you think about the importance of reading skills compared to oral/written skills?
5. What are your views on the teacher reading books aloud in class? (why positive/why negative?)
6. What are your views on pupils reading silently in class? Why?
7. What are your views on pupils reading in groups in class? Why?
8. What are your views on pupils getting to choose texts/books themselves?
9. Has *LK06* been positive for your teaching?

Resources

The *LK06* curriculum:

1. What do you think about the *LK06* curriculum?
2. To what extent do you base your teaching on the *LK06* curriculum?
 - a. Have you received any information about how to implement the curriculum?
 - b. Have you changed your practices after the implementation of the *LK06* curriculum?

- c. How?
- d. How do you meet with the learning objectives in the curriculum?

Familiarity with:

1. The *LK06* Teaching Guidelines?
 - a. If applicable: Have you used them?
2. Are you familiar with 'Fremmedspråksenteret' on the Internet, e.g. the guidelines for teachers about reading in English?
 - a. If applicable: Have you used it?
3. Are you familiar with the *European Language Portfolio*?
 - a. If applicable: Have you used it?
 - b. Are you familiar with the Guide to Teachers (belonging to the *ELP*)?
 - c. Have you received any information about how to use the *ELP* in practice?
 - i. Do you know that such information exists on Fremmedspråksenterets Internet site?

Final remarks from the informant