Critical Visual Literacy and Intercultural Learning in English Foreign Language Classrooms

An exploratory case study

by

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis revolves around two significant, ongoing, and in many ways interrelated developments in education, and in society at large: the increased use of multimodal and visual texts as a mode of communication, enabled largely through the new communication technologies; and the global intercultural communication enabled through these technologies and through increased global mobility. The semiotic landscapes learners need to navigate in their everyday lives, in formal education, and in their future work lives are therefore increasingly complex and diverse. Thus, the overarching aim of the current thesis has been to provide insights into the meaning making processes Norwegian upper secondary learners engage in when reading images in the context of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom and how these can be facilitated through instruction. More specifically, it explores the utilisation of critical visual literacy (CVL) as a teaching approach which aims to make the social, cultural, and ideological workings of images conscious and its potentials for increasing learners' understanding of meaning-making processes from the perspective of intercultural learning.

The thesis is article-based and comprises three articles, all drawing on empirical data from a case study in which CVL was introduced as an approach to reading visual texts in three upper secondary EFL classrooms, and a synopsis, which serves to illuminate the links between the respective articles and to provide a broader overview of the research context. The articles address the research aim from three different theoretical perspectives, thus contributing to shedding light on different aspects of the research problem.

Article I investigated the ways in which the learners brought beliefs about different groups of people in the form of stereotypes into the meaning-making processes prior to and following instruction. The findings showed that the learners were less inclined to stereotype after the intervention, and that they displayed an increased awareness of the process of stereotyping, which lead some of the groups to challenge the process itself.

Article II explored whether and how the learners were able to co-construct multiple perspectives through dialogue facilitated by critical questions before and after the instruction. The analysis found that the learners were able to develop multiple perspectives both before and after the instruction, and specifically demonstrated how the dialogue and the critical questions were instrumental in enabling this co-construction of perspectives. Furthermore, following instruction, the learners displayed more agency in this co-construction process and were also able to develop the perspectives in greater depth and more critically.

Article III aimed to explore how the learners analysed and redesigned a multimodal advertisement poster following instruction. The analysis found that through engaging with one or more of the themes power, identity, diversity, and symbolism, and through using knowledge and analytical tools they had gained through instruction, the learners identified the underlying ideologies in the original advertisement, problematised these and challenged them through creating alternative texts which were more in line with their own worldview.

The main contribution of this thesis is an increased understanding of the kinds of meaning-making processes EFL learners engage in when reading visual texts from different cultural contexts. Drawing on results from all three articles, three overarching themes were identified which contribute to illuminating these processes. Firstly, the learners were found to be active co-constructors of meaning, utilising a range of resources both individually and in dialogue with others. By expanding these resources through instruction, and through collaborative dialogue with others, the learners produced more complex and multifaceted knowledge about social and cultural issues. Secondly, the findings demonstrate how the learners utilised their increased awareness of themselves, of others, and of meaning-making processes in general in order to engage with visual texts in critical and informed ways. Finally, through raising this awareness, the learners developed increased control of meaning making resources, and understandings of how these are related to social and cultural contexts. This was argued to foster their symbolic competence, which is here understood to be closely related to intercultural learning. However, developing increased awareness of and control over semiotic resources was found to be a complex process, and the results imply that learners need time and explicit instruction in order to develop this type of agency in their readings of images.

Sammendrag

Denne doktorgradsavhandlingen dreier seg om to viktige, pågående og på mange måter beslektede endringer i utdanning og i samfunnet generelt: den økte bruken av multimodale og visuelle kommunikasjonsformer, i stor grad muliggjort gjennom de nye kommunikasjonsteknologiene; og den globale interkulturelle kommunikasjonen muliggjort gjennom disse teknologiene samt økt global mobilitet. De semiotiske landskapene elever trenger å navigere i hverdagen, i formell utdanning og i framtidig arbeidsliv blir derfor stadig mer komplekse og mangfoldige. Dermed er det overordnede målet for denne oppgaven å gi innsikt i de meningsskapende prosessene norske videregående elever deltar i når de leser visuelle tekster i engelskklasserommet, og hvordan undervisning kan tilrettelegge for og støtte disse. Mer spesifikt utforsker oppgaven bruken av kritisk visuell literacy som en undervisningsmetode hvis mål er å bevisstgjøre elevene om de sosiale, kulturelle og ideologiske virkningene av visuelle tekster, og denne metodens potensial for å øke elevenes forståelse for hvordan mening skapes fra et interkulturelt læringsperspektiv.

Avhandlingen er artikkelbasert og består av tre artikler, som alle trekker empiriske data fra en casestudie der kritisk visuell literacy ble introdusert som en tilnærming til lesing av visuelle tekster i tre engelskklasserom på videregående skole, samt et sammendrag som tjener til å belyse koblingene mellom de respektive artiklene samt å gi en videre oversikt over forskningskonteksten.

Artikkel I undersøkte måtene elevene brakte med seg oppfatninger om ulike grupper av mennesker i form av stereotypier inn i den meningsskapende prosessen før og etter instruksjon. Funnene viste at elevene var mindre tilbøyelige til å anvende disse stereotypiene etter instruksjonen, samt at de viste en økt bevissthet om prosessen med stereotyping, noe som førte enkelte grupper til å utfordre selve prosessen.

Artikkel II utforsket om og hvordan elevene samkonstruerte flere perspektiver gjennom dialog tilrettelagt av kritiske spørsmål før og etter instruksjonen. Analysen fant at elevene var i stand til å utvikle flere perspektiver både før og etter instruksjonen, og demonstrerte spesifikt hvordan dialogen og de kritiske spørsmålene var instrumentelle i muliggjøringen av denne samkonstruksjonen. Videre viste elevene mer handlefrihet i denne prosessen etter instruksjonen, og var også i stand til å utvikle perspektivene mer kritisk og med mer dybde.

Artikkel III hadde som mål å utforske hvordan elevene analyserte og re-konstruerte en multimodal reklameplakat etter instruksjon. Funnene viste at gjennom å engasjere seg i ett eller flere av temaene makt, identitet, mangfold og symbolikk, og ved å anvende

kunnskap og analytiske verktøy de hadde tilegnet seg gjennom instruksjonen, identifiserte elevene de underliggende ideologiene i den opprinnelige annonsen. Videre problematiserte de disse og utfordret dem gjennom å skape alternative tekster som var med i tråd med deres eget verdensbilde.

Hovedbidraget til denne avhandlingen er økt forståelse av hvilke meningsskapende prosesser elever engasjerer seg i når de leser visuelle tekster ut fra ulike kulturelle kontekster. Basert på resultatene fra de tre artiklene ble tre overordnede temaer identifisert, noe som bidrar til å belyse disse prosessene. For det første ble elevene funnet å være aktive medkonstruktører av mening, gjennom å bruke en rekke ressurser både individuelt og i dialog med andre. Ved å utvide disse ressursene gjennom instruksjon, og gjennom dialog med andre, produserte elevene mer komplekse og mangesidig kunnskap om sosiale og kulturelle tematikker. For det andre viser funnene hvordan elevene utnyttet sin økte bevissthet om seg selv, om andre, og om meningsskapende prosesser generelt for å lese visuelle tekster på en kritisk og informert måte. Til slutt, gjennom å fremme denne bevisstheten, utviklet elevene økt kontroll over meningsskapende ressurser, og forståelse av hvordan disse er knyttet til sosiale og kulturelle sammenhenger. Det ble argumentert at dette bidro til å utvikle elevenes symbolske kompetanse, som her er forstått å være en viktig del av interkulturell læring. Denne utviklingen ble imidlertid funnet å være en kompleks prosess, og resultatene peker mot at elever trenger tid og eksplisitt instruksjon for å utvikle denne typen handlefrihet i deres lesing av visuelle tekster.

List of publications

Article I

Brown, C. W. (2019). "I don't want to be stereotypical, but…": Norwegian EFL learners' awareness of and willingness to challenge visual stereotypes. *Intercultural Communication Education, 2*(3), 120-141.

Article II

Brown, C. W. (forthcoming). Developing multiple perspectives with EFL learners through facilitated dialogue about images. Manuscript submitted for publication in *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies.*

Article III

Brown, C. W. (accepted with minor revisions). Taking action through redesign: Norwegian EFL learners engaging in critical visual literacy practices. Manuscript submitted for publication in *Journal of Visual Literacy.*

List of abbreviations

CVL – Critical visual literacy

FL – Foreign language

EFL – English foreign language

ELL – English language learner

ELT – English language teaching

ESL – English second language

SL – Second language

Table of contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1   Introduction

> We live in a visual world. We are surrounded by increasingly sophisticated visual images. But unless we are taught how to read them, we run the risk of remaining visually illiterate. This is something that none of us can afford in the modern world. (Howells & Negreiros, 2012, p. 1)

As Howells and Negreiros (2012) argue in the above quotation, communication is becoming increasingly visual. This view is shared by a large number of scholars (e.g., Albers et al., 2018; Berger, 1972; Howells & Negreiros, 2012; Jaeckel, 2018; Mitchell, 1994; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009), and as long as 25 years ago, Mitchell (1994) argued that "while the problem of pictorial representation has always been with us, it presses inescapably now, and with unprecedented force, on every level of culture" (p. 16). Since then, the advent of modern technologies has enabled information in visual form to flow globally at an unprecedented speed and scope (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). It is therefore not just a question of multiple modalities, but also of multiple social and cultural contexts. The English foreign language (EFL) classroom is no exception from this, as the use of visual media such as textbooks, online videos, and movies allows the learners to engage with visual texts from various cultural contexts.

Traditionally, literacy in EFL settings has been oriented towards developing the abilities to decode, comprehend, and produce verbal texts, culture has been treated as "an expendable fifth skill" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 1) and visual texts have largely been treated as support for comprehension and language learning (Corbett, 2003; Jakobsen & Tønnessen, 2018). However, with the global interconnectedness enabled through digital technologies, as well as increased economic and social mobility, the aims of cultural learning in foreign language (FL) teaching have shifted in many parts of the world, including Norway. Rather than inviting learners into the 'culture of the elite' through canonical texts, or teaching facts about specific target national cultures, FL teaching increasingly emphasises the development of learners' ability to navigate between cultures, that is, their intercultural learning, in order to meet the demands of today's society.

Norway's education system underwent a major reform of the English subject curriculum during the research period for this study, and some of the changes made exemplify this development well. Whereas the old curriculum referred briefly to the promotion of "greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds" (Udir., 2013, p. 2), the new curriculum implemented in 2020 is much more explicit in the reference to intercultural learning, stating among other things that "English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding

1

of different ways of living, ways of thinking, and communication patterns" (Udir., 2019, p. 1). Given the increased use of English as a lingua franca (Hoff, 2020; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012), intercultural communication will take place between people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as is also recognised in the curriculum when it states that the subject is expected to provide the learners with "the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background" (Udir., 2019, p. 1).

A substantial number of studies have been conducted on visual representations of gender, culture, ethnicity, and religion in different media, including EFL textbooks (e.g., Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Poindexter, 2011; Taylor-Mendez, 2009). Broadly speaking, this research suggests that if readers are not critical towards the images they are exposed to, they may construct knowledge about people from different cultures and/or ethnic groups which reinforces negative stereotypes and encourages a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'. However, Kiss and Weninger (2017) criticise studies that have examined visual representations of cultures in textbooks for assigning "fixed meanings to images, rather than treating them as mediators of cultural meaning-making" and argue that "there remains much to be learnt about how learners engage in meaning-making processes, especially in relation to visuals, if we are to fully exploit them as a classroom resource for cultural learning" (Kiss & Weninger, 2017, p. 188). With some exceptions (e.g., Albers et al., 2008; Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Callow, 2006; Kiss & Weninger, 2017), relatively little research addresses how the viewer actually interprets images, especially in FL settings.

The studies that have been conducted on how learners read images point towards the importance of instruction. In a study investigating how fifth grade learners and their teachers read advertisements, Albers et al. (2008) found that although both groups could identify individual signs within the ads, "neither group had much success in identifying the underlying tacit messages" (p. 10). The study therefore indicates that the learners and teachers read the images at a superficial level, without recognising underlying ideologies or the particular ways that the image positions them. While Arizpe and Styles (2003) found that many of the children in their study were "capable of subtle and engaged analysis of visual texts" (p. 93), they recognise their own roles as facilitators, "especially in terms of providing a language through which the children could talk about pictures, modelling concepts and using prompts and leading questions" (p. 32). Similarly, in his study of the introduction of visual metalanguage and critical literacy practices in relation to democracy, Callow (2006) found that "the inclusion of a metalanguage, combined with relevant and challenging content and teaching approaches, scaffolds the students, enabling them to make sophisticated and critical interpretations about their own work and the work of others" (p. 8). This research

therefore supports the argument made by Howells and Negreiros (2012) that visual literacy, understood as the ability to navigate, interpret, design and interrogate visual texts (Serafini, 2012), is a skill that needs to be taught.

This thesis explores the potentials of critical visual literacy (CVL) as a teaching approach for facilitating the development of visual literacy in FL settings and for raising awareness of the social and cultural contexts of visual texts from the perspective of intercultural learning. As a field within critical literacy which focuses specifically on the visual mode, CVL consists of literacy practices which interrogate the issues of power, diversity and access inherent in visual text production and reception, with a focus on the effects these texts have on the reader and in the world (Janks, 2000; Janks et al., 2014). Through increasing learners' awareness of how visual texts 'work', i.e., how they are constructed and how they can reflect, produce and challenge the dominant ideologies in societies and cultures, CVL as a teaching approach aims to foster the ability to participate in these kinds of literacy practices by providing "strategies for making these workings conscious" (Newfield, 2011, p. 92). As such, CVL aims to facilitate the development of learners' ability to consciously engage with the perspectives on offer in texts and, through this, promote their agency in accepting or challenging these perspectives. In the current study, CVL is thus understood to include both the teaching approach which aims to facilitate certain kinds of literacy practices, and the ability to engage in such practices.

In line with critical approaches to FL teaching (Dervin, 2015; Kearney, 2016; Kramsch, 1993), CVL emphasises the connection between meaning making and culture, whereby culture is understood to be continually and dynamically negotiated between people and mediated through symbolic systems. This means that cultures are seen as both influencing and being influenced by meaning-making processes. From the perspective of this thesis, therefore, intercultural learning is understood as aiming to increase learners' ability to understand and purposefully employ the symbolic resources through which meaning making happens in various cultural contexts, i.e., to develop their symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2006b). Given the increasingly complex, culturally diverse, and multifaceted semiotic environment learners are required to engage with in their education, private lives, and future work lives, this ability is crucial in order to face the challenges and opportunities of our contemporary world. With its inherent focus on other cultural contexts, and its long tradition of utilising images as a way of supporting comprehension, the EFL classroom presents a unique, but underutilised, context for engaging with and developing the learners' agency in relation to these types of meaning-making processes.

3

1.1 Purpose, research questions, and design

The central purpose of the current study is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning-making processes upper secondary learners, roughly aged 16, engage in when reading images in the context of the EFL classroom before and after introducing CVL, and to explore these from the perspective of intercultural learning. In other words, it seeks to explore the kinds of cultural knowledge the learners co-construct from images which depict, or are produced in, cultural contexts outside of Norway and how this relates to intercultural learning as defined above. This purpose statement has been developed into the following main research question:

> *What characterises the process of Norwegian upper secondary learners' readings of images before and after introducing CVL from the perspective of intercultural learning in the EFL classroom?*

The main research question was further divided into three areas, with one or two sub-questions in each, which were addressed in Articles I, II, and III respectively. An overview of the thesis and the three research articles can be found in Table 1. The four sub-questions were all investigated through the same empirical study. This study utilised a case-study design, which aims to develop an in-depth analysis of a case (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the case was an intervention that was specifically designed to address the purpose of the study. Eighty-three learners from three EFL classes in an upper secondary school situated in an urban area on the West coast of Norway participated in the intervention. Running over a period of 16 weeks, the intervention involved the learners participating in a number of lectures and tasks that encouraged them to engage in CVL practices in relation to visual texts representing, or produced in, various cultural contexts.

4

Table 1. *Overview of thesis and research articles*

Study purpose	**To gain a deeper understanding of the meaning-making processes upper secondary learners engage in when reading images in the context of the EFL classroom before and after introducing CVL, and to explore these from the perspective of intercultural learning.**		
Main research question	*What characterises the process of Norwegian upper secondary learners' readings of images before and after introducing CVL from the perspective of intercultural learning in the EFL classroom?*		
	Article I	**Article II**	**Article III**
Title	"I don't want to be stereotypical, but…": Norwegian EFL learners' awareness of and willingness to challenge visual stereotypes	Developing multiple perspectives with EFL learners through facilitated dialogue about images	Taking action through redesign: Norwegian EFL learners engaging in critical visual literacy practices
Approach	Qualitatively driven		
Research questions	*1. What stereotypes, if any, can be identified in the group discussions before and after the intervention?* *2. Is the learners' awareness of and willingness to challenge visual stereotypes displayed in group discussions before and after the intervention, and if so in which ways?*	*Do the learners develop multiple perspectives in their readings of images through dialogues facilitated by critical questions before and after the intervention, and if so in what ways?*	*In what ways do Norwegian upper secondary EFL learners change the meaning(s) of an advertisement when engaging in a redesign task after explicit critical visual literacy instruction?*
Data	Focus group interviews Learner artifacts	Focus group interviews	Learner artifacts
Analysis	Thematic analysis Interaction analysis	Thematic analysis Interaction analysis	Thematic analysis Semiotic analysis

This case-study employs a qualitative research approach. An illustration of the overall design of the study is presented in Figure 1. During the first week and a half of the intervention, focus group interviews were conducted with five groups consisting of six learners in each group. Another set of focus group interviews was conducted with the same groups of learners in the two weeks following the intervention. Data was also collected during the intervention in the form of artifacts produced by the learners, individually and in groups, in response to the tasks they were completing. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to and completed by the learners at the start of the intervention.
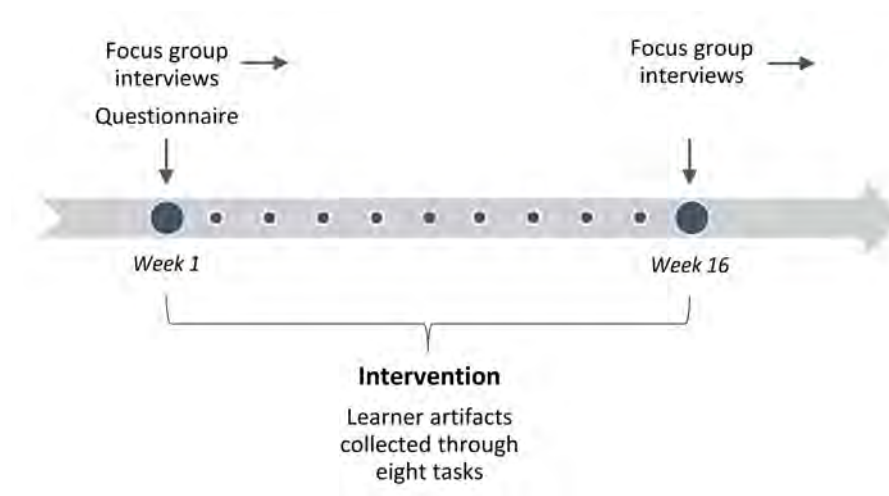
Figure 1. *Research design.*

1.2 Personal background and philosophical stance

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that the interpretative nature of qualitative research requires the researcher to "explicitly identify their biases, values, and personal background […] that shape their interpretations formed during the study" (p. 183). Although these points will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 in relation to the methodology, a brief outline will be provided here of the influence of my background on the choice of study, as well as the philosophical stance guiding the process of designing and implementing the study.

My stance towards the cultural significance of visual representations has heavily influenced the choice of research topic. The long tradition of utilising visual images in EFL teaching as means for aiding comprehension and language-learning is an important starting point for the study (Corbett, 2003). In my MA thesis, I investigated how

indigenous people are represented visually in four EFL textbook collections designed for teaching English at lower secondary schools in Norway. The study found that the visual representations of indigenous peoples in these textbooks reinforced a stereotypical view of the world and encouraged a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'. Consequently, the findings indicated "not only a lost potential of increasing intercultural competence", but that the visual representations of indigenous peoples in these textbooks actively worked against this (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017, p. 30).

My own experience from EFL classrooms, either as an observer or a teacher, showed me that the cultural aspect of images was, for the most part, neglected (Corbett, 2003; Liruso et al., 2019). Being worried that these images would just be accepted as 'the truth', and what this might mean in terms of the type of cultural knowledge the learners construct, I wanted to do something beyond initiating a change in textbook image-choices and production. Textbooks, although given a certain authority in the classroom, are by no means the only sources of visual information learners engage with. With visual media playing a major role in people's lives, it might even be counter-productive to ensure that learners are only exposed to 'correct' images in the classroom. Therefore, I wanted to see whether it was possible to use these images in a productive way; in a way that might provide the learners with important life-skills they could bring with them into future encounters with visual media, both within and outside of public education, while also encourage intercultural learning. These concerns influenced my choice of research topic when embarking on my PhD journey, which I entered with two overarching goals: 1) to shift focus from the images to the readers, and gain insights into how learners engage in meaning-making processes related to visuals; and 2) to investigate whether it was possible to scaffold this meaning-making process, and, through this, encourage intercultural learning.

Figure 2. *Coherence in the thesis*
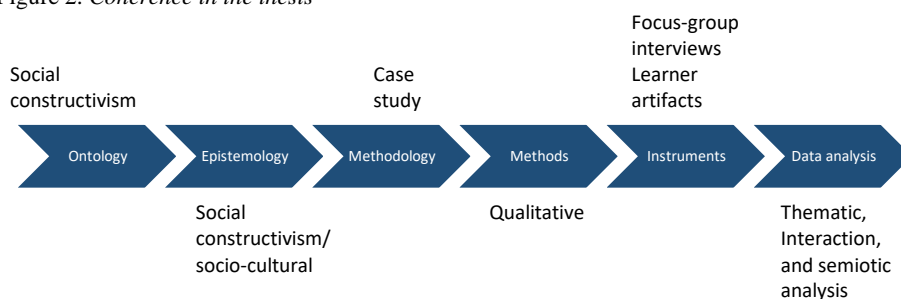
The philosophical stance that has guided my choices in the planning and implementation of the current research is situated within the philosophical framework

of social constructivism[1]. Unlike constructivism, which focuses on how meaning is constructed "through individual, cognitive processes", *social* constructivism sees meaning as constructed "through social processes and interaction" (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 375). Social constructivists take a pluralistic position towards the nature of reality and see reality as constructed socially through individuals engaging in meaning-making processes together (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Because of the focus on co-construction of knowledge, social constructivist research often involves investigating interactions between individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Figure 2 illustrates the coherence between the different choices made in the research process, from the ontological and epistemological positions, to the choice of methodology, instruments, and data analysis approaches. The implications of the philosophical position of social constructivism for the current research will be discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4.

1.3   Contributions and originality of the study

While recent years have seen a growth in studies investigating images in EFL textbooks, including research focusing specifically on cultures (e.g., Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Derakhshan, 2021; Maslak, 2008; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Thumvichit, 2018; Weninger & Kiss, 2013; Yuen, 2011), few studies investigate how images are actually interpreted and engaged with in EFL settings with a focus on (inter)cultural learning[2]. Those that have been conducted have focused on various visual media, e.g., advertisements (Takaya, 2016), photographs (Hoyt, 2016; Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Lindner & Garcia, 2014), picture books (Heggernes, 2019; Yeom, 2019), video (Chao, 2013; Mete, 2020; Raigón Rodríguez & Larrea Espinar, 2019; Truong & Tran, 2014) and a combination of visual media (Liruso et al., 2019). The majority of these studies were conducted in university settings (e.g., Lindner & Garcia, 2014; Mete, 2020; Takaya, 2016), while some were conducted in lower secondary schools (Forsman, 2010; Heggernes, 2019; Yeom, 2019), and one in primary school (Liruso et al., 2019). Overall, these studies, while scarce in number, have investigated various aspects of (inter)cultural learning through visual media. Takaya (2016) and Kiss and Weninger (2017), for example, explored the kinds of meanings EFL learners made in relation to visual texts by analysing the associations learners made in relation to a specific image. This research shows how, when interpreting visual information created in other cultural contexts, the learners try to

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[1] There is some inconsistency in the use of the terms 'constructivism', 'constructionism', and 'constructive' in the literature (Raskin, 2002). Savin-Baden and Major (2013), for example, differentiate between constructionism and constructivism in their account of different philosophical traditions, while referring to users of constructionism as both 'social constructionists' and 'social constructivists'.

[2] I place (inter) in brackets before cultural when referring to groups of studies in which one or more of the studies do not explicitly emphasise an *inter*cultural perspective.

make meaning using their existing knowledge and their own cultural experiences when context-specific knowledge is lacking.

Other studies focused on encouraging intercultural learning through engaging with the visual media in various ways through instruction. These studies point to the potentials of engaging with images to encourage empathy, perspective taking and cultural awareness (Heggernes, 2019; Lindner & Garcia, 2014; Yeom, 2019), to gain awareness of one's own viewpoints as well as others (Truong & Tran, 2014; Yeom, 2019), and modifying previous stereotypes (Forsman, 2010; Truong & Tran, 2014). As a prerequisite for this type of learning, however, the studies point to the importance of engaging with the images in an in-depth manner. Forsman (2010), for example, found that focusing exclusively on experience and reflection meant that the learners mainly modified stereotypes related to the specific groups the learners had discussed and explored through various modes, as opposed to reflecting on the process of stereotyping more generally. Lindner and Garcia (2014) found that the structured questions in the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media (AIEVM) (Council of Europe, 2013) facilitated the participants' in-depth exploration of certain aspects of the image which might otherwise not have been discovered. Similarly, Hoyt (2016) points to the importance of guiding the participants to describe the elements in the image so that they can "more objectively ground their interpretations and judgements" (p. 79). Heggernes (2019), on the other hand, highlights the importance of asking open questions and allowing the learners to co-construct meaning by letting them explore possible answers themselves.

While CVL could provide a systematic way of going beyond literal interpretations and engaging in an in-depth exploration of the sociocultural contexts of visual images, very little research has been conducted in this area. Overall, there is an increasing number of studies investigating critical literacy practices in EFL and English second language (ESL)[3] settings, but a large number of these studies focus exclusively on verbal materials (e.g., Arce, 2000; Enciso, 2011; Ghahremani-Ghajar & Mirhosseini, 2005; Giampapa, 2010; Henry, 1998; Huang, 2011, 2012; Huh, 2016; Izadinia & Abednia, 2010; Ko, 2013; Ko & Wang, 2013; Kuo, 2013; Liu, 2017; Macknish, 2011; Nussbaum,

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[3] Traditionally, the term ESL is used in settings where learners are taught the English language in an English-speaking country. As such, the aim of ESL instruction is usually for learners to acquire the language and cultural knowledge required to participate in educational, professional, and private life in their country of residence at the time. EFL, on the other hand, refers to settings where English is taught in a country in which English is not the national language. Because of this, learners' exposure to English is likely to be much more limited than that of ESL learners, and the aims of EFL teaching usually include the ability to communicate in multiple settings, not in any one specific country. It should be noted, however, that in the Norwegian context, the terms ESL and EFL are often used interchangeably, with some scholars arguing that English is approaching the status of a second language due to the level of exposure to the language (e.g., Simensen, 2007), as is also reflected in the special status given to English in the Norwegian curriculum, aside from the other foreign languages.

2002; Park, 2011; Shin & Crookes, 2005; Walker & Romero, 2008). Even in the studies where visual materials are included, these are rarely in focus (see section 2.3 for a review of these studies), and, overall, studies using critical literacy in FL and second language (SL) settings are often focused on outcomes related to language learning and/or critical engagement (Bacon, 2017), not (inter)cultural learning.

The current study seeks to expand the research on the use of visual media to encourage intercultural learning in EFL settings through investigating CVL as a field within critical literacy which focuses specifically on the visual as an important mode of communication. By focusing on upper secondary school learners, the study, along with Forsman (2010), Heggernes, and Yeom (2019), contributes to expanding this area of research to the secondary school context, which is particularly interesting given the exploration of identity and "reorganisation of perspectives, beliefs and opinions" adolescents undergo (Carugati, 2003, p. 120), and the potentials this has for their level of openness. The study will also contribute to a deeper understanding of how critical literacy practices relate to intercultural learning in FL settings, which, despite its theoretical potentials, is an under-researched area (c.f., Myers & Ebefors, 2010 for such explorations related to verbal texts). As such, the current study aims to both establish and explore the connection between CVL and intercultural learning in the FL classroom, while also contributing to expanding our knowledge of how an under-researched age group approaches the reading of images in the context of the EFL classroom.

Theoretically, the current study proposes a novel view of the relationship between CVL and FL teaching. More specifically, by conceptualising a link between critical literacy and symbolic competence, previously suggested by Kearney (2012), the thesis provides both theoretical and empirical contributions to the combination of these frameworks. In addition to contributing to the fields of critical literacy, and intercultural learning in EFL teaching, the results from the study are expected to extend beyond the research field and have practical implications for EFL teachers. Currently, little is known about how images are used in EFL classroom in Norway, and to what extent learners are able to critically read images. The study can therefore add to the limited understanding of EFL learners' meaning-making processes when reading images, and how EFL teachers can scaffold these processes with the aim of reaching the general aims of the English subject curriculum. By conceptualising culture as multiple and diverse, a conceptualisation which has only recently entered the English subject curriculum, the results from the study will be timely and highly relevant in the Norwegian EFL context and beyond.

1.4   Structure of the synopsis

Subsequent to the present Introduction chapter, the thesis consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 2 discusses the relevant background for the current study, focusing on changes in the understandings of culture and literacy within FL teaching, with Norway as a particular focus. The chapter also provides a review of previous research on critical literacy with visual texts in FL/SL settings with the aim of positioning my study within this field.

In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the conceptual framework which has informed the current study, drawing on theories from social constructivism, social semiotics, symbolic competence, and critical visual literacy.

Chapter 4 presents an account of the methodological approach, research design, as well as data collection and analysis methods. Included in this chapter is also a discussion on the trustworthiness of the results based on quality criteria, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the three research articles, followed by a discussion where the results from these are synthesised in order to address the main aim of the study as a whole. The chapter ends with conclusions, limitations, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

The three articles are included at the end of this document.

2 Background and relevant research

The current chapter seeks to provide an overview of the societal, theoretical, and empirical backgrounds for the current study, thus relating the study "to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 26). The developments of the concepts of culture and literacy will be outlined in relation to the societal and theoretical advancements prompting these developments, and the educational advances taken to address these changes, with a particular focus on the Norwegian EFL context. Finally, I will present relevant research previously conducted on critical literacy in English language teaching (ELT)[4] settings with the aim of situating my thesis within this research field.

2.1 Changing understandings of culture and Norwegian curricula

Understandings of culture in language teaching have changed several times in the last century. In the following, these changes will be broadly described in three 'shifts', while drawing connections to the Norwegian curricula and the upper secondary school EFL contexts in particular.

2.1.1 From 'big C culture' to 'little c culture'

Traditionally, the term culture was primarily used in the sense of 'high culture', referring to "the best which has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold, 1869/2003, p. viii). In the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, this view of culture was prevalent in EFL teaching in Norway which focused on what Kramsch (2006a) has called 'big C culture', referring to the literature and arts of a cultured elite. Access to this culture was gained through reading canonical texts, aimed at giving students "insights into the culture of the elite" and through this "develop their knowledge and thinking" (Fenner, 2018, p. 21). Culture, in this view, is therefore seen as a relatively fixed set of cultural 'content', which learners should process and internalise. It also implies a value-judgement of what counts, and what does not count, as 'high culture'.

Following World War II, a communicative turn took place in language pedagogy in response to an increasing need for competent FL speakers. As a consequence, the role of culture in FL teaching came to take on a more anthropological meaning, as encompassing "whatever is distinctive about the 'way of life' of a people, community,

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[4] The term ELT is used in this thesis as a way of referring to both EFL and ESL settings.

nation or social group" (Hall, 2013a, p. xviii). Although the focus was now primarily on 'little c culture' (Kramsch, 2006a), culture was still equated with a nation and the focus was therefore on "the native speakers' ways of behaving, eating, talking, dwelling, their customs beliefs and values" (Kramsch, 2013, p. 66). In Norway, the main target cultures were the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). In line with this, textbooks for the lower levels of schooling in Norway tended to present constructed dialogues from different everyday situations in these target cultures (Fenner, 2018), with the cultural aspect only providing background context. In upper secondary schooling, however, a focus on 'big C culture' persisted in the curriculum until the mid-70s.

2.1.2   From cultural knowledge to intercultural competence

Up until the late 1980s and during the 1990s, the predominant aim of language and culture learning was to become "like a person from another country – both 'linguistically', and to a large extent, 'culturally'" (Díaz & Dasli, 2017, p. 5). The 'native speaker' was used as a model, and culture was seen as a relatively static entity, reflecting an essentialist view which sees culture as something people *have*; a set of ideas, values, rules and norms that are transferred between generations within a specific nation or people (Dahl, 2013). Within this view, cultural boundaries can be clearly defined, and "people in one culture are [seen as] essentially different from people in another" (Holliday, 2010, p. 5).

This view was challenged by scholars such as Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993), who argued that culture and language are inextricably linked, and that rather than abandoning their own cultures in order to become 'native-speaker-like', language learners should instead acquire competences in navigating *between* cultures. The concept of communicative competence was expanded to include intercultural awareness (Council of Europe, 2001), and emphasis was put on language learners' ability to negotiate and mediate between cultures by taking both an insider's and an outsider's view on one's own and others' cultures in a 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993). This ability is often referred to as intercultural competence (IC), a term which is notoriously difficult to pin down. In a study conducted in the early 2000's, Deardorff (2006) found that among the international scholars participating in the study, the definition of IC that reached the highest agreement was "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 247-248). More recent definitions often display a less functional and transactional approach to intercultural competence by replacing 'effective' and 'appropriate' communication with, for example, "understanding of, and interaction with, diversity" (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143), or adding "understanding and

respecting", as well as "establishing positive and constructive relationships" (Barrett, 2018, p. 94). Common to most definitions, however, is a synthesis of different affective, behavioural, and cognitive factors.

In FL teaching, Byram's (1997) model of *Intercultural Communicative Competence* has been particularly influential in terms of how intercultural competence has been understood and enacted in various curricula, partly because of its impact on Council of Europe materials such as the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Byram et al., 2009) and the more recent *Competences for Democratic Culture* (Council of Europe, 2016). Intercultural competence, according to this model, comprises five *savoirs*. The first, *savoirs* (knowledge), consists of knowledge about self and others, as well as more general knowledge about how social practices and interactions are developed in different social groups and countries. *Savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating) incorporates the "ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 52), while *savoir apprendre/faire* (skills of discovery and interaction) refers to the ability to gain knowledge of other cultures and their practices, as well as the ability to combine knowledge, skills and attitudes and operationalise these in real-time interactions. *Savoir être* includes attitudes such as curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own culture. Finally, *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness/political education) is composed of the ability to critically evaluate cultural practices, perspectives, and products of both one's own and others' cultures based on explicit criteria.

Despite the shift from cultural knowledge to intercultural competence, and the idea that people can navigate between cultures in a 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993), much scholarship on intercultural competence remained essentialist in the sense that culture was equated with nations, something for which Byram's (1997) model has received critique (e.g., Dervin, 2010, 2015; Matsuo, 2012)[5]. Holliday (2012) calls this 'neo-essentialism', and argues that this approach, which is characterised by rejecting "essentialism and cultural overgeneralization" and acknowledging cultural diversity, while simultaneously "invariably [being] pulled back towards the traditional, essentialist use of national cultures as the basic unit" (p. 37) remains dominant in academic discourses at this time.

Mentions of the need for intercultural competence and the role of education in its development first entered the Norwegian curriculum in the 1990s, although the term

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[5] Partly in response to this critique, which Byram (2021) argues stems from misunderstandings, an updated version of the model with new descriptors was recently published in Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.

itself is not explicitly mentioned. In the core curriculum in Norway of 1993[6] it is stated that learners should be able to "meet other cultures openly" and that education should "provide training in cooperation between persons of different capacities and groups with diverse cultures" (The Royal Ministry of Education Research and Church Affairs, 1993, pp. 40, 10). The role of the foreign languages in this context was not highlighted, despite the nature of these subjects indicating a strong potential for the development of these abilities (Byram, 2008), and the core curriculum as a whole can be considered to uphold the essentialist view of culture, seeing culture as "inherited forms of conduct, norms of behavior and modes of expression" (The Royal Ministry of Education Research and Church Affairs, 1993, p. 9).

In the national curriculum *Knowledge Promotion,* implemented in 2006 (LK06/13), the intercultural aspect gains a more prominent role also in the English subject curriculum, albeit implicitly, by stating that one of the overarching aim of the subject is to promote "greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds" (Udir., 2013, p. 2). A view of culture as related to nations can still be identified. In fact, the Norwegian scholars Dypedahl and Eschenbach (2014) argue that the view of culture reflected in the curriculum justifies an inclusion of essentialist and controversial value scales (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). While the curriculum calls for the use of English as a tool for encouraging respectful co-citizenship, mentions of empathy or shifting of perspectives are distinctly absent (Lund, 2008). Simultaneously, the curriculum remains vague in regards to how these aims should be achieved and the competence aims related to culture depend greatly on the unspecified verb: "å drøfte" (to discuss) (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017). Culture, it is stated, is to be understood "in a broad sense […] and covers key topics such as social issues, literature and other cultural expressions" (Udir., 2013, p. 4). Furthermore, competence aims such as "[t]he subject should enable the pupils to discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries" (p. 11) seem to follow the dominant approach in intercultural competence scholarship, suggesting an equation of culture with country, with emphasis on a monolithic national culture.

2.1.3 The critical turn in EFL pedagogy and culture teaching

Dasli and Díaz (2017) argue that two 'moments' have been particularly important in relation to the developments of understandings of language and intercultural competence over the last two decades, which they name 'the critical turn'. Firstly, the field has been influenced by anthropological ethnography, which sees culture not as a set of static entities, but as being continually negotiated. Thus, no clear boundaries can

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[6] The core curriculum is an overarching curricular document which outlines and describes the values and principles for primary and secondary education.

be drawn between cultures, people participate in more than one culture at any point in time, and people within a culture can have widely different characteristics. What constitutes a culture, instead, is the shared understanding of meaning (Hall, 2013b).

The second 'moment' pertains to the influence of critical pedagogy (Dasli & Díaz, 2017), advocated in the field of language studies by scholars such as Pennycook (1990) and Guilherme (2002). These scholars argue that the construction of culture is intimately related to power relationships and ideologies, and that language teaching should not only "aim to help students draw upon and investigate their own cultural resources and investigate other knowledge claims, but also […] aim to change the society itself and the possibilities it presents" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 311). Taken together, these two 'moments' suggest that education needs to address culture as meaning-making, and to understand meaning-making "as a process of selecting symbolic forms from a range of options and doing so purposefully to establish, negotiate or advance a perspective" (Kearney, 2016, p. 4).

These critical approaches problematise several concepts central to the field of intercultural competence. By challenging the idea of culture as a static unit and highlighting the intersectionality between cultures and identities, the notion of *inter*cultural communication becomes equally blurry. If no strong boundaries can be drawn between cultures, it is not clear what can be defined as intercultural communication, and what is *intra*cultural. Scholars such as Dervin (2015) dispute the use of the concept of culture altogether, arguing firstly that culture as an entity does not really exist as "[o]ne cannot meet a culture but people who (are made to) represent it – or rather represent imaginaries and representations of it" (p. 9), and secondly that the use of the concept "can rid the 'other' of his/her plurality" (p. 13). Abdallah-Pretceille (2006) suggests using the term 'culturality' instead, which she argues "allows us to understand cultural phenomena based on dynamics, transformations, fusion and manipulations" (p. 479). The move away from culture as the central unit can be seen in many newer definitions of intercultural competence, where 'culture' or 'intercultural' has been replaced with, for example, "diversity in a broad sense" (Borghetti, 2017, p. 2) or people with different ways of thinking and/or communication patterns than oneself (Dypedahl, 2020). Implied in this shift is a recognition of the fact that intercultural competence is not just needed in interactions 'abroad' or when interacting with people born in a different country, but that diversity is inherent in any society. From this point of view, Kramsch's (1993) notion of 'third place' has some shortcomings, mainly related to how the static spatial metaphor represents "a largely essentialist and

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reductionist 'third', hybrid dimension between the remaining, unchanged 'native' and 'target' cultures" (Díaz & Dasli, 2017, p. 10)[7].

Critical approaches further challenge the idealistic notion that intercultural competence can lead to complete harmony and acceptance of differing viewpoints. Dervin (2015) suggests instead that instability should be put in the centre of interculturality[8] and that it needs to be recognised that "discomfort, anger, and annoyance are part of the process" (p. 96). Simultaneously, he maintains that non-essentialism is an unreachable ideal, arguing that it is only possible to "navigate between essentialism (simple) and non-essentialism (complex)" (Dervin, 2017, p. 69). He uses the term 'simplexity' to refer to this process of navigating between the simple and the complex, and argues that to promote moving towards the complex, FL teaching should focus on the intersection of "various identity markers and contexts, and [provide] tools to question 'truths' by exploring beneath the surface of discourse" (Dervin, 2017, p. 69). However, while Dervin (2015) provides some guidelines for how to incorporate this type of approach to interculturality in education, such as focusing on reflexivity, power differentials and "going below the surface of discourse and appearances" (pp. 103-106), the question of how this can be achieved in the classroom remains largely unanswered.

2.1.4 Current approaches to culture in the Norwegian EFL context

The current national curriculum in Norway (LK20) was developed to address the challenges presented by recent societal developments. A report published prior to the renewal of the curriculum states, among other things, that the language subjects need to be strengthened in light of increased globalisation and internationalised work life (NOU 2015:8, 2015, p. 10) and stresses the role of FL teaching as an important arena for meeting other world views (p. 22). The report also highlights the importance of reflecting on one's own perspectives and accepting the diversity of perspectives inherent in today's society.

In LK20, it is stated that one of the central values of the English subject is to encourage the development of an understanding "of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patters" as well as an understanding of how one's own "views of the world are culture-dependent" (Udir., 2019, p. 1). Additionally, the subject "shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally,

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[7] In her later work, Kramsch largely moved away from the notion of 'third place' and introduced the notion of 'symbolic competence', further discussed in section 3.2.3.
[8] Dervin consistently uses the term *interculturality*, the suffix -ity in this term indicating an endless process, in line with Abdallah-Pretceille's (2006) *culturality*.

regardless of cultural or linguistic background". Thus, intercultural competence is given a much more central role than in the previous curricula in Norway. There is also a recognition of the necessity for this type of competence in local contexts, which reflects the development outlined in section 2.1.3, where diversity is understood to be inherent in society itself. A similar recognition can be found in the Council of Europe's *Competences for Democratic Culture*, which was developed following the refugee crisis in 2014. The model, which describes the competences "citizens require to participate effectively in a culture of democracy" (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 3), includes intercultural competence in addition to more democracy-oriented values, attitudes and knowledge. Thus, it is recognised that even within one society, cultural diversity necessitates intercultural dialogue. While Simpson and Dervin (2019) criticise the Council of Europe for using the terms democratic competence and intercultural competence interchangeably, Barrett and Byram (2020), who were both involved in the development of the framework, dispute this terminological issue, stating that the two terms are treated as distinct, though sometimes overlapping, competences. Nevertheless, a shift has occurred in the field from the language of intercultural competence, to the language of democracy and citizenship.

Novel to the LK20 curriculum is also the explicit use of the term intercultural competence. In relation to working with texts in English, it is stated that

> [b]y reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. (Udir., 2019, p. 3)

Here again, intercultural competence is not related to any particular (national) culture, but refers to a diversity of ways of living, thinking, and communicating. Additionally, the aims of intercultural competence are related to an ability to 'deal with', which reflects a movement away from the idealistic notion of cross-cultural harmony, towards understanding and accepting a multiplicity of perspectives.

Similar to LK06/13, the LK20 curriculum remains relatively unspecific in terms of both content and methods. After the first year of general studies at upper secondary school, for example, the learners are expected to "explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English speaking world based on historical contexts" (Udir., 2019, p. 12). While working with this competence aim in the FL classroom "*may* entail a critical investigation and comparison of different worldviews (including the learners' own)" (Hoff, 2018, p. 78), to do so is not explicitly stated. In the explanation of the verbs used in the competence aims, 'to explore' is stated to "in some cases" mean "to investigate

different aspects of an issue through open and critical discussion" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 16). [9] Likewise, 'to reflect' refers to the examination and consideration of "different aspects of your own and other's actions, attitudes and ideas" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 16). Thus, a critical approach to cultures is not only possible but may be said to be encouraged. To the best of my knowledge, no research has been conducted investigating how the cultural element of the English subject is actually taught in Norwegian classrooms outside of intervention studies (e.g., Heggernes, 2019; Hoff, 2019; Khanukaeva, 2020). Thus, little is known about how the cultural parts of the English curriculum are understood and enacted in classrooms between teachers and learners.

The current study positions itself within the critical approaches to culture. Culture is therefore not seen as a static entity, something 'out there', which determines people's behaviour *a priori*. Instead, "people play an active role in making and remaking culture" (Ratner, 2000, p. 413) in a constant negotiation of meaning, making cultures fluid, dynamic and diverse. In line with this, I prefer to use the term intercultural learning over intercultural competence to denote the fact that this is an ongoing and never-ending process (Dervin, 2015; Lund, 2008) [10]. The focus of intercultural learning in the intervention was to increase awareness of how culture and meaning-making processes intersect, and to encourage exploration of the diversity and plurality within cultures and within individuals. Simultaneously, the intervention was implemented in 2017/18, and was therefore designed to fit within the LK06/13 curriculum, which, as argued in section 2.1.2, still maintained a singular and often national view of culture. The study also recognises that learners will come to the classroom with different conceptions of cultures in general, and imaginaries of specific cultures. Thus, specific national/ethnic cultures, such as indigenous peoples and people from English-speaking countries, all groups that have been explicitly mentioned in the curriculum and the learners' textbooks, would sometimes provide a topic or an entry point to the tasks in the intervention, reflecting a process of working from the simple, to the complex (Dervin, 2015). Primarily focusing on everyday texts from different cultural contexts, the intervention involved the types of communicative literacy events learners engage with in their daily lives, e.g., through social media, and is thus situated in 'little c culture' (Kramsch, 2006a).

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[9] Explanations of the verbs in English can be accessed through the online version of the curriculum: https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04?lang=eng

[10] The terms learning and competence are, however, used interchangeably in relation to the concept of 'symbolic competence', where both should be read as indicating an ongoing and never-ending process of development.

2.2   Expanding understandings of literacy

Another development in education which has had an influence on how FL teaching is conceptualised today is the expanding understandings of literacy. Given the importance of meaning-making as culture, and on texts as a source of cultural information, literacy practices are highly relevant also for the understandings of how cultures are addressed.

2.2.1   Changing semiotic landscapes

The main backdrop to the development of an expanded view of literacy is the changing semiotic landscapes. While verbal texts have long been given a central role in education, the advent of digital technologies has made the necessity to focus on other semiotic meaning-making resources, such as audio and visual design, more prevalent. In particular, the visual has taken on a more dominant role as a meaning-making resource in society (e.g., Albers et al., 2018; Berger, 1972; Howells & Negreiros, 2012; Jaeckel, 2018; Mitchell, 1994; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). This is also the case for young people living in Norway today. A study conducted by Medietilsynet (The Norwegian Media Authority) in 2020[11] found that by the age of 14, close to all Norwegian children own their own mobile phone, and by the age of 16, more than 8 of 10 own their own computer, giving them almost unlimited access to information in visual form. Furthermore, by the age of 13, ninety-nine percent of Norwegian children use social media, with the most used media channels, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok (Medietilsynet, 2020), relying heavily on visual communication. Seventy-one percent of the respondents state that they experience a high degree of exposure to commercials through social media, and by the age of 15, ninety-five percent report reading/watching the news frequently in social media. Thus, it is becoming common for adolescents to consume information, commercials, and news content through visual modes. Additionally, the findings indicate that this content is frequently created in other cultural contexts. For example, fourteen percent of the respondents stated that they mostly used English when accessing news, thirty-two percent when using social media, and sixty-four percent when watching YouTube[12].

The trend of increasing visual communication can also be seen in the development of English language textbooks, a trend which is particularly relevant given the strong tradition of textbook-based instruction in Norwegian schools (Charboneau, 2012; Skjelbred & Aamotsbakken, 2010). In a study of English textbooks published in the 1930s, 1980s and 2000s, Bezemer and Kress (2009) found that while the textbooks

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[11] The survey included a representative sample of Norwegian children between 9-18 years old, consisting of 3395 participants.
[12] The survey only asked which language the children used *mostly*. Thus, there is no information about the number of children who use English *often*, or *occasionally*.

from the 1930s contained an average of 0.03 images per page, this increased to 0.54 images per page in the 1980s, and further to 0.74 images per page in the 2000s. Similarly, in the Norwegian context, Brown (2016) notes a significant increase in the amount of illustrations included in the English textbooks *Search* (Fenner & Nordal-Pedersen, 1999) and its successor *Searching* (Fenner & Nordal-Pedersen, 2008). This is also supported by Skulstad (2018), who argues that Norwegian textbooks for teaching English have developed from simple black and white drawings, to now containing coloured illustrations, artwork and photographs. Bezemer and Kress (2016) also suggest that while in previous periods images in textbooks were used as illustrations of the verbal texts, in the 2000s images and writing complimented each other, thus further enhancing the importance put on visuals as a mode of communication.

In response to "the multiplicity of communication channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world today" (New London Group, 1996, p. 60), the New London Group argues that traditional language-based approaches are not sufficient and that a broader approach to literacy is necessary. They propose a pedagogy of multiliteracies, which focuses on a broad range of representational modes and which sees these as "dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes" (New London Group, 1996, p. 64). Their pedagogy of multiliteracies comprises four components: Situated Practice, which means drawing on students' previous meaning-making experiences; Overt Instruction, through which an explicit metalanguage is taught; Critical Framing; referring to the framing of meaning-making practices in relation to "the historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and value-centred relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice"; and Transformed Practice, in which learners are encouraged to use their increased mastery of meaning-making systems to consciously design social futures (New London Group, 1996, p. 86). The notion of literacy thus expanded in two significant ways. Firstly, to include multiple modes, and, secondly, to include a view of meaning as socially and culturally situated.

2.2.2   Critical literacy

As early as the 1970s, scholars initiated discussions about critical approaches to literature (Williams & Williams, 1977) and education (Giroux, 1978), whereas critical orientations to SL learning followed over a decade later (e.g., Benesch, 1993; Pennycook, 1990). Critical literacy gained traction in mainstream English education in countries such as Australia from the 1990s, driven on by scholars such as Luke and Freebody, who incorporated a clear critical element in their *Four Resources Model* of literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999). They argue that to engage in effective literacy activities, learners need to draw on a repertoire of practices:

breaking the code of texts (coding competence); making meaning by participating in the understanding and composing of texts (semantic competence); using texts functionally in particular social contexts (pragmatic competence); and analysing texts critically (critical competence), a practice involving "conscious awareness of the language and idea systems that are brought into play when a text is used" (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p. 13). Each of these practices, they contend, are necessary but not sufficient in order to engage in the types of literacy demanded and expected of society. Possible reasons for why critical literacy entered ELT classrooms later, and to a lesser extent, could be related to structuralist approaches to language learning, where proficiency is seen as a "rule-governed deployment of abstract value-free grammar" (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 931), but also the idea that practising critical literacy would be too linguistically challenging for learners still acquiring the language (Lau, 2013; Yol & Yoon, 2020).

Critical literacy is an approach to literacy which emphasises the social and cultural context of text production and reception. Building on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970/1993), briefly referred to in section 2.3.1, it sees meaning-making as closely related to the development of ideologies. The founder of critical pedagogy, the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, famously stated about the relationship between language and culture that *to read the word is to read the world* (Freire & Macedo, 2005). Taking the view that power relationships are maintained through ideologies from the Frankfurt school of critical theory, critical pedagogy aims to disrupt these power relationships through using literacy education as a tool for empowerment, liberation and social transformation (Freire, 1970/1993). Critical literacy builds on this and focuses specifically on the role of texts in maintaining or challenging dominant ideologies. It views texts as a "principal means for representing and reshaping possible worlds" (Luke, 2013, p. 145), and thus as closely interrelated with the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced and read. When creating a text, the creator has to make a number of choices between different meaning-making resources. These choices, being influenced by social and cultural contexts, can never be neutral. Rather, they work to position the reader to accept a particular perspective on the world (Janks et al., 2014). In this way, texts are both shaped by, and contribute to shaping, the contexts in which they are embedded.

Critical literacy is a complex and diverse field which, since Freire's (1970/1993) work on critical pedagogy in Brazil, has developed through and drawn from multiple critical traditions, such as feminist, postcolonialist, and poststructuralist theories, cultural studies and critical linguistics (Luke, 2014). This has led to multiple different realisations of what critical literacy practices entail. Janks (2000), for example, argues that while approaches to critical literacy have in common their focus on developing

understanding of and abilities to manage relationships between power and language, they differ "by foregrounding one or other of domination, access, diversity or design" (p. 23). Domination, foregrounded in approaches such as critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), focuses on how the use of symbolic forms contributes to maintaining and reproducing inequitable social relations. Approaches foregrounding access, on the other hand, emphasise the issue of providing access to dominant forms of language, discourses, genres etc., while simultaneously valuing diversity of languages and literacies. Critical approaches to ELT have been particularly concerned with access and diversity (e.g., Canagarajah, 2005; Pennycook, 1990), criticising the way in which ELT has been largely treated as an ideologically neutral endeavour, despite the dominance of the English language globally, and the disadvantage this has for diversity of languages and cultural identities. A focus on diversity entails an emphasis on including learners' diverse 'ways with words' (Heath, 1983) in education by involving a variety of modes and discourses. This orientation can be recognised, for example, in The New Literacy Studies, an approach which seeks to redefine literacy to extend beyond print literacy and include other modes, such as digital tools (Gee, 2000; Kress, 2003; Street, 1994). Finally, design emphasises the importance of productive power, or the ability to design alternative social futures (New London Group, 1996) by utilising "the multiplicity of semiotic systems across diverse cultural locations to challenge and change existing Discourses" (Janks, 2000, p. 177).

Arguing that domination, access, diversity and design are equally important and crucially interdependent, Janks (2000, 2010) suggests a *Synthesis Model* which includes all the aforementioned orientations. Other models of critical literacy have also been developed, for example the widely cited *Four Dimensions of Critical Social Practice* (Lewison et al., 2002), which emphasises the practices one engages in, such as disrupting commonplace ways of viewing the world, interrogating multiple perspectives and focusing on socio-political issues. Also directed towards instructional practices, the *Integrated Critical Literacy Instructional Model* (Lau, 2013) includes an emphasis on self-reflexivity and personal/emotional engagement in response to poststructuralist and feminist orientations to critical literacy. These models add to the theoretical foundations of critical literacy, alongside more holistic literacy models such as the *Four Resources Model* (Luke & Freebody, 1999) and the multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996), which incorporate strong critical literacy elements.

The diverse realisations of critical literacy theory and practices reflect its various theoretical foundations, but also its grounding in critical pedagogy, where a focus on empowerment, liberation and social transformation calls for approaches situated in

learners' own lived realities (Freire, 1970/1993). Scholars therefore warn against narrow and prescriptive views of critical literacy practices, arguing for the need to situate such practices in local contexts, allowing individual backgrounds and reactions to work as a starting point for inquiry (Lau, 2015; Luke, 2014; Stevens & Bean, 2007). Thus, critical literacy cannot, or should not, be seen as a set method or approach to be applied directly in classroom settings, but as an orientation to literacy which is continually negotiated in local contexts, with the teacher as an important facilitator.

Historically, critical literacy focused mainly on verbal texts. However, in line with the developments outlined in section 2.2.1, critical literacy has increasingly adopted a multimodal approach (e.g. Janks et al., 2014; Serafini, 2012). In particular, the important role of the visual as a mode of communication has been recognised through the development of critical *visual* literacy as a field within critical literacy (Chung, 2013; Falihi & Wason-Ellam, 2009; Newfield, 2011; Schieble, 2014). Through its foundation in critical theory, critical pedagogy and critical literacy, and its specific focus on the visual mode, CVL is situated in the "interplay between visual literacy and liberation" (Chung, 2013, p. 13). CVL is thus based on the assumption that images are not neutral reproductions of reality, but "work to position their audiences" (Janks et al., 2014, p. 2). As an approach to teaching, it aims to develop an awareness of how visual texts are positioned, as well as the ability to recognise how the texts attempt to position the viewer (Janks et al., 2014, p. 1). In reading a visual text critically, examinations of the positions that the text offers the viewer are conducted, with the aim of revealing which interests are served by the image, or the image's "effects in the world" in relation to power, diversity or access (Janks et al., 2014, p. 83). By de-constructing the image, i.e., critically analysing its content, structures, and contexts (Janks et al., 2014), the positions offered by the image are uncovered and the critical reader can thus take an active stance toward the meanings that are communicated and decide whether to agree or disagree.

2.2.3 Literacy in the Norwegian English subject curriculum and English teaching

Section 2.2 has so far offered a brief overview of two important developments in the understandings of literacy, namely, the recognition that meaning is constructed through multiple modes, and the recognition that meaning is constructed in social contexts, which means that literacy cannot be taught as a decontextualised, mechanical skill. In the original version of LK06, the term *multimodal* was not mentioned in the English subject curriculum, although it was stated that the learners should "master an increasing number of genres and forms of expression" (Udir., 2006, p. 3). In a revision made in 2010, the ability to produce multimodal texts in digital media was added as a

competence aim for upper secondary school (Udir., 2010). This learning aim was replaced with the ability to "produce different kinds of texts suited to formal digital requirements for different digital media" in 2013 (Udir., 2013, p. 10), where 'formal digital requirements' in digital texts refers to how "effects, images, tables, headlines and bullet points are compiled to emphasise and communicate a message" (p. 5). The 2013 revisions also included a shift in formulation from "a variety of genres", to "a diversity of texts", where the term text was "used in the broadest sense of the word", including "a range of oral and written texts from digital media" (p. 1). This shift mirrors the new description of reading as a basic skill[13] in a framework produced in 2012, which states that texts include "everything that can be read in different media, including illustrations, graphs, symbols or other modes of expression" (Udir., 2012, p. 8). As such, the introduction of multimodality in the English subject is a relatively recent development.

In the introductory sections of the current curriculum, LK20, multimodality is given a more explicit role. It is stated that the learners "shall employ suitable strategies to communicate […] in different situations and by using different types of media and sources" (Udir., 2019, p. 2). Texts as a term is understood in a wide sense, and "can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message" (Udir., 2019, p. 3). Thus, the new curriculum more clearly than LK06/13 takes a multimodal approach, which recognises the importance of attending to the full range of semiotic resources available to language learners (Skulstad, 2018). In the competence aims for general studies at upper secondary level, the learners are explicitly expected to be able to produce multimedia texts, and also "discuss and reflect on form, content and language features […] in different media" (Udir., 2019, p. 12). Thus, the current national curriculum in Norway seems to support the inclusion of a multimodal approach to literacy in the FL classroom, as advocated previously by several scholars (Elsner et al., 2013; Habegger-Conti, 2015; Rimmereide, 2013; Skulstad, 2018).

While Norway has a long tradition of using visuals in English language textbooks (Skjelbred, 2017) and multimodal resources such as film, music and drama, very little is known about how multimodality is approached in English language classrooms in Norway. One exception is Jakobsen and Tønnesen's (2018) case study of a literacy event surrounding an illustrated book. They found that while the teacher included a variety of modes in the initial pre-reading phase, the verbal mode was dominant in the reading and assessment phases. Thus, the authors argue that visual and other

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[13] Basic skills refer to the five skills: oral skills, reading, writing, digital skills and numeracy. These were defined as being fundamental to learning and were integrated into all subject curricula from 2006, and updated in 2012/2013.

multimodal resources were "primarily seen as *support* for learning written and oral English language and culture" (Jakobsen & Tønnessen, 2018, p. 50), as opposed to an important meaning-making resource. While no generalisations can be made based on a single-case study, similar findings have been identified in an analysis of national written English examinations for the end of lower secondary school in Norway between 2014-2018, which found that the learners were "mainly invited to *read* multimodal texts and not *produce* them" (Jakobsen, 2019, p. 22). While no systematic studies have been conducted on this, Skulstad (2018) also emphasises that textbook tasks and questions do not pay attention to the visuals, indicating that they are not treated as genuine meaning-making resources.

In relation to reading, the 2013 version of the curriculum states that "[b]eing able to read in English means the ability to create meaning by reading different types of text [...] and to understand, explore, discuss, learn from and to reflect upon different types of information" (Udir., 2013). The learners' role as active agents in the reading-process is thus recognised. Critical literacy is not mentioned, and there are no further explanations provided as to the meaning of the verbs 'explore', 'discuss', and 'reflect', although they do open up for more critical approaches to reading. In the current Norwegian curriculum (LK20), the term critical is mainly used in the sense of "applying reason in an inquisitive and systematic way when working with specific practical challenges, phenomena, expressions and forms of knowledge" (Udir., 2017, p. 6). Critical in the sense of "analysis that seeks to uncover the social interests at work" (Janks, 2010, p. 12), indicative of a critical literacy approach, is less obvious in the curriculum and the term critical literacy is still not mentioned. However, some aspects of critical literacy can be recognised. For example, the learners should "think critically about how knowledge is developed" (Udir., 2017, p. 6), which hints at a social view of meaning-making processes. Furthermore, in the English subject curriculum, in relation to fictional texts, the competence aim uses the verb "analyse", which is explained as meaning to "investigate an issue, an object or a concept to determine a viewpoint or meaning" or to systematically study individual elements and compare the relationship between them (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 16). The verb "reflect" in the competence aim "discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in different cultural forms of expression from different media" (p. 12) also opens up for an exploration of multiple viewpoints in "consider[ing] different aspects of your own and others' actions, attitudes and ideas" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018, p. 16).

With its basis in critical visual literacy, the current study positions itself within both multimodal and critical approaches to literacy. It sees literacy as socially and culturally

embedded practices, which is possible to scaffold through education with the aim of developing the learners' agency in navigating the possibilities and challenges of the semiotic landscapes they participate in, both inside and outside of formal educational settings. Acknowledging "that texts work to position us, and that this happens below the level of consciousness" (Newfield, 2011, p. 92), the intervention focused on visual texts as particularly prominent and persuasive meaning-making resources in today's society (Sherwin, 2008). While the current study was located in the LK06/13 curriculum, the study's use of CVL can be said to more in line with the LK20 curriculum with its emphasis on analysis and reflection in relation to texts with various modes. Situated at the intersection of intercultural learning and literacy learning, the intervention was designed with the aim of cultivating awareness of how meaning-making processes work, and how they are intimately tied to social and cultural contexts. In line with Freire (1970/1993), therefore, the study sees literacy education as a possible source of empowerment, whereby increased understandings of meaning-making processes can foster learners' agency to make more informed choices about how they produce, engage with and/or challenge the perspectives on offer in texts.

2.3   Research on critical literacy in ELT settings

The current section will provide a discussion of relevant research with the aim of providing an overview of the research field, positioning the current study in relation to previous studies, and establishing "a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 26). Following Krumsvik and Røkenes (2016, p. 67), the criteria for inclusion and exclusion were developed in the beginning phase of the literature review as an important part of limiting the search and focusing the review. The criteria were revisited and revised throughout the process, mainly expanding the search due to a lack of relevant studies. Importantly, as no studies were identified which investigated CVL in ELT settings, the search was expanded to focus on the wider field of critical literacy. Another change relates to the fact that few studies were identified within the lower- and upper-secondary school contexts, which meant that the criteria were expanded to include primary school and university settings. An overview of the updated inclusion and exclusion criteria can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

	Included	**Excluded**
Databases	Academic Search Premier, ERIC, Google Scholar[14]	PubMed, PsychInfo
Timeframe	1980-2021	Literature published prior to 1980
Publication type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, book chapters	Newspaper articles, book reviews, BA, MA and unpublished doctoral theses, steering documents, white papers
Type of article	Empirical research studies	Theoretical articles, explanations of course instruction, pedagogical articles
Focus	Critical literacy/critical visual literacy AND images/pictures/photographs/other visual media AND ESL/EFL/ELT[15]	Media literacy, critical thinking, visual literacy
Language	English, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish	Other languages
Target teaching level	Primary school, lower- and upper-secondary school, university	Pre-school, adult education

In total, 44 studies were identified. These were screened for use of visual media, and studies employing verbal texts only were subsequently excluded from the review. Furthermore, as the primary focus of the current study is ELT, studies conducted in English Language Arts settings were also excluded, even if they included ESL speakers as the aims and contexts of the EFL/ESL classrooms on the one hand, and English Language Arts classrooms on the other, are very different. Table 3 provides an overview of the 26 studies included in the final review.

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[14] Most of the studies included were identified using the snowball method, i.e., through checking the reference lists of relevant articles.
[15] Studies in other FL contexts were not excluded from the review when otherwise relevant but were also not explicitly searched for.

Table 3. *Overview of studies on critical literacy in ESL/EFL settings which include visual media*

Author(s)	Year	Educational level[16]	Country	Visual material
Ajayi	2011	Primary	USA	Movies
Ajayi	2015	Lower secondary	Nigeria	Textbooks
Aristzabal-Jimenez	2020	Upper secondary	Columbia	YouTube video
Cho and Johnson	2020	Upper secondary	South Korea	Self-chosen
Fain	2008	Primary	USA	Picture books
Hayik	2011	Lower secondary	Israel	Picture book
Hayik	2015a	Lower secondary	Israel	Picture books
Hayik	2015b	Lower secondary	Israel	Picture books
Hayik	2016	Lower secondary	Israel	Picture books
Huang	2015a	University	Taiwan	Movies
Huang	2015b	University	Taiwan	TV-show episode
Huh and Suh	2015	Primary	Korea	Graphic novels
Kearney	2012	University	USA	Various
Ko	2013a	University	Taiwan	Newspaper pictures
Kuo	2009	University	Taiwan	Picture book
Kuo	2014	University	Taiwan	Picture book
Kuo	2015	University	Taiwan	Picture book
Lau	2013	Mixed: Primary/lower secondary	Canada	Picture book
Lau	2020	Primary	Canada	Picture books, videos, art
Lau et al.	2017	Primary	Canada	Picture books
Lee	2017	Primary	South Korea	Picture book
Liu	2019	Upper secondary	China	Movies
Luk and Hui	2017	Upper secondary	Hong Kong	Advertisement
Roy	2017	Primary	USA	Picture books
Walsh	2009	Lower secondary	USA	Media texts
Yol and Yoon	2020	Primary	USA	Picture book

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[16] In cases where the educational level is not mentioned, primary school has been defined as aged 5/6 to 12/13, lower secondary as aged 13/14 to 15/16, and upper secondary as aged from 16/17, following the Norwegian system of education.

The majority of these studies were conducted in primary (8 + 1 mixed) or lower secondary school (6 + 1 mixed), while only four were conducted in upper secondary schools and seven at the university level. This differs from the metasynthesis review conducted on critical literacy studies with English language learners (ELLs) by Bacon (2017), which included slightly more studies at the University level (13) than elementary (11). This difference could be due to the fact that the current review was restricted to studies which included visual media, and that pictures are considered more appropriate and/or necessary language support for younger learners. Only a few studies commented explicitly on the choice of focus material, but of those, Hayik (2015a), for example, argued that her choice of using picture books was related to the language challenges posed by the participants' English proficiency. Furthermore, many of the studies conducted in primary school settings did not include any theory about visual communication/multimodality and gave restricted information about how the visuals were approached, if at all (Fain, 2008; Lee, 2017; Roy, 2017; Yol & Yoon, 2020), suggesting that the visual as an important mode of communication was not in focus in these studies.

Methodologically, all the studies included were qualitative in nature, some with samples as small as 2-3 learners (e.g., Hayik, 2011; Lee, 2017; Roy, 2017; Yol & Yoon, 2020). Common designs, as defined by the author(s), were variations of action research (Aristizábal-Jiménez, 2020; Lau, 2013; Lau et al., 2017), practitioner inquiry (Hayik, 2011, 2015a, 2016; Huang, 2015a, 2015b; Walsh, 2009), ethnographic approaches (Kearney, 2012) and case studies (Ajayi, 2015; Cho & Johnson, 2020; Ko & Wang, 2013; Kuo, 2009; Roy, 2017). In light of this, most of the studies included a combination of several data sources, such as field notes, interviews, student artifacts, and video and/or audio recordings of classroom talk, with Luk and Hui (2017) being an exception in only including data from one data source (focus group interviews). These methodological choices are supported by the critical literacy scholars who argue for the need to situate critical literacy practices in local contexts (Lau, 2015; Luke, 2014; Stevens & Bean, 2007). By employing qualitative methodologies, the studies are more capable of accounting for the individuality of the contexts/participants, which requires thick descriptions. In light of this, it can be seen as indicative that none of the included studies were conducted in European settings as it might prove more difficult to transfer these findings to European, and Nordic, classrooms when the conditions are often very different (Ruzzene, 2012). Additionally, many of the studies included here were conducted in out-of-school settings, possibly due to curricular requirements not allowing this type of approach in mainstream EFL classes in these countries.

One of the challenges of synthesising the findings from these studies is their various conceptions of what critical literacy practices entail, closely reflecting the diversity

within the theoretical field. Kuo (2014), for example, defines critical literacy "as an instructional approach that uses tasks to make students active learners in the pursuit of knowledge and language development" (p. 113), while other studies draw on Lewison et al.'s (2002) four dimensions framework (e.g., Fain, 2008; Hayik, 2011; Hayik, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Lee, 2017) or the New London Groups' multiliteracies pedagogy (Walsh, 2009). Still other studies suggest a new framework, such as Yol and Yoon (2020), who base their study on a critical global literacies framework which "considers global and multicultural perspectives as a central focus" (p. 2). Despite this, some common trends could be identified across several studies, which will be elaborated on in the following.

In terms of research foci, the studies in this review focus largely on learning outcomes, often related to individuals, as opposed to learning processes. Thus, the review generally reflects previous observations that few studies, as well as little theoretical work, focus on the 'micro-processes' of critical literacy (Taylor & Hikida, 2020; Vossoughi & Gutiérrez, 2016), although some exceptions apply (e.g., Kearney, 2012). Within the focus on learning outcomes, various directions were identified, and several studies also had multiple foci. In the following, findings from these different studies will be discussed in relation to the four main identified focus areas; namely focus on a) language learning; b) critical engagement; c) (inter)cultural learning; and d) visual/multimodal engagement.

2.3.1   Language learning

A handful of studies focused on language as a central part of investigating critical literacy in SL/FL settings. In the current review, some studies investigated whether it is possible to implement critical literacy despite low language proficiency (e.g. Yol & Yoon, 2020), whether language proficiency influences the learners' consumption of popular culture in English (Luk & Hui, 2017), or whether and how language proficiency can be developed alongside critical literacy practices (Aristizábal-Jiménez, 2020). Others explored the benefits of translanguaging, i.e., strategically utilising two or more languages for meaning making, as a pedagogical strategy in critical literacy work with multilanguage users (Lau, 2020; Lau et al., 2017). Overall, the findings from these studies suggest that language proficiency is not a hindrance for critical literacy practices (Luk & Hui, 2017; Yol & Yoon, 2020), that language proficiency can be developed alongside critical literacy practices (Aristizábal-Jiménez, 2020), and that the access to two or more languages can be utilised as a strength for developing critical literacy practices (Lau, 2020; Lau et al., 2017). This research thus firmly challenges the ideas that critical literacy is too linguistically advanced for FLLs (Lau, 2013; Yol & Yoon, 2020).

2.3.2   Critical engagement

Similar to what Bacon's (2017) review study found, many of the studies focused on whether and how the participants engaged in critical literacy practices (e.g., Hayik, 2011; Huh & Suh, 2015; Kuo, 2009; Lee, 2017; Yol & Yoon, 2020), what teachers were doing to facilitate critical literacy practices (e.g. Cho & Johnson, 2020; Lau, 2013; Roy, 2017), or the effectiveness of specific instructional strategies to encourage different aspects of critical literacy (Hayik, 2015b, 2016; Kuo, 2014). In general, these studies report positive findings, such as the ELLs developing a sense of agency and efficacy (Lau, 2013; Lau, 2020), demonstrating an ability to "challenge the authors' representation of different social issues" (Huh & Suh, 2015, p. 143), and questioning and challenging messages about gender ideologies (Hayik, 2016). In a longitudinal study, Walsh (2009) found that the one-year practitioner research project based on a multiliteracies curriculum "gave the students the critical analytic tools with which to assess the sociocultural and political consequences of a range of print and media texts" (p. 134). One exception is perhaps Hayik (2015a), who found that the aims of her practitioner-inquiry project, to change "students' understanding of, and attitudes towards, people from religions other than their own" (p. 93), were not met and that "[s]uch a goal turned out to be much larger than a [six-week long] unit would afford" (p. 104).

The importance of teacher facilitation and scaffolding was highlighted in several of the studies (Cho & Johnson, 2020; Hayik, 2016; Huh & Suh, 2015; Lau, 2013; Lau, 2020; Lee, 2017). Lee (2017), for example, focused specifically on resistant readers, defined as learners who are able to read but choose not to, and found that with explicit scaffolding by the teacher, this resistance "could be harnessed as a meaningful opportunity to promote multiple perspectives" (p. 41). Lau (2013) pointed to the importance of classroom structures and conditions, highlighting their significance in relation to facilitating "open and critical discussions of real students concerns" as a prerequisite for the learners' ability to engage in "cognitively challenging literacy work" (p. 25). In a study focusing on how an English Language Arts and a French second language teacher collaborate to facilitate their learners' critical learning, Lau (2020) highlights the importance of the teachers "coordinating meaning-driven discussions, working together fluidly to extend, challenge and support the children's thinking and discussions" (p. 55).

Several of the studies emphasise the importance of the learners' personal and/or emotional engagement. Luk and Hui (2017) found that the students in their study used their personal background experiences to interpret the presented text, and other studies show how through engaging in critical literacy, the learners can gain awareness of both their own position and social and/or global issues simultaneously (e.g., Ajayi, 2012;

Yol & Yoon, 2020). Huang (2015b) reflected on how, as a teacher-researcher, he had constructed the learners "as academic […] language learners" (p. 335), focusing on engaging with ideologies through critical analysis. His analysis of students' texts, however, found that the learners engaged with the ideologies "as a lived experience rather than merely an academic deconstruction" (Huang, 2015b, p. 335). Similarly, Lau et al. (2017) point to how the learners' understanding of their personal roles and responsibilities in engaging in social change depended on moving away from being positioned as objective critics, to "honest, complicit but reflective individual[s]" (p. 119).

2.3.3   *(Inter)cultural learning*

Very few of the studies in this review included an explicit emphasis on culture or intercultural learning. This is despite the fact that critical literacy views texts as deeply interconnected with cultural and social contexts. Some studies had a cultural focus, such as including multicultural children's literature (Hayik, 2011) and encouraging religious diversity (Hayik, 2015a), while not foregrounding the kinds of cultural learning encouraged through this. Other studies, particularly in ESL settings, emphasised the participants' identities as immigrants or multilanguage users (e.g., Fain, 2008; Lau et al., 2017; Walsh, 2009) or locally situated social issues (e.g., Ajayi, 2015).

One of the exceptions to this is Huh and Suh's (2015) study, which investigated cultural stereotypes and power relationships. Their study was conducted in an after-school reading class with eleven Korean primary school learners. Over the period of the study, the learners read graphic novels and met for 14 one-hour sessions in which they discussed and engaged in various activities, of which some were based on critical literacy. Based on an interpretivist approach to data analysis which focused on instances of critical literacy practices, the authors found that the students "spoke back to the texts by unpacking the social injustice of commonplace racial stereotypes [and] gender representations" (Huh & Suh, 2015, p. 143). Through challenging the representations offered in the graphic novels, the learners also tended to take multiple perspectives, more specifically focusing on those who had power, and those who were either marginalised or silenced. They also found that the learners often struggled to suggest alternative worldviews and propose that this prevented them from progressing in further critical literacy practices.

Another exception is Yol and Yoon (2020), who combined critical literacy with global awareness in a 'critical global literacies' framework, defined as "critical practices that focus on developing students' global and multicultural perspectives" (p. 2). Their framework   consists   of   1)   developing   global   awareness,   focusing   on   the

interconnectedness of the world; 2) facilitating connections between personal and global issues; 3) taking a global and cross-cultural perspective on analysing and critiquing texts; and 4) encouraging social and political activity on global and multicultural issues. These dimensions were implemented in four ESL lessons with 3 sixth-grade students in New York over a period of four weeks. Based on student interviews, audio recordings, observations and field logs, the authors found that the learners, through seeking solutions for global problems, "gained awareness [of] both global and personal issues while actively navigating their identities and adopting a global agency" (Yol & Yoon, 2020, p. 11).

Kearney (2012) conducted a study in a university French FL classroom in the USA, including the course instructor and her 14 students. The instructor used a variety of historical texts, including visual, as vehicles for developing perspective taking, critical literacy, and cultural learning about historical situations in France. During classroom sessions, the instructor would model and encourage perspective-taking and provide opportunities to "interrogate the visual text function to support cultural learning" (Kearney, 2012, pp. 68-69); encouraging the development of symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2006b) by guiding attention to how the choice of particular icons and symbols conveyed particular perspectives on reality. Ethnographic and discourse analytical analysis of classroom practices showed how the students adopted the critical stance modelled by the instructor and started to analyse the visual texts with a focus on, among other things, the intent and motivation behind the text, and sought information which would allow a fuller interpretation and alternative cultural narratives. Thus, overall, the instruction facilitated an exploration of the perspectives embedded in cultural texts, which allowed the learners to understand the historical situations from multiple perspectives. However, no specific critical literacy framework was followed in this ethnographic study of classroom practices.

While few in number, and with generally small samples, these studies demonstrate the potential for critical literacy practices as an approach to engaging with cultural stereotypes, developing multiple perspectives on an issue, and gaining self-awareness in the process. Further research is needed in order to understand how these processes might work across multiple contexts, particularly secondary school contexts, which have not been represented here. Given the increasing and changing role of culture in FL teaching in Norway, as well as globally, the potentials for critical literacy, particularly including visual texts, to encourage intercultural learning remains underexplored.

2.3.4   Multimodal/visual engagement

Similar to the (inter)cultural focus, only a handful of studies focused specifically on critical reading of multimodal and/or visual texts. As stated previously, several of the studies did not comment on the visuals much beyond stating that a picture book was used (e.g., Fain, 2008; Lee, 2017; Roy, 2017; Yol & Yoon, 2020). Other studies explicitly explained the role of visuals and the approach taken to these, but did not investigate this in depth due to different foci (e.g., Lau et al., 2017).

Luk and Hui (2017) conducted a study focusing on how upper secondary school EFL learners in Hong Kong read an advertisement poster written in English. Data was collected from focus group interviews in an initial phase of a three-year study on critical intercultural literacies (Pegrum, 2008), in which the participants were encouraged to read the advertisement. This reading was facilitated by questions such as "What is it about?", "Who produced it?", and "For whom?" (Luk & Hui, 2017, p. 216). They found that the participants were not just passively consuming the messages in the advertisement. Instead, they frequently produced oppositional readings, interpreting the messages from an "alternative framework of reference" (Hall, 1980, p. 138) or negotiating the meanings to "local conditions" (p. 137). However, these oppositional readings were frequently "based on surface visual features, and [the participants] tended to evaluate the text content with their everyday spontaneous concepts" (Luk & Hui, 2017, p. 227). This is in line with what was reported from studies on the use of visual texts to encourage cultural learning in section 1.3 (Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Takaya, 2016). Furthermore, they found that the critical comments seemed "to be largely spontaneous, subjective, and lacking grounded and rational justifications" (Luk & Hui, 2017, p. 225).

Other studies focused on the results after instruction. Ajayi (2015), for example, conducted a multiple-case study in a ninth grade reading class with 38 learners in Nigeria. Three female students were selected as cases prior to the study, which aimed to investigate how the case students employed critical multimodal literacy to contest textbook messages after critical literacy instruction. The instruction included discussing pictures of Nigerian male politicians, focusing on "how visuals, language, and layouts contributed to meaning making in the text" (Ajayi, 2015, p. 223). Ajayi found that the instruction allowed the participants to critique the texts with a focus on local cultural prejudices, question messages of gender inequality and the social production of gender, and display agency through creating multimodal texts which challenged these discourses. Through the use of a case, Ajayi demonstrates how several of the students provided a wider critique of the socio-political structures which impede literacy learning for women in their society.

In a different study, Ajayi (2012) focuses on how Hispanic grade three learners in an ESL class in the USA "use their cultural background and semiotics to mediate interpretations of a movie version of *Cinderella*" (p. 62). In a 3-week critical ethnographic classroom study, he guides the 18 participating learners to read still-shots from the movie, paying attention to colour, posture, and spatial relationships, with the aim of providing language and resources for discussing the video. Based on analysis of learner drawings, Ajayi (2012) found that the learners' interpretation of the movie "was personal as well as socially and culturally shaped; based on their integrated and related multiple identities, classroom social practices, self-reflexive practice, and semiotic resources" (p. 85). Additionally, he found that the female participants, whom he specifically focused on, did not accept the cultural gender roles represented through the movie, but contested and rejected these and constructed "a new, different cultural model that positioned women as strong, independent and successful" (Ajayi, 2012, p. 85).

Huang's (2015a) teacher-inquiry study over an 18-week semester with 26 university students in Taiwan explored the critical analysis of movies. Instruction included examining representations of stereotypes related to race, class, and gender, also paying attention to how these were created through images, sounds, gestures, and spatial organisation. In the second half of the semester, the students created a counternarrative to the dominant discourses and ideologies at play in a movie of choice through a multimodal report/ensemble. Findings showed that, in their deconstructions, the students paid attention to the multiple modes utilised to identify how power relations and marginalisations were created through multiple modes. In their multimodal ensembles, they similarly drew on multiple modes, "making their messages as persuasive and effective as those in the media texts viewed" (Huang, 2015a, p. 21).

In Lau's (2020) study of bilingual collaboration between an English Language Arts and a French second language teacher, visual grammar was also given explicit attention with the aim of encouraging meta-semiotic awareness. She found that through "the recursive, explicit references to inter-textual relations […], students were sensitized to how design features in multimodal texts construct meaning and in turn learned to make agentive choices themselves about these design features to articulate ideas and express emotions" (Lau, 2020). Furthermore, the study highlights how, through drawing connections between multiple modalities, e.g., the two languages, still and moving images, etc., the learners' collaborative inquiry was expanded.

The studies investigating participants' critical reading and/or designing of multimodal texts following instruction, while including diverse approaches to instruction, have in common that they all provide some kinds of language and/or resources with which the participants can scaffold their reading of visual texts. This aided the participants in

critiquing the visual texts' ways of representing the world, and in some cases also create multimodal counternarratives to these. Thus, unlike the findings from Luk and Hui's (2017) study, which preceded instruction, the participants in these studies provided critiques which went well beyond spontaneous and subjective comments.

2.3.5   Identifying knowledge gaps

To summarise, very few studies had an explicit and systematic focus on critical literacy in relation to culture and/or visuals within ELT. Given the increasing global interconnectedness, and the flow of visual representations from multiple cultural contexts in digital media, more studies are needed which investigate how learners engage in meaning-making processes when reading visual media from other cultural contexts. In particular, there is a need for more studies including everyday visual texts, as well as studies exploring how learners engage with visuals from the perspective of intercultural learning (Kiss & Weninger, 2017). Although the few studies conducted in this area demonstrate the potential for critical literacy practices as an approach to engaging with stereotypes, multiple perspectives and the symbolic and cultural meanings embedded in visual texts, further research is needed in order to understand how these processes might work across multiple contexts, particularly secondary school and European contexts, which have not been represented in previous research. Furthermore, given the individuality and diversity of contexts and participants, there is a need for studies which systematically explore the potential of instruction by comparing how the same learners approach the reading of visual texts before and after instruction.

By employing pre-and post-intervention focus group interviews, the current study advances our understandings of how EFL learners read visual texts representing or produced in other cultural contexts and represents a novel exploration of whether and how this process differs before and after instruction. With its dual focus on visuals and culture, the study contributes to an under-researched area on the use of critical literacy to encourage intercultural learning in EFL contexts through the use of visual texts. Furthermore, the results will expand our knowledge about critical literacy practices classes in an under-researched context, with no studies having been conducted in Nordic, or European, countries.

3   Conceptual framework

This chapter will outline the conceptual framework of the current thesis, understood as "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs [one's] research" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39). In the following, I will discuss some central themes related to meaning-making processes through the lens of social constructivism, including socio-cultural, critical, and social semiotic perspectives. I will start by presenting my view on learning processes. Then I will move on to give an overview of meaning-making processes as understood through a social semiotic perspective in general, followed by a discussion of the role of culture and individuals in these meaning-making processes. Following this, I will give an account of what this means for FL teaching in particular through theories of symbolic competence. Theories of reading images from a critical perspective, included under the umbrella critical visual literacy, will then be outlined as an approach to developing symbolic competence.

3.1   A social constructivist view on learning

As stated in section 1.2, the current study is rooted in a social constructivist view. I will here describe some of the central tenets of the social constructivist view of learning, drawing on the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978, 1986) as well as the works of different scholars who have linked Vygotsky's ideas specifically to FL teaching and learning.

In line with social constructivism, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning describes learning and development as occurring through social interactions. He states that "[e]very function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). This view is compatible with a social semiotic theory of meaning-making (discussed in section 3.2), whereby semiotic resources are created and re-created in social interactions and then created and re-created by individuals in social settings. In the context of second language reading, Yang and Wilson (2006) summarise this from the point of view of learning as interactive:

> learning is both interactive in the sense that learners must interact with sources of ideas/knowledge in social settings, as well as in the sense that they must take an active part in reconstructing ideas/knowledge within their own minds. (p. 365)

In these social interactions, Vygotsky argued, learning would occur through a "process of supportive dialogue which directs the attention of the learner to key features of the environment, and which prompts them through successive steps of a problem" (Mitchell et al., 2013, p. 222). This has later been referred to as scaffolding (e.g. Wood et al., 1976), which includes involving learners in meaningful activities beyond their current control, predicting and providing appropriate support, and gradually removing support as the learner is able to take more control (Daniels, 2007, p. 323).

In Vygotsky's view, supportive dialogue is dependent on 'a more competent other', often interpreted as a teacher, or someone who has considerably more knowledge than the learner within the specific area. Influenced by social constructivist theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), many scholars have later expanded the understandings of the role of 'the more competent other', arguing that "learner(s) themselves build new knowledge" through problem-solving activities (Mitchell et al., 2013, p. 224). Similarly, in the field of SL learning, collaborative dialogues, defined as "dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building" (Swain, 2000, p. 102), are seen as a source of language learning. In such dialogues, speakers use language to mediate their thinking by producing utterances, which can be expanded on, challenged etc. by the other speakers, leading to a co-construction of knowledge (Swain & Watanabe, 2012). This socially built knowledge can then later be internalised (Swain & Lapkin, 2000), in line with Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory.

From this perspective, which is adopted by the current thesis, learning can happen in all collaborative activities, including pair and group work (Wells, 1999, p. 333). The idea that learners co-construct knowledge between themselves has been foundational for the design of the intervention for the current study, and this was explored through analysis of the learners' co-construction of knowledge during the focus group interviews in Article I, and more elaborately in Article II. Likewise, the role of scaffolding was key to understanding the role of critical questions in Articles II and III, and the role of analytical tools in Article III.

3.2   *A social semiotic view of meaning-making in EFL*

The current thesis takes a social semiotic view of meaning-making, viewing it as a social, and thus cultural, practice. Kress (2010) summarises the relationship between meaning-making, or communication, and culture: "culture is an effect, a result, of communication and not possible without it; in turn, communication is framed and shaped by culture and changes culture in the process of communication" (p. 51). From this view, it is not possible to separate culture and meaning making; rather, they intersect in multiple ways.

3.2.1   Semiotic resources

The concept of 'signs' is central to a social semiotic theory of meaning-making. Indeed, semiotics can be defined as "the study or 'science of signs' and their general role as vehicles of meaning in culture" (Hall, 2013a, p. xxii). The idea of a science of signs originated with Ferdinand de Saussure, who proposed that all languages are built up of signs in the early 1900's. According to Saussure (1916/2011), signs are made up of two separate parts, namely the signifier and the signified. In a language, the signified is the concept or thing that is referred to, and the signifier is the word which is used to refer to this concept or thing. Saussure argued that the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. From this view, meaning is cultural in the sense that "words only mean the things they do because we agree that they do" (Howells & Negreiros, 2012, p. 114), and culture largely depends on its participants interpreting signs in similar ways (Hall, 2013b, p. 5).

From a *social* semiotic perspective, however, the relationship between signifier and signified is not seen as arbitrary. Rather, the making of signs is bound with the interests of the maker (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), or as Halliday (1973/2003) puts it: "Language is as it is because of what it has to do" (p. 309). In this way, signs are politically motivated and embedded in ideologies and power relationships. In social semiotics, the concept of 'sign' is more often replaced with 'semiotic resource', a term which originated from Halliday's (1978) notion that grammar should not be understood as a set of rules governing the use of language, but as a "resource for making meanings" (p. 192). The current thesis follows this direction in order to avoid "the impression that 'what a sign stands for' is somehow pre-given, and not affected by its use" (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 3). Moreover, in line with Barthes (1957/2012), the current thesis holds that everything can be a sign, given that everything "can be done or made in different ways and therefore allows, at least in principle, the articulation of different social and cultural meanings" (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 4). Semiotic resources are therefore understood as actions, materials and artifacts used for communicative purposes that, based on their past uses, will carry potential meanings which are realised in concrete social contexts (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 285).

3.2.2   The role of culture and individuals in meaning-making processes

Following a social constructivist view, the current study sees knowledge as constructed through meaning-making processes in a social context, and cultures are seen as fluid and dynamic, mediated and negotiated through various symbolic systems. Simultaneously, the social constructivist view inherently rejects the idea that

individuals act in a vacuum, completely free from cultural influences. Instead, "the discourses that surround us (from the media and popular culture to the conversations we have with others) structure our imaginations and sensibilities and are in turn structured by them" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 365). Furthermore, not everyone has equal rights or power to influence whose meanings get to count. Rather, these rights and power relationships are influenced by social structures and institutions at play in society. The question that can be asked is thus: "How are social actors […] capable (at least in principle) of critically evaluating and reconstructing the conditions of their own lives?" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 964). In the following, I will elaborate on how this is conceived in the current study, drawing on social semiotic theory.

Kress (2010) proposes a two-stage social semiotic theory of communication, in which both the maker of the message and the interpreter, and their respective interests, play important roles. In the first stage, the maker of the message chooses from the semiotic resources available in order to convey the message in a manner which coincides with their interests. The sum of these semiotic resources then creates a foundation from which interpretation can happen. In stage two, the interpreter, based on their interests and attention, frames the foundation in unique ways, bringing their own resources and thus creating a new semiotic entity as a result of "a series of transformations" (Kress, 2010, p. 36). In this way, semiotic resources are constantly created and re-created in social interaction, which again "becomes part of cultural resources, imbued with the meaning of the work of those who have made and remade the resources" (Kress, 2010, p. 14).

In line with Kress (2010), the current thesis sees reading as an act of communication, and the process of reading an image can therefore be understood in the ways outlined by Kress's theory of communication, with the reader acting in the role as interpreter. From this view, making meaning from an image is a complex process, involving much more than the image itself. The semiotic choices made in the making of an image, which are intimately connected with the interests of the maker, represent only one stage. The actual meaning taken will be transformed as the reader actively interprets it, guided by their own interests, which again are bound up with the semiotic resources they bring to the image. As Berger (1972) wrote in his famous work, *Ways of Seeing*: "although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing" (p. 10). Our perceptions, or 'ways of seeing', he further argues, are affected by the readers' knowledge and beliefs, guiding them to focus on certain aspects over others and make interpretations which go beyond the image itself. In relation to interpreting images depicting people whom we are unfamiliar with, this process of interpretation may often take the form of stereotyping, which in the current study is understood as "the application of a belief about a group of

individuals to an individual from the group" (Kanahara, 2006, p. 314). Lippmann (1922/2017), who coined the term, wrote about how stereotypes influence our interpretations of what we see: "we notice a trait which marks a well known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry about in our heads" (pp. 88-89). These stereotypes, he argues, are formed "for us by our culture" (p. 81). From a social semiotic view, the stereotypes will not just be formed by 'our culture', but by people engaging in meaning-making practices in cultural contexts. Accordingly, "meanings are produced not in the minds of individual viewers so much as through a process of negotiation among individuals within a particular culture and between individuals and the artifacts, images, technologies, and texts created by themselves and others" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 4).

If individuals' 'ways of seeing' are interconnected with the social and cultural meaning-making practices they participate in, it follows that their ability to influence these practices is "is oriented toward, depends upon, and is constrained by social activities, institutions, conditions, and movements" (Ratner, 2000, p. 421). To answer the question posed in the first paragraph of this section: agency, which in the current study is understood as the capacity to engage critically with images and make informed choices based on this engagement, is dependent on understanding "the manner in which [one's] ideas and actions reflect social practices and concepts" (Ratner, 2000, p. 427). By this I mean that readers have to be aware of how images communicate in social and cultural settings, how images have agency in the sense that they "have the power to give meaning to us" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 3) within those same cultural contexts, and how readers can have agency in challenging those meanings. This view of agency as being facilitated by an awareness of meaning-making processes in light of social and cultural contexts is at the core of the current study and was particularly influential for Article I, where the learners' engagement with their own visual stereotypes was explored, and in Article III, which investigated the ways in which the learners challenged meanings through redesign.

3.2.3   Symbolic competence

Several scholars have explored a social semiotic view on meaning-making in relation to FL teaching (e.g., Kearney, 2016; Kramsch, 1993; Ventola, 1984). In particular, a social semiotic view has consequences for how culture is approached and understood in the context of FL teaching. As argued by Kramsch (1993), if "language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching" (p. 8). If semiotic resources are constantly created and re-created in social interactions, which then again constitute culture, it follows that culture cannot be seen as a static entity. Teaching culture can therefore not be achieved through teaching facts about nation states, or

through fixed cultural value scales such as those proposed by Hofstede (1980). Indeed, it is not sufficient to understand "others' ways of referring to the world and of construing and attributing significance to it"; instead ELT needs to encourage an understanding of meaning-making as a process of selecting semiotic resources from a range of options, and the ways in which these choices establish or advance certain perspectives (Kearney, 2016). Kramsch refers to this as 'symbolic competence' (Kramsch, 2006b, 2009, 2011; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). Symbolic is here used both in the sense that people and objects in the world are represented through conventional symbolic forms, which were previously referred to as signs or semiotic resources, and in the sense that subjective realities (e.g. values, attitudes, perceptions, stereotypes) are constructed through symbolic forms (Kramsch, 2009).

Symbolic competence, as conceptualised by Kramsch (2011) is a perspective on intercultural learning which recognises the diversity and complexity of cultures. Rather than attempting to understand oneself and others through one's respective national (and static) cultures, as indicated by the notion of 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993), symbolic competence "involves becoming adept at recognizing, analysing, questioning and exploiting symbolic representations, actions and power" (Kearney, 2016, p. 48). Symbolic competence is thus closely related to development of agency as understood in the current study, as it aims to develop "the ability not only to approximate or appropriate for oneself someone else's language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664).

Symbolic competence includes the ability to "understand the symbolic value of symbolic forms" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201); to see form not as simply communicating *a priori* meanings, but as producing meaning. This means going beyond investigating what kinds of perspectives are on offer in a text, and reflecting on how these perspectives are conveyed through the use of different forms (Kramsch, 2011). Symbolic competence also includes the ability to look underneath the surface of symbolic forms to see how they "can be used to support conflicting and historically contingent truths" (Kramsch, 2006b, p. 251), and investigating whose interests this serves (Kramsch, 2011). By interpreting semiotic resources in light of historical and subjective contexts, established categories such as different nationalities, genders, and ethnicities, can be destabilised and contextualised. Finally, symbolic competence includes the ability to produce and utilise semiotic diversity and complexity to "reframe ways of seeing familiar events" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201) and to "create alternative realities and reframe the balance of symbolic power" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 666).

As others have also pointed out (e.g., Matsuo, 2014), the concept of symbolic competence as conceived by Kramsch is not readily translatable to pedagogy. However, Kramsch (2011) does provide some recommendations for language teachers, such as 1) encouraging reflection on "the nature of language, discourse, communication and mediation" in communicative activities; 2) paying attention to what remains unsaid as much as what is said; 3) aiming to "show complexity and ambiguity"; and 4) engaging learners' emotions (p. 364). Furthermore, she suggests that interculturally competent speakers will ask questions such as "Whose words are those?", "Whose interests are being served by this text?" and "What made these words possible, and others impossible?" (p. 360).

The current study adopts Kramsch's symbolic view of intercultural learning. Seeing the reading of visual texts created in other cultural contexts as "a form of intercultural communication in itself" (Hoff, 2016, p. 52), the study places particular emphasis on the development of symbolic competence in relation to visuals. Furthermore, it expands on the recommendations for language pedagogy made by Kramsch (2011) through connecting symbolic competence with critical literacy practices, as will be elaborated on below. Following Kearney (2016), I see the development of symbolic competence in ELT as "increasingly diversified abilities to perceive and act in a semiotic environment and increased control over semiotic resources" (p. 63), and as being aligned with the understanding of agency outlined in section 3.2.2. The learners' ability to perceive and control semiotic resources after the intervention was explored in detail in Article III. Furthermore, by focusing on the ways in which the learners engaged in the interpretation of semiotic resources over time, and particularly before and after the intervention, Articles I, II and III emphasise "the types of interpretive processes [the learners] are apprenticed into and that they then apply more and more independently when encountering symbolic texts and representations" (Kearney, 2016, p. 63).

3.3   *Critical visual literacy*

Critical visual literacy is in the current study understood both as a teaching approach which emphasises the cultural and socio-political contexts of visual texts, and an ability to engage in the literacy practices fostered through this approach. CVL thus implies a focus on reading *against* the text, questioning the ways in which it provides us with a partial perspective of the world (Janks, 2010, p. 22). Following the main tenets of critical pedagogy and critical literacy outlined in section 2.2.2, CVL as a teaching approach aims to be emancipatory by providing strategies for making the social, cultural and ideological workings of images conscious (Newfield, 2011). By focusing on increasing learners' agency and control of semiotic resources from different cultural contexts, CVL can thus be seen as an approach to developing symbolic competence in

the FL classroom, with a particular focus on the visual mode as an important mode of communication.

3.3.1 Visual literacy foundations

Just as the development of symbolic competence with a focus on verbal language does not negate the necessity of mastering grammar, spelling and genre conventions (Díaz & Dasli, 2017, p. 10), so too does a symbolic approach to images require an understanding of how images produce meanings in order to understand their symbolic values and power (Janks et al., 2014). CVL is therefore grounded in visual as well as critical literacy (Chung, 2013). In light of this, Serafini's (2012) multimodality-oriented version of the *Four Resources Model* (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999, see section 2.2.2) has been influential for how the current study understands the meaning-making processes learners engage in when reading images on an individual level.

The model combines several different theoretical perspectives, i.e., perceptual, cognitive, sociocultural, and critical, and consists of four roles readers adopt, or can adopt, when approaching the reading of texts. Each of these, Serafini (2012) argues, is necessary, but not sufficient in order to "create an informed, literate citizenry" (p. 151). The first role, *reader as navigator*, emphasises the role readers take in decoding texts by perceiving, giving attention to, and understanding their content, but also their structures (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), which themselves consist of and constitute semiotic resources. In the role *reader as interpreter*, the readers draw on their "available resources to make sense of what is written or depicted" (Serafini, 2012, p. 156), in line with Kress' (2010) two-stage social semiotic theory of communication. The *reader as designer* emphasises the interests of the reader (Kress, 2010), how they in reading a text make decisions in choosing what to focus on, where to place emphasis etc. Finally, the *reader as interrogator* role entails acknowledging the social and cultural influence on meaning-making processes, and thus signals a focus on critical and socio-political analysis. In line with Serafini (2012) and Janks et al. (2014), the current study sees all these roles as supporting and facilitating critical engagement. Thus, instruction included a focus on a) decoding structural elements of visual texts, introduced through parts of the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006); b) interpretation, by recognising and working from the learners' personal interpretations, e.g. visual stereotypes; c) allowing learners' interests to serve as a starting-point for discussion; and d) critical interrogation. The model was also utilised in Article II to analyse how the learners used the different roles, with different agency and to different extent, in their meaning-making processes before and after instruction.

3.3.2   Critical foundations

The word *critical* in critical visual literacy is here seen as signalling a focus on the socio-political and cultural contexts of visual texts. As a field within critical literacy (cf., section 2.2.2), CVL is also characterised by a certain diversity in how it is defined. The different definitions can be roughly categorised into three different conceptualisations; 1) CVL as a set of literacy practices, 2) CVL as the ability to participate in these kinds of literacy practices, and 3) CVL as a teaching approach which aims to develop this ability. Belonging to the first conceptualisation, Rose (2001) defines critical visual methodology as

> an approach that thinks about the visual in terms of the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded; and that means thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging (p. 3).

Related to the second conceptualisation, Chung (2013) defines CVL as "the ability to investigate the social, cultural, and economic 'contexts' of visual texts in order to illuminate the power relationships in society" (p. 6), whereas Newfield (2011), in line with the third conceptualisation, defines CVL as an approach which "provide[s] strategies for making [the workings of images] conscious" (p. 92). These different conceptualisations are, however, often used interchangeably in the literature. The current study builds on Rose's (2001) definition and Janks' (2000, 2010) *Synthesis Model* (see section 2.2.2), and defines critical visual literacy as

> A teaching approach that facilitates learners' engagement in literacy practices which emphasise the social, cultural, and ideological contexts of visual texts, as well as the ability to interrogate and challenge issues of power, diversity, and access inherent in the production and reading of visual texts, which is developed through this teaching approach.

In line with the social semiotic view of meaning-making taken in this study, this definition of CVL acknowledges that the production and reading of visual texts are intimately connected with social and cultural contexts. It acknowledges that these contexts are not neutral, but rather produces ways of seeing that are bound up with power relations, which can be challenged through different ways of seeing, i.e., through being able to engage in CVL practices. Thus, the definition is also aligned with symbolic competence as encompassing an awareness of how the meanings of semiotic resources are tied to historical and cultural contexts, and how semiotic resources can be used to advance certain perspectives. Situated in FL teaching, CVL thus involves engaging both with local contexts, i.e., what kinds of meaning-potentials the texts have in the learners' own lives, and other contexts, e.g., the context in which the text was

produced, and/or potential other relevant historical, social, and/or subjective contexts. In light of this, FL learners are not seen as merely 'deficient language users', but as multilanguage users who are, in principle, capable of using several semiotic systems and drawing on multiple contexts in order to make meaning.

3.3.3   Instructional foundations

The current study follows Freire (1970/1993) in taking a dialogic approach to critical literacy instruction. In line with social constructivist views of learning, therefore, instruction should aim to encourage a co-construction of knowledge through dialogue. The teacher engages in this dialogue *with* the learners, rather than teaching *to* the learners (Freire, 1970/1993), and learner contributions are seen as important and valuable to the common critical knowledge-construction. Learners are therefore seen as agents capable of creating knowledge, rather than just receiving it. In order to facilitate this critical dialogue, the teacher's role, as seen in this study, is mainly to provide a supportive environment, to scaffold the dialogue by asking critical questions and to provide analytical tools. Importantly, in order to engage in dialogue *with* students, the questions need to be authentic, showing a genuine interest in the learners' contributions. Furthermore, as argued by Abednia (2015), critical questions should encourage active participation and abstract thinking, enable the transfer of knowledge to new situations, and promote self-awareness and the ability to consider alternative interpretations.

By focusing on providing analytical tools, the current study also draws on text-analytical approaches, that is approaches which aim to deconstruct the ideological functions of texts "by providing students with technical resources for analysing how texts work" (Luke & Woods, 2009). The introduction of analytical tools is here seen as providing "resources for making meaning" (Halliday, 1978, p. 192), that is, resources on which learners can draw in their meaning-making processes. As argued by Cloonan (2011), "without a metalanguage, or grammar, for describing multimodal texts, understandings remain tacit rather than explicitly articulated and brought to consciousness" (p. 24). Thus, providing analytical tools is here seen as an important step towards a conscious understanding of how texts work to advance certain perspectives on the world. Importantly, however, they were not seen as prescriptive tools. In line with the view of meaning-making taken in this study, there is no definite 'truth' to be interpreted from texts; rather meanings are created and re-created in social and culturally situated processes and are thus multiple.

The instructional model of critical literacy that has informed the current study is Lewison et al. (2002) *Four Dimensions of Critical Social Practice*. Building on a

synthesis of critical literacy literature from the three preceding decades, the model proposes that critical literacy practices consist of four interrelated dimensions: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues, and taking social action (Lewison et al., 2002, p. 382). The model does not situate itself in any one of the orientations: domination, access, diversity and design (Janks, 2000; 2010, cf. section 2.2.2). Instead, it outlines social practices through which one can engage with one or several orientations, depending on one's focus.

The dimension of disrupting the commonplace focuses on seeing the world through new lenses and questioning what is considered normal. Building on the principle that choices made by producers of texts combine in creating a position for the user which attempts to persuade them to see the world from a particular position, engagement with this dimension aims to bring these positions into the open by focusing the readers' attention to them. This can be done through asking questions such as "What positions are on offer?" and "What is constructed as natural?" (Janks et al., 2014, p. 32), thus bringing attention to the positionality of the text in question, and the ways in which it attempts to persuade the reader to accept a particular view of the world as 'natural' as opposed to constructed. A prerequisite for this type of disruption is an understanding of how semiotic resources contribute to creating meaning. In relation to reading visuals, this could, for example, include the analysis of how angles, framing and salience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) contribute to positioning the viewer in a particular way in relationship to the depicted items and/or people, and questioning where or who one would have to be in order to see the world in this way.

Within the dimension of interrogating multiple viewpoints, the aim is to understand and reflect on the texts through multiple perspectives, including one's own (Lewison et al., 2002). This entails an awareness of how one's own background, experiences and 'ways of seeing' influence the meaning-making process, as well as how other people might view the world differently. It also entails considering whose perspectives are or are not included in texts through asking questions such as "Which positions, voices and interests are at play?" and "Which are silent and absent?" (Luke & Freebody, 1997, p. 214).

Focusing on socio-political issues means moving beyond individual and collective meaning-making processes and giving attention to the wider socio-political structures reflected in the texts, and to the contexts in which they are produced and read. In particular, it entails interrogating "how sociopolitical systems and power relationships shape perceptions, responses, and actions" (Lewison et al., 2002, p. 383). By investigating who the "topdogs" and the "underdogs" in a particular context are, and how the text maintains or challenges dominant meanings and structures in society

49

(Janks et al., 2014, pp. 5-6), working with this dimension entails focusing on social issues such as inequities of race, class, gender and disability (Vasquez et al., 2019). Ultimately, the aim is to stimulate an understanding of how semiotic resources are used to maintain or challenge such inequities (Vasquez et al., 2013).

In the final dimension, this understanding is utilised by taking action based on insights gained through working with the previous three dimensions. This dimension is concerned with interrogating one's own role and agency in maintaining or challenging the status quo. Vasquez (2013) explains:

> Even though we may be committed to social change, more often than not, we are part of the dominant culture and hence, part of the problem. Until we understand how our current identity and the positions we take mitigate our reform efforts, we cannot truly become part of the solution (p. 18)

As argued by Lewison et al. (2002), taking action and promoting social justice is frequently perceived as the defining factor of critical literacy, also reflected in critical pedagogy's central aims of empowerment, liberation and social transformation (Freire, 1970/1993). However, as argued in 3.2.2, agency relies on an understanding of the social and cultural systems which influence meaning-making processes. Similarly, taking informed action relies on the understandings and perspectives explored through the other three dimensions (Lewison et al., 2002).

Lewison et al. (2015) later presented an expanded *Instructional Model of Critical Literacy*, which, in addition to the critical social practices outlined above, also includes a critical stance. A critical stance consists of the attitudes and dispositions necessary "to become critically literate beings" (Lewison et al., 2015, p. 13), which includes consciously engaging, entertaining alternate ways of being, taking responsibility to inquire and engage in reflexivity. The *Four Dimensions of Critical Social Practice* model (Lewison et al., 2002) formed the basis from which the tasks in the current intervention were designed and was also used actively as a way of interpreting the results in Articles II and III. Additionally, the notion of critical stance was used as an interpretive frame in Article II, reflecting an understanding of critical literacy as "a way of being, living, learning" (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 302).

3.3.4 Conceptualising a link between critical literacy and symbolic competence

The four dimensions of critical social practice are in the current study seen as closely related to symbolic competence. In the following, the four dimensions of CVL as understood in the current study will be presented as located in FL settings and as aiming

to develop symbolic competence. Figure 3 shows how this relationship is conceptualised in the current thesis, where the four critical social practices are seen as a way of developing different aspects of symbolic competence, as indicated by the arrows.

Disrupting the commonplace	Focus on form as meaning
Interrogating multiple viewpoints	Production of complexity to reframe ways of seeing familiar events
Focusing on the socio-political	Investigating the historicity and subjectivity of symbolic forms with focus on interests
Taking informed action	Creating alternative realities and reframing the balance of symbolic power

Figure 3. *The relationship between the four dimensions of CVL practices (Lewison et al., 2002) and symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2006b, 2009, 2011; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008)*

As stated in section 3.2.3, symbolic competence involves the ability to understand how forms produce meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and how these meanings convey certain perspectives of the world (Kramsch, 2009, 2011). These abilities are closely aligned with the types of practices learners engage in through the dimension of disrupting the commonplace, where form is not treated as 'natural', but rather as constructed. Thus, a photograph is not approached as a neutral representation of reality; rather, the choices made in the act of taking or using the photograph, including angles, framing etc., are treated as constructed. By interrogating the types of positions that are offered based on these choices, therefore, disrupting the commonplace is, *inter alia*, focusing on form as meaning. In FL settings, this includes exploring what forms mean not just in one's own context, but also in various other contexts.

Another aspect of symbolic competence is the ability to produce and utilise complexity to "reframe ways of seeing familiar events" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201). When interrogating multiple viewpoints, learners are encouraged to step back from their own 'ways of seeing' and engage in a conscious exploration of multiple other perspectives. When reading texts produced in other cultural contexts, as is common practice in the

FL classroom, this should entail interrogating multiple viewpoints from the cultural context in which the text was produced, in addition to local contexts. Through this, the dimension of interrogating multiple viewpoints focuses on expanding the meaning-making potentials of the text beyond the text itself, thus producing diversity and complexity (Kramsch, 2009).

Symbolic competence is also understood as encompassing the ability to consider how semiotic resources can be used to support certain viewpoints and how these are historically and socially situated (Kramsch, 2006b, 2011). By focusing on socio-political issues, learners are asked to consider whose interests are served by the messages embedded in the texts (Janks, 2010). By focusing on social issues related to race, gender etc., and how inequities can be maintained or challenged through semiotic resources utilised in texts (Vasquez et al., 2013), working with the dimension of focusing on socio-political issues encourages an understanding of the constructedness of social categories, thus destabilising and contextualising these, as called for by Kramsch (2011). When working with images in FL settings, this should include a focus not just on the local socio-political contexts, and not just on the socio-political contexts in which the text was produced, but the intersections and incongruities of these.

Finally, both CVL and symbolic competence ultimately aim to empower learners with agency. That is, understanding the ways in which texts work to position readers and producing complexity by investigating multiple viewpoints and social/cultural contexts empowers learners to make informed choices about which positions they would like to take up. Importantly, however, CVL and symbolic competence also aim for learners to use their increased control of semiotic resources (Kearney, 2016) in order to "remake the world" (Janks, 2010, p. 156); to be agentive meaning-makers who can draw on multiple and conflicting perspectives and social/cultural contexts in order to shape the intercultural and multimodal environments in which they participate.

The current section has attempted to describe the link between symbolic competence as an aim of FL teaching and CVL as a way of developing symbolic competence. This theoretical link will be explored further in relation to the empirical findings of the current study in Chapter 5.

3.4   Summary

Drawing on a theoretical foundation based on social constructivism, the current chapter presented some central themes related to meaning-making processes, including co-construction processes, and the role of culture and agency. It explored how a social semiotic view of meaning-making can be addressed in the FL classroom through the

development of symbolic competence and described how the current thesis conceptualises the relationship between CVL and symbolic competence in FL contexts. The conceptual framework presented here will be drawn on in the discussion in Chapter 5 as an interpretive frame for understanding the empirical findings in the current study.

4 Methodology

In the following chapter, the methodology employed in the study will be presented. First, the overall research design will be described. Then, the individual data collection methods will be discussed separately, before an account is provided of the data analysis approach applied in the three articles. Following this, a discussion on the quality of the results from the study will be presented. The chapter concludes with an account of the ethical considerations related to participation in the study, and the process of data collection.

4.1 Research design and methods

4.1.1 Case study research

The overarching methodological approach employed in the current study was case study research. Case studies are defined by Creswell (2013) as an approach "in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 97). Case studies have been an increasingly popular approach to educational research since the 1980's (Tight, 2010). The case study approach allows for depth of investigation, detailed contextual analysis and has a unique capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This was considered advantageous for the current project, as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the complexity of the educational setting and is also in line with the research traditions within the field of critical literacy, as discussed in section 2.3.

Although some differences can be identified in the literature regarding what a case study is, i.e., whether it is "a method, approach, style, strategy or design" (Tight, 2010, p. 331), it is generally agreed that the case study is a primarily qualitative approach (Creswell, 2013; Verschuren, 2003), although a multitude of different methods can be applied (Morgan, 2015). The current study considers the case study as a distinctive approach in the sense that it a) tends not to rely on a large number of participants as in quantitative research; and b) tends not to rely on isolating causal mechanisms as in experiment-driven research. While causality might be explored, as in the current study, factors can never be completely isolated but are rather explored within contexts.

In the current study, the bounded system constituting the case (Creswell, 2013) consists of an intervention implemented in three EFL classes in a Norwegian upper secondary

school. The current study can be defined as "an intrinsic case study in which the focus is on the case itself […] because the case presents an unusual or unique situation" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 99). The intervention was studied over a period of 16 weeks, from mid-October 2017, to mid-February 2018. The reasons for investigating this intervention as a case were closely related to the overall aim and research questions of the study, as well as the context of EFL teaching in Norway. As the overall aim of the study included exploring whether and how it is possible to scaffold the meaning-making processes Norwegian upper secondary EFL learners engage with when reading images through CVL, it was necessary to investigate this through classroom practices. The choice of studying an intervention, rather than existing classroom practices, was made for two reasons. Firstly, CVL practices are, to the best of my knowledge, not commonly implemented in Norwegian EFL classrooms (see section 2.2.3). Thus, locating classrooms in which these practices were already implemented in order to study these would have proven difficult, if not impossible. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, by utilising an intervention as a case, it is possible to make more direct comparisons of the learners' reading of images before and after being introduced to CVL. It allows for investigating both how the learners approach the reading of images without any explicit CVL instruction, and how the same learners approach the readings of images after. For these reasons, the case was selected and studied due to its unique and inherent qualities.

The case study as a method has been subject to heavy criticism. Campbell and Stanley (1963), for example, claimed that case studies had "such a total absence of control as to be of almost no scientific value" (p. 6). Although Campbell (1975) later revised this unforgiving verdict of case studies, the statement represents one pole in the discussion about the scientific value of case studies. In general, however, much of the criticism towards case studies is based in a positivist epistemology, in which the aim is to generate objective and universal knowledge and laws (Munro, 2015). However, research in fields such as education has largely been unable to validate any laws (Stake, 1978) and it can therefore be argued that a search for universal and context-independent knowledge is unserviceable. From a social constructivist view, learning is so contextual that investigating it holistically in a 'natural' environment is likely to provide more useful findings than a more experimental approach, as is also reflected in contemporary ELT research conducted from social constructivist perspectives (Mitchell et al., 2013). Case studies, with their focus on the multidimensionality of the real-life bounded system, are particularly suitable for producing this type of context-dependent knowledge.

Given the exploratory nature of the current study, and its positioning within social constructivism, no control group was included in the research design, which also

circumvents any potential ethical issues related to depriving certain groups of learners from educational benefits. By using an intervention, the study could have been designed as a quasi-experimental research study, whereby the intervention would be seen as the 'treatment' given to an experimental group, and the results would have been compared to a control group which received no treatment. This type of control is, however, difficult to achieve in exploratory qualitative research in general, and in classroom settings in particular. Firstly, the effectiveness of a control group is linked to the level of similarity to the experimental group (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). That is, the two groups would have to be similar enough so that it is unlikely that any other factors than the 'treatment' would have influenced any differences in results between the two groups. Given the dynamic nature of classroom settings, this would have been difficult to achieve. Perhaps more importantly, based on the theoretical position taken in the current study which emphasises the complex interplay between the individual and the cultural in meaning-making processes, and thus the individuality of experiences and backgrounds the learners bring into these processes, making comparisons between different groups would not be theoretically justifiable. In order to indicate the ways in which the intervention in the current study scaffolded these processes, therefore, other measures had to be taken. These included conducting interviews prior to and following the intervention, and analysing these in relation to instructional steps taken, both related to CVL and outside of this, and artifacts produced by learners during the intervention. How this was done in practice will be outlined further in section 4.3.

4.1.2   Sampling

In addition to the selection of the main focus of the case, i.e., the intervention, a number of other considerations had to be made when locating the case in time and space, and when selecting the participants. Upper secondary school learners were chosen as participants not just because they are relatively under-represented in this type of research (see sections 1.3 and 2.3), but also because they are a particularly interesting group to investigate. As adolescents, they are in the process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood, with the consequences this has for the exploration of identity. As argued by Carugati (2003), adolescents' lives are characterised by a "widening of spatial, temporal, emotional, and social regions" (p. 119), during which "contradictions, conflicting viewpoints […] and personal and societal requests have to be negotiated, and new decisions, new trajectories, and reorganisation of perspectives, beliefs, and opinions have to be produced" (p. 120). This fundamental search for understanding 'Who am I?' and 'How do I fit into this world?' means that upper secondary school learners might be at a point of openness which might be more difficult to negotiate with, for example, University students. Simultaneously, the curricular aims and

expected level of English proficiency for upper secondary school learners in Norway facilitates an engagement with more complex and abstract issues.

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) differentiate between the phenomenon of study and the participants. Whereas the phenomenon of study is "the 'who' or 'what' that a researcher will study", the participants "are the individuals from whom researchers collect data" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 312). The phenomenon of study in the current research project is a process, i.e., meaning making in relation to visual texts, within a specific group, i.e., Norwegian upper secondary EFL learners. As such, the phenomenon of study implies certain spaces (EFL classrooms) and participants (upper secondary learners). A number of sampling strategies are available to qualitative researchers and the selection of sampling approach(es) should be informed by the aim of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). For the current study, the typical case strategy, whereby the case is sampled based on being typical of a group (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 315), could for example imply searching for one or several classes of upper secondary school learners with a typical gender balance, socio-economic conditions, etc.

However, as the current study demanded a considerable amount of time, effort, and willingness to collaborate on the part of the participating teachers it was necessary to start the sampling process with them. Utilising my personal network, I contacted a number of teachers who taught EFL in upper secondary schools at the time. One of the teachers expressed eagerness to participate, and also suggested recruiting two of her colleagues, both working at the same school as the former. These teachers were subsequently contacted and invited to participate, to which they agreed. Thus, the strategy was a form of snowball or network sampling, which Savin-Baden and Major (2013) classify as convenience sampling. The main participants of the study were then recruited from these teachers' EFL classes. The strategy of convenience sampling could be problematic in relation to the credibility of the study, as compromises are made in the selection of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In the current study, the final group of participants were three classes of upper secondary school learners with a relatively even gender balance. Furthermore, classes attending the first year of general studies were purposely selected over second- and third-year classes, as English is only a compulsory school subject in the first year of upper secondary school. Learners studying English in their second or third year have done so by choice, which would potentially reduce diversity and make the findings less transferrable.

The participants in the study thus consisted of 83 learners (38 girls and 45 boys) who attended one of three EFL classes at the same upper secondary school. This school was

located in a medium-sized city on the west coast of Norway, and offered education in general studies, qualifying students to study at universities or colleges. When the intervention started, the learners were aged between fifteen and twenty-one[17], and the mean age was 16. Thirteen of the learners reported that both their parents had been born in a country outside of Norway, while another thirteen reported that one of their parents had been born outside of Norway. The remaining 57 learners reported that both their parents had been born in Norway. The expected English proficiency level of the learners was around B1/B2 (Council of Europe, 2018) but individual variations were observed within the group. Of the 83 participating learners, 79 consented to participate in the questionnaire, 42 consented to participate in focus group interviews, and 62 learners consented to let the texts they produced as part of the intervention be used in the study (see Appendix 1 for the consent form). All the learners participated in the classroom tasks described in the section below, regardless of whether data was collected from them or not.

4.1.3   Pedagogical approach and classroom procedures

In line with the philosophical stance of the study, the pedagogical approach and the design of the intervention were informed by social constructivism. Based on a synthesis of literature on instructional theories written from a social constructivist perspective, Adams (2006) suggest five principles for social constructivist pedagogy. These are:

1. Focus on learning not performance.
2. View learners as active co-constructors of meaning and knowledge.
3. Establish a teacher-learner relationship built upon the idea of guidance not instruction.
4. Seek to engage learners in tasks seen as ends in themselves and consequently as having implicit worth.
5. Promote assessment as an active process of uncovering and acknowledging shared understanding.

(Adams, 2006, p. 247)

Building on these principles, the intervention was designed to engage learners in meaningful tasks that enabled co-construction of meaning and knowledge through discussions. The teachers' main role, and my own as a participant observer, was to facilitate rather than to instruct. We aimed to scaffold the learners, offering enough support to enable them to carry out the tasks (Wood et al., 1976). This included

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[17] There was one 21-year-old, and one 17-year-old learner in the sample. The rest were aged 15-16.

providing support through modelling, introducing important concepts, and providing analytical tools which the learners could apply in their work with tasks.

Overall, a task-based approach was taken in the design of the intervention (Willis & Willis, 1996). The aim was to integrate CVL tasks with the general EFL teaching over a longer period of time, as opposed to an intensive stand-alone intervention, allowing learners more time for reflection between tasks. In order to ensure successful integration, several measures were taken. Firstly, the tasks were developed to fit within the general topics of instruction as outlined in the teachers' yearly plan. Secondly, the choice of tasks was made on a week-to-week basis, and the teachers were involved in selecting tasks and/or altering them so that they would fit well within the lesson plans for the particular week.

Practically, this meant that I had meetings with the teachers ahead of the intervention in order to gain insight into their general approach to teaching and obtain more specific information about their yearly plan. As the focus of the current study is meaning-making processes from the perspective of intercultural learning, the exact timing of the intervention was selected based on when they would be covering culture-related topics. In co-operation with the teachers, therefore, it was decided that the intervention would be most appropriately implemented while the learners were working on three topics: 'stereotypes, indigenous people and multiculturalism', 'politics and multiculturalism' and 'race and class', with each topic covering a period of roughly four-five weeks.

Following these preliminary meetings, I developed a selection of materials and tasks in advance of the intervention. In addition to fitting within the instructional topics, and the curricular learning aims for the English subject at the time (Udir., 2013), the tasks and materials were designed to address a number of learning aims developed by me specifically for the intervention. Based on the view of CVL outlined in section 3.3, these learning aims can be understood as the understandings and abilities necessary to engage in critical visual literacy practices, and were as follows:

> The critically visually literate reader should:
>
> 1. Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work
> 2. Recognise that all texts are partial re-presentations of the world
> 3. Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives
> 4. Recognise the role of images in society
> 5. Recognise how the choices made by image-makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
> 6. Be able to recognise how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning

7. Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world
8. Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images

These learning aims were addressed in different phases of the intervention, although overlaps occurred. Overall, three different phases can be outlined (see Figure 4). In the first phase, the main focus was on developing awareness of the role of images in society, including as carriers of cultural meaning, such as stereotypes, as well as their constructedness and partiality. This phase therefore entailed a main focus on disrupting the commonplace and interrogating multiple viewpoints (Lewison et al., 2002). As outlined in section 2.2.3, learners are often not encouraged to pay attention to visuals beyond providing support for other types of (verbal) learning in the EFL classroom. Images, and photographs in particular, are often seen as neutral representations of the world (Sherwin, 2008), and it was therefore thought that the learners might be resistant towards engaging in the type of critical analysis implied by CVL (Jaeckel, 2018). The first four weeks of the intervention therefore focused on cultivating this type of understanding as a first step towards CVL practices.

Phase 1 (weeks 1-4)

The role of images in society, their partiality and positionality, and visual stereotypes

(Aims 1, 2, 3, 4, (5), 7)

Phase 2 (weeks 8-12)

Introduction of analytical tools, deconstruction and interrogating multiple perspectives

(Aims 3, 5, 6, 8)

Phase 3 (weeks 12-16)

Deconstruction, interrogating multiple perspectives, and re-designing using analytical tools

(Aims 3, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Figure 4. *The main focus and learning aims in the three phases of the intervention*

In the second phase of the intervention, roughly encompassing weeks eight to twelve[18], a more systematic framework for analysis was introduced. This framework was based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design, which utilises visual semiotic theory to describe the meanings typically ascribed to different visual structures in Western societies. Building on systemic functional linguistics (Halliday &

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[18] No CVL tasks were implemented in weeks 5-7 for various reasons related to unpredicted events.

Matthiessen, 2004), the grammar takes its point of departure from the three metafunctions of semiotic modes: ideational, interpersonal, and compositional (textual)[19]. Only parts of this visual grammar were introduced due to the complexity of the framework and the limited timeframe of the intervention. Attention was given to visual grammar concepts related to the interpersonal metafunction, whose emphasis on power relationships and emotional engagement strongly correlates with CVL as understood in the current study. During this phase, the learners were therefore introduced to the analysis of vertical and horizontal angles, framing, and eye-contact. While the potential meanings of the different structures, as suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), were provided to the learners, these were problematised. For example, according to the framework, the use of a high angle denotes a relationship between the viewer and the depicted in which the viewer is in power. While told this, the learners were simultaneously encouraged to think of situations in which this might not apply. It was thus stressed that the grammar was not a formal set of guidelines which should be applied to any reading (New London Group, 1996), but that they were analytical tools which could be utilised when deemed relevant. This phase thus focused on providing analytical tools to aid in further disrupting the commonplace, and to interrogate multiple perspectives through these means.

The final phase of the intervention aimed to bring these emerging understandings together and entailed a focus on socio-political issues through its concern with power, diversity and access (Lewison et al., 2002; Vasquez et al., 2019), as well as taking informed action through the act of redesign (Janks, 2010). An overview of the tasks that were implemented, and the timeline for these, can be found in Table 4 (for a full description of the tasks and an overview of lesson content for each week of the intervention, see Appendix 2 and 3). Twelve tasks were implemented, which, when combined, added up to about 9 hours of teaching time, amounting to roughly 20% of the total teaching time for the English subject during the period.

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[19] The ideational metafunction encompasses how persons or objects and their relations to other objects and processes can be represented. Focusing on the constructed relationship between the viewer and the viewed, the interpersonal metafunction includes a focus on power relationships and emotional engagement/identity. Finally, the compositional metafunction concerns itself with the layout of a text as a whole, how the different elements are arranged in a design, as well as the consequences of this in relation to, among other things, salience, or information value.

Table 4. *Overview of tasks implemented in the intervention*

Topic	Week	Task name	Description	Time in minutes	Learning aims
Stereotypes, indigenous people, and multiculturalism	1	Blindfold task *Inspired by Vasquez et al. (2013)*	The learners make guesses about what a photograph depicting Native Americans might look like and reflected on the source of these assumptions in a class discussion.	10	1 & 4
	1	Are images universally understood?	The learners explore different ways of understanding the same images from different positions in a class discussion based on an ambiguous cartoon taken from an advertisement for painkillers as well as an image containing items with strong cultural associations in Norway.	10	3
	1 & 2	AIEVM	The learners analyse an image depicting indigenous people individually, using questions from the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media* as a guide (adapted from Council of Europe, 2013).	30	1 & 5

Topic	Week	Task name	Description	Time in minutes	Learning aims
	2	Taking pictures of the school *From Janks et al. (2014, p. 85)*	The learners read and discuss the poem "The blind men and the elephant". They then take pictures of the school individually and compare the images and the impression they give of the school in group discussions.	30	2
	4	Visual stereotypes and redesign of photomontage	Following a lecture on visual stereotypes, the learners redesign a montage from a Norwegian EFL textbook (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007) depicting indigenous people in pairs.	80	1 & 7
Politics and multiculturalism	8	American Born Chinese[20] *Questions adapted from Schieble (2014) and Davis (2013)*	The learners read chapter 2 and 3 of the novel and answer questions related to stereotypes, positioning, and power relationships. Although the questions are answered individually, learners are encouraged to engage in group and full class discussions during the lessons.	80	5 & 6

[20] Chapters 2 and 3 of the graphic novel *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2006) were included in the teachers' yearly plan for the English subject. This task was developed to add a CVL element to the work with these chapters.

Topic	Week	Task name	Description	Time in minutes	Learning aims
	8	Visual grammar and positioning *Based on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Janks et al. (2014)*	The learners are introduced to key concepts from Kress and Van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design (angle, frame, focus, colour etc.). They then analysed images of their choice individually using these tools.	60	5 & 8
	9	Optional task on montage	As an optional task on a test, the learners individually write an essay discussing the montage Redesign of photomontage task: Focusing on both the text and the images, write an analysis of the possible messages communicated about indigenous people through this montage. Discuss the potential implications of these messages, and how they relate to the situation of indigenous peoples today.	80	N/A
Race and class	12	White privilege	The learners discuss their own experiences of white privilege in groups. They then analyse a poster that represents "white" people as "normal" from different perspectives.	30	3 & 5

Topic	Week	Task name	Description	Time in minutes	Learning aims
	14	Political cartoons	The learners are introduced to persuasive techniques and analyse political cartoons addressing racial issues in the USA individually based on these. Discussions are encouraged.	25	5,6 & 8
	16	Redesign of advertisement	A critical reading of two advertisements is modelled.	80	5, 7 & 8
		Annotation of visuals, idea taken from Arizpe et al. (2014). List of question based on Stevens and Bean (2007)	The learners then discuss an advertisement in groups based on a list of questions, focusing on representations of race, power relationships and socio-political consequences. Following this, the learners redesign the advertisement individually.		

The implementation of the tasks followed one of two patterns, depending on whether they would be accompanied by a lecture. When the task included an introductory lecture, this was held by me in an auditorium where all three classes would attend simultaneously. I would then also introduce the task before the learners returned to their respective classrooms to complete it. When no introductory lecture was provided, the tasks were introduced by the three teachers in their respective classes. In these cases, the teachers were provided with different materials (e.g., power point slides, task sheets) and a set of instructions for how to introduce the task (Appendix 2). Additionally, the task implementation was discussed during the weekly meetings with the teachers. In either case, the teachers and I all worked as facilitators while the learners were completing the tasks. As the classrooms were adjoined, we were able to shift between the classrooms during the sessions, thus further ensuring continuity and similarity of instruction between the classrooms.

4.2   Data collection

This section describes the data collection methods used in the current study: focus group interviews, collection of learner artifacts produced during the intervention and a questionnaire.

4.2.1   Focus group interviews

Interviews are commonly utilised as a data collection method in qualitative research, and are central when gathering data about attitudes, opinions and understandings that are not accessible through observations (Mackey & Gass, 2005), which is the case for the current study. Additionally, interviews were chosen over observation in this study to a) collect data in a systematic way which would allow for comparisons between pre and post instruction, and b) to enable probing, i.e., asking questions to encourage further explanations of the learners' meaning-making processes. The choice of focus group over individual interviews was made to a) encourage dialogue between the learners, allowing an investigation of the social construction of meaning in line with the philosophical position and pedagogical foundations of the study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), b) better reflect the group interaction patterns encouraged throughout the intervention, and c) create a less intimidating environment for the learners (Eder & Fingerson, 2002).

However, the use of focus group interviews over individual interviews can also have some possible negative outcomes related to bias. Firstly, while all interviews are social situations and thus inevitably involve the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewed (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014), group interviews also have the added

dimension of the relationships between the interviewees. These relationships might influence the extent to which the learners feel comfortable expressing their opinions, particularly if these diverge from the majority. Consequently, focus group interviews might be biased towards unity of opinion, and therefore conceal diversity. In the current study, I attempted to mitigate some of this bias by presenting a clear set of guidelines for the interviews. Immediately prior to both the pre- and post-intervention interviews, I went through a checklist orally with the learners (Appendix 4). Among other things, the learners were encouraged to show diversity of opinions, and it was stressed that there were no right or wrong answers and that everyone's opinion was equally valued. Secondly, as in any group discussions, focus group interviews may be dominated by one or two people (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Consequently, they may be systematically biased against certain groups of people who are perhaps more reluctant to share their opinions. In response to this, I tried to be continually aware of this during the interviews, and actively facilitated the discussion by directly addressing learners who had been quiet for a while and by trying to draw attention away from the learners who dominated the discussion, e.g., through avoiding eye contact.

Overall, the advantages of focus group interviews as a data collection method were considered to outweigh the possible limitations in the current study. Several measures were also implemented in order to reduce the limitations, as described above. However, it was still considered essential that the contextual influences on the interview data would be taken into consideration during the analysis. How this was approached will be discussed in some detail in section 4.3.

Group composition is another important factor of consideration when conducting focus group interviews. In the current study, forty-two of the learners (13 girls and 29 boys) consented to participate in the focus group interviews. These were divided into five groups of six learners in each group. Based on the assumption that people who are unfamiliar with each other feel more able to share ideas freely, Savin-Baden and Major (2013), argue that researchers should avoid composing focus groups in which participants are too well acquainted. This was difficult to accomplish in the current project, as the learners were likely to be familiar with each other from attending the same class. Instead, two principles guided the process of group composition in the current study. Firstly, measures were taken to ensure an even gender balance in order to encourage a more diverse discussion. The girls were therefore first distributed randomly to five groups, with three girls in three of the groups, and two girls in the remaining two. Following this, the boys were randomly distributed to the same five groups, with three boys in three of the groups, and four boys in the remaining two. Twelve of the boys that had consented to participate were therefore not included in the groups. A randomised list of these learners was kept in case some of the original

participants would not be able to attend. Secondly, measures were taken in order to ensure that relationships between individual learners in the groups would not be disruptive for their willingness to participate in the discussions. To address this, the teachers were asked to consider the group composition, and comment on whether any of the learners should be moved. No changes were necessary based on the information provided by the teachers. The final group setup in the pre- and post-intervention interviews can be seen in Appendix 5.

Although the aim was to use the same groups for both the pre- and the post-interviews in order to ensure greater comparability, some changes still needed to be made. Firstly, one of the learners in Group 2 was absent from school on the day of the post-intervention interview. Because it was not practically possible to find a replacement within the time frame available, only five learners participated in this group in the post-intervention interview. Secondly, one learner stated before the post-intervention interview that she did not wish to participate. However, she did not wish to withdraw from the study as a whole and gave consent for the use of the data collected from the pre-intervention interview. The first on the list of learners who had not been assigned a group already was therefore asked to participate in her place, to which he consented.

The language of the focus group interviews was English. There were two main reasons for choosing English rather than Norwegian, the mother tongue of most of the learners. Firstly, as the intervention was conducted in English, the learners would be introduced to vocabulary and ways of discussing images in English. As the learners might not be familiar with the kind of metalanguage used to discuss images in Norwegian, it might prove difficult for them to verbalise their emerging understandings in another language in the post-interviews. The second reason is related to the timing of the interviews, which was during the regular English lessons. Because of this, it was considered more ethical to conduct the interviews in English in order to provide a learning outcome for the participants, i.e., providing opportunities for communicating in the target language. As the learners' expected level of English proficiency was relatively high (B1/B2), it was considered that conducting the interviews in English would not unduly influence the results. The learners were also informed in advance of the interviews that they could use Norwegian when necessary, both in cases where they were unsure about particular words, and when they felt they could better express their opinion or thoughts in Norwegian. Several learners used this opportunity during the interviews.

The focus-group interviews were semi-structured. This encourages collaboration between the interviewees and interviewer, and therefore allows an exploratory approach, which is useful for researching topics that are relatively unexplored (Dörnyei, 2007). The structure of the interviews was based around different stimuli, which is

common in focus-group interviews (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In the current study, the stimuli consisted of different visual texts, which were selected on the basis of representing current events and/or being related to topics covered during the intervention. Each set of stimuli were accompanied by questions, which were designed to be open, i.e., not eliciting any one particular answer, but allowing a possibility of responses. Simultaneously, the aim was that, overall, the tasks would encourage elicitation of the different abilities necessary in order to approach images in a critical manner, as defined by the learning aims developed for the intervention (section 4.1.3).

Possible interview tasks were developed and pilot-tested with a different group of six learners in the spring of 2017, all in their first year of upper secondary school. The process of piloting the interview guide is recommended in order to identify potential problematic areas, and make revisions before the actual data collection (Mackey & Gass, 2012). In total, seven tasks were tested in the pilot-interview, which lasted for about 60 minutes. As it was observed that the discussions became briefer and less nuanced after about 40 minutes, it was decided to reduce the number of tasks to five in order to keep the learners' focus throughout the interviews. Based on the type of information and discussion elicited from the different tasks in the pilot, only three of the original seven tasks were used in the final interviews (Task 1, 2 and 3). Task 4 and 5 were developed to address aspects that were lacking in the piloted tasks, namely aim 3, being able to interrogate multiple perspectives, and aim 7, being able to recognise how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world. An overview of the tasks can be found in Table 5 (for the full interview guide, see Appendix 6).

The interviews were audio recorded in order to allow for full verbal transcriptions. Video recordings were taken of the tables where the stimulus material was placed in order to capture non-verbal cues such as pointing. The learners' faces were deliberately not included in the video recordings for ethical reasons. The interviews were held in a room which was close to the learners' classrooms for practical and logistical reasons, while still offering a "distraction-free place for conducting the interview[s]" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 165). Before the interviews started, the participants were invited to sit down at one of the places designated for the learners around a large table (see Figure 5 for an illustration). They were offered a drink of water and some casual conversation was initiated in order to make the learners feel more comfortable. Then I introduced the aim of the interview, as well as a set of guidelines (Appendix 4). This was done in Norwegian, to ensure that the learners could fully comprehend all the details. The learners were also invited to ask questions. Following this, I initiated the interviews by starting the audio- and videorecording and proceeding with Task 1.
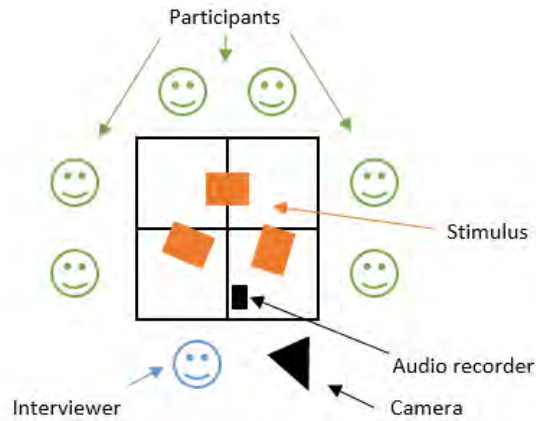
Figure 5. *Illustration of interview situation.*

My role during the interviews was that of both researcher and moderator. Savin-Baden and Major (2013) suggest that the moderator has four roles or responsibilities in the interviews, namely task master, encourager, probe, and clarifier. In the role of task master, I kept the discussion focused on the task. Furthermore, the learners were all encouraged to engage in the discussion, and to take turns talking (Creswell, 2014). The role of encourager includes encouraging discussion through offering supportive feedback to individual participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This was done through keeping eye contact, nodding, making comments such as "that's interesting", "mhm", asking questions and stimulating further discussion through for example offering supportive, but brief, feedback. In the role of probe, I asked questions to encourage deeper explorations of ideas, for example "Could you say something more about that?" Finally, the moderator's role of clarifier entailed asking clarifying questions such as "Do you mean that…", "Am I understanding this right?".

The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 7) for transcription codes) immediately following the end of each round of interviews (pre and post). Standard orthography was used, as the learners' language accuracy was not the focus of the study (Mackey & Gass, 2012). Non-verbal cues from the video-recordings, such as pointing and the placement of job titles, were subsequently added to the transcripts. In total, 511.5 minutes of audio- and video-recordings were transcribed (see Appendix 8 for how this time was distributed between the tasks and the groups).

Table 5. *Overview of focus group interview tasks, pre- and post-intervention*

Task	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Focus
1	***Who will have which job and why?*** *Stimulus*: Six photographs depicting teenagers with different gender and ethnicities. *Prompts*: Say something about the different teenagers. Assign one job title to each teenager (eight job titles provided) and explain why.	***Who will have which job and why?*** *Stimulus*: Same as pre-intervention interviews. *Prompts*: Distribute one job title and one hobby to each teenager (eight job titles and eight hobbies provided) and explain why.	Visual stereotypes
2	***Donald Trump in the news I*** *Stimulus*: Two photographs depicting the crowd at Donald Trump's inauguration from different angles *Prompts:* In what way(s) do the two photographs differ? Why do you think they were so concerned about the spreading of the first photograph? One photograph at a time: How does this photograph make you feel about Trump and what are the elements in the photograph that contribute to this?	***Nazi propaganda posters*** *Stimulus:* Two Nazi propaganda posters from WW2, depicting Hitler and Jews respectively. *Prompts:* One poster at a time: How does this poster make you feel towards Jews/Hitler and what are the elements in the photographs that contributes to this? In what way(s) do the two posters differ? Why do you think the Nazi's distributed posters like these? Can you think of anything similar happening today?	Role of images in society Positioning Analytical tools

72

Task	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Focus
3	***Donald Trump in the news II***	***Hillary Clinton in the news***	How different modes work together to create meaning
	Stimulus: Two photographs depicting Trump taken from two different newspaper pieces, and accompanying quotes.	*Stimulus:* Two photographs depicting Clinton taken from two different newspaper pieces, and accompanying quotes	
			Analytical tools
	Prompts: Compare the two photographs. Assign the quotes to each photograph and explain why. Why do you think these photographs were chosen?	*Prompts:* Compare the two photographs. Assign the quotes to each photograph and explain why. Why do you think these photographs were chosen?	Positioning
4	***Native American-themed sports teams***	***Native Americans in Thanksgiving picture books***	Multiple perspectives
	Stimulus: Four images, two depicting sports team logos with a Native American theme, two depicting sports crowds using Native American-themed artifacts.	*Stimulus:* Four images representing Thanksgiving, three from picture books and one painting.	
	Prompts: How do these images portray Native Americans? What do you think Native Americans and the supporters think about these types of images?	*Prompts:* How do these images portray Native Americans? What do you think the target group(s) and Native Americans think of these images?	

Task	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Focus
5	***Mexican migrants***	***Mexican migrants***	Redesign
	Stimulus: A photograph depicting a group of Mexicans in the process of crossing a river to get to the US.	*Stimulus:* Same as pre-intervention interviews.	
	Prompts: What is your impression of the photograph and the people in it? Is there anything about the way the photograph is taken that influences your impressions? After information about context: Where do you think you would find this type of photograph? Could anyone gain anything from these representations? Who and in what way? Could the photograph have been taken differently in order to provide a different impression?	*Prompts:* What is this photograph depicting? What type of impression does it give of Mexicans, and what are the elements of the photograph that influence this impression? Could anyone gain anything from these representations? Who and in what way? Could the photograph have been taken differently in order to provide a different impression?	

4.2.2   Learner artifacts

To supplement the interview data, artifacts were collected from the learners during the intervention. These mostly consisted of verbal texts, but also included drawings and annotations. The artifacts were produced in response to several of the tasks outlined in Table 4. As such, they added valuable insight into how the individual learners responded to the tasks. Because the artifacts were produced throughout the intervention, they also aided in more clearly connecting the results found in the pre- and post-intervention focus group interviews with the intervention itself. An overview of the number of texts collected in relation to the different tasks can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. *Overview of collected learner artifacts.*

Task	Week	Number of artifacts (learners)	Explanation
AIEVM (adapted)	1	29 (29)	Written answers to questions taken from the AIEVM. Due to lack of time, some are only partly completed.
American Born Chinese	8	45 (45)	Responses to questions related to chapters 2 and 3 in *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang.
Visual grammar and positioning	8	53 (53)	Two paragraphs where the learners analyse one or two images of their choice using tools from the grammar of visual design.
Optional task on montage	9	16 (16)	Essays consisting of five paragraphs written as an optional task on an exam, where they were asked to analyse and discuss a montage of indigenous people taken from an EFL textbook.
White privilege	12	44 (44)	Two paragraphs written in response to questions about a poster referring to 'white people' as 'normal'.
Political cartoons	14	55 (55)	Individually written analysis of a political cartoon (choice between four) addressing race issues in the USA.

Annotations	16	9 (36[21])	An annotated version of the advertisement, completed as part of a group discussion.
Redesign of advertisement	16	54 (54)	A drawn redesign of an advertisement, and an explanation of the changes they made and their reasons for making these changes, as well as how they thought this had improved the original advertisement.

In total, 305 learner artifacts were collected from seven tasks throughout the intervention. All the texts that were submitted by the 62 learners who consented for their texts to be used in the study were included in the data set[22]. A possible limitation of this data set is that since most of the learner artifacts, with the exceptions being artifacts from *Annotations* and *Redesign of advertisement*, were uploaded to the online learning platform itslearning, the learners were aware that their teachers might read their texts for overall assessment purposes. This could have influenced the way in which the learners completed the tasks. However, the tasks do add an individual component to the overall data set, as well as insights into the process of the intervention. Artifacts collected in this way were also only utilised as supporting data sets.

4.2.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to the learners immediately before the intervention through the online survey program SurveyXact. The questionnaire aimed to elicit background information about the individual learners, including age, gender, and experiences with people from various cultures through travelling and family/friends. The questionnaire was written in Norwegian (see Appendix 9 for a translated version) and was completed by all 79 learners who had consented.

4.3 Data analysis

For the current study, multiple qualitative analytical methods were applied in order to increase credibility through triangulation (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The main qualitative data analysis process, utilised in all the three research articles, was based on

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[21] Task completed in groups
[22] The number of texts collected from each tasks varies for various reasons. In relation to the individually written texts, a lack of submission could be related to absence from school, or failure to complete and/or upload the task. As the *Montage* task was an optional question on an exam, where the learners could choose between four different questions, only a limited number of texts were collected. For the group task, only the texts written by groups in which all the members had consented could be collected.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis. However, in accordance with the social constructivist perspective, elements of interaction analysis were incorporated to account for the influence of the social context (Halkier, 2010) and to examine "the ways in which individuals co-create knowledge" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 56) in Articles I and II, which were based on focus group interview data. Finally, Article III utilised visual semiotic analysis in relation to the learners' drawings.

In line with the exploratory approach taken in the study, the entire data set was first subjected to an initial analysis in order to identify possible subsets and research foci. Figure 6 provides an outline of the overall process, although it should be acknowledged that the process started already during the data collection period, where I kept a journal noting down my observations and interpretations of events. In the initial analysis, I familiarised myself with the data by transcribing, and reading and re-reading the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this time, I was actively searching for patterns in the data and continually making notes of interesting aspects and refining initial ideas. On the basis of this initial analysis, three research foci/themes where identified, related to visual stereotypes, perspective-taking, and analytical tools, and the relevant data for each of these were organised into three tentative subsets of data. From this point on, the three subsets were analysed separately, before accumulating in Articles I, II and III respectively. These analytical procedures will be described in the following.
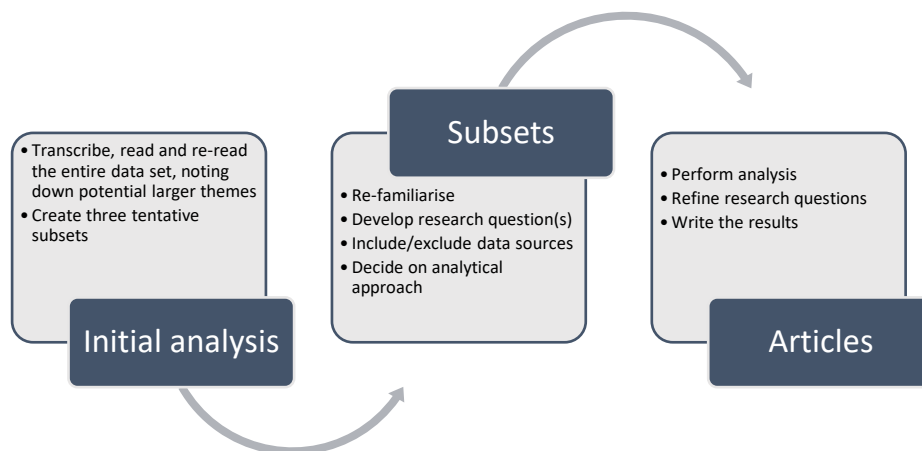

Figure 6. *Overview of the data analysis process from the complete data set to the individual articles*

77

4.3.1   Thematic analysis

The qualitative data analysis software NVivo (version 12.4) was used as a tool for the thematic analysis. Focus group interview transcripts and learner artifacts were imported into NVivo. Cases were created for each participant, and background information from the questionnaire was imported and connected to each case. However, although computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software aids the researcher in the analysis process, allowing them to take the qualitative data analysis further than would be possible by hand (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, pp. 577-578), the researcher is still the driving force behind the analysis. Thus, NVivo can only be used as an aid to deepen the analysis, while the researcher is the active agent.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six phases of thematic analysis: 1) familiarising oneself with the data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report. These phases were used as a guide for the thematic analyses conducted for the current study, although some deviations occurred, as will be described below. While presented in a linear fashion in the following, the process was in fact recursive, and movement back and forth between the phases was done when necessary throughout the whole analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As indicated in Figure 6, I started the analysis for the individual articles by re-familiarising myself with the respective data sets through reading and re-reading the transcripts and listening to the audio recordings. In this process, I further refined the research questions and reviewed the data set based on this refinement. The next phase included generating initial codes by systematically coding the data set. In Articles I and II, this initial phase was only conducted on the focus group interview data. Both inductive codes, i.e., codes that 'emerged' from the data, and deductive codes, i.e., "codes that are identified prior to analysis and then looked for in the data" (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 565), were employed in the analysis for all three articles. However, as Packer (2011) cautions, codes and themes do not simply emerge, but are "the product of interpretation" (p. 70). Thus, although I aimed to be true to the data, the process of interpretation implies a level of abstraction, and I generally prefer using the term 'identified' over 'emerged'.

Between phases two and three, relating to codes and themes respectively, another phase was included in which the codes were reviewed and revised and sorted into broader level categories (Saldaña, 2016). This was found to be a necessary step towards developing themes, as the inductive coding generated a multitude of codes. In some cases, these codes were clearly related, while not constituting a theme in their own right. In these cases, a category was created, encompassing two or more codes. In phase three,

the codes and categories were sorted into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A tentative thematic map was also developed in order to explore the relationship between the codes, categories, and themes. By necessity, the process of developing categories and themes moves the analysis further towards abstraction, as illustrated in Figure 7.
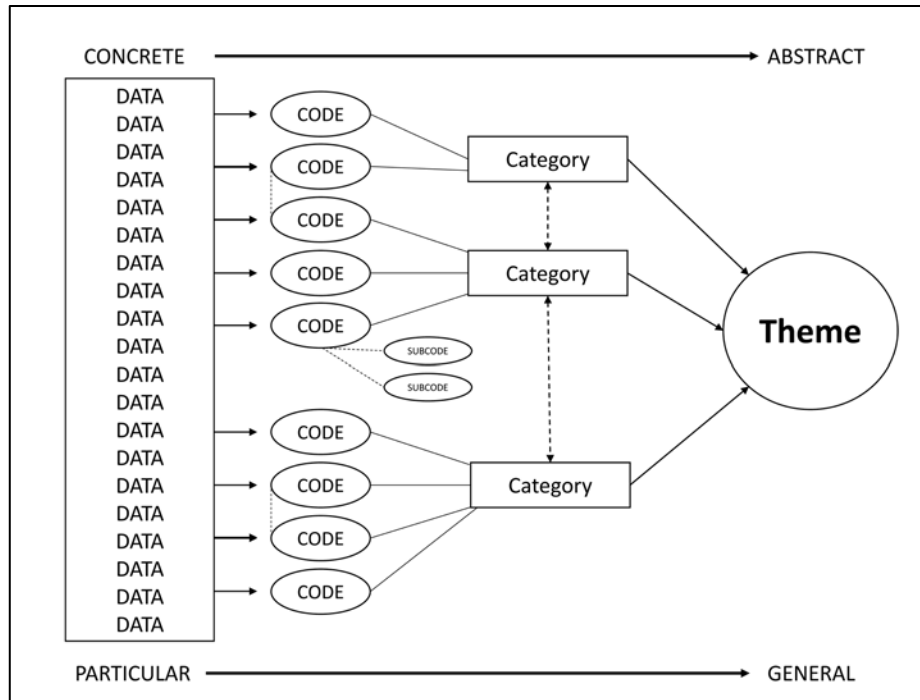
Figure 7. *Illustration of the process from codes to themes, adapted from Saldaña's (2016, p. 14) Streamlined Codes-to-Theory Model for Qualitative Inquiry*

Braun and Clarke (2006) divide phase four into two levels of reviewing and refining the candidate themes developed in the previous phase. Following this, the themes were first reviewed by reading through the extracts collated in each theme and considering "whether they appear to form a coherent pattern" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). The tentative thematic map was constantly revisited and revised during this level of refinement, and codes and categories were moved or removed when necessary in order to create coherence within the themes. At the second level of refinement, the entire data set was re-read with the aim of asserting whether the themes accurately reflected the data set as a whole, and to make sure that the coding was exhaustive. When the process of refinement reached the point of saturation (i.e. the refinements were no longer adding anything substantial), and the thematic map was developed to the point of satisfaction, phase five was initiated (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). In this phase, the themes were

given names that would most accurately capture their specific nature, and definitions were developed. The thematic map was also finalised in this phase.

The process as described so far remained similar across the three articles. However, some differences apply which will be outlined in the following. In Article I, phase four also included a deductive analysis of learner artifacts. That is, a number of codes generated from the focus group interview data was applied to learner artifacts from selected tasks in order to enable an exploration of the possible connections between the post-intervention findings and instruction. Furthermore, following phase 5, the explore functions in NVivo were utilised in order to search for patterns within and between the individual learners and/or groups (imported as cases in NVivo), and between the pre- and post-intervention interviews. In this process, counting played a central role. As argued by Sandelowski (2001), "[c]ounting is integral to the analysis process, especially to the recognition of patterns in data and deviations from those patterns" (p. 231). Where patterns, or deviations from these, were identified, these were explored qualitatively, and extracts were selected for further analysis (see section 4.3.2). In Article II, on the other hand, the thematic analysis was utilised in order to select a case for more in-depth interaction analysis. Finally, Article III utilised semiotic analysis in the coding process, which will be described in section 4.3.3.

4.3.2 Interaction analysis

In Articles I and II, which both included focus group interview data as the primary, or only, data source, interaction analysis was conducted subsequent to the thematic analysis outlined above. Interaction analysis is typically used for analysing both elicited and naturalistic spoken samples of language, and takes a discursive, interpretive approach which focuses on "both the linguistic and non- linguistic aspects of spoken language" (Nunan, 1992, p. 161). The main purpose of including elements of interaction analysis in the current study was to account for the influence of the social dynamics on what is being said, and how, during the focus group interviews. In Article I, this was done in a less elaborate way, and only on selected excerpts, whereas it was the main analytical approach in Article II. In either case, including a focus on the social interaction dynamics in the analysis of focus group data signifies a recognition of qualitative data as social enactments (Halkier, 2010). Following Marková et al. (2007), both the external and internal framing of the interviews were considered in the analysis. External framing here refers to the context surrounding the interviews, such as the time and place, instructions provided, etc. Internal framing refers to "how participants actually build their discourse from moment to moment in and through the ongoing interaction, once it is in progress and actually staged" (Marková et al., 2007, p. 73).

In Article I, where the interaction analysis was only applied to selected excerpts, the analytical tools drew heavily on the works of Goffman (1967/2003, 1971, 1986). This included the notion that in social interactions, people endeavour to sustain their performance and direct the impressions formed of them by others (Goffman, 1971), implying a multiple identity perspective, whereby people take up different roles, or performances, in different social interactions. Thus, how the learners positioned themselves in the interactions was considered, i.e., whether they spoke from a personal and subjective position, or whether they distanced themselves from their statements. It also included considering the role of face, i.e., the way in which people are concerned about how others perceive them, in social interaction, and how the learners might be concerned about maintaining not only their own face, but also respecting that of their peers, which could lead to an avoidance of confrontation (Goffman, 1967/2003). How the external and internal framing of the situation might influence what could or could not, should or should not, be said in a specific situation was also considered (Goffman, 1986).

The second article focused specifically on the dialogic process, which entailed a more in-depth and systematic analysis of the interactional patterns. In line with a position of social constructivism, the transcripts were no longer treated as "a series of juxtaposed individual contributions by autonomous speakers", but "as an intricate web of sense-making and sense-creating in which, in principle, each contribution is interdependent with previous and possible next contributions" (Marková et al., 2007, p. 133). To guide the analysis, I used the sensitising questions developed by Gillespie and Cornish (2014), and the accompanying clues for when to ask these questions (see Appendix 10). These questions can be applied as tools to address dialogue as "contextual, temporal and relational" (Gillespie & Cornish, 2014, p. 435).

As noted by Gillespie and Cornish (2014), the intention is not to apply all questions to every utterance, but rather to use the clues as prompts for investigating potentially interesting aspects of the utterances. Given the focus of the research question, *whether and how the learners developed multiple perspectives in their readings of images through dialogues facilitated by critical questions*, particular attention was given to the voices through which participants spoke. That is, whether they spoke from an I-position, using first person pronouns or possessives, used an impersonal voice, or gave voice to others by quoting them directly or indirectly (Aveling et al., 2015). Thus, by addressing "Who is doing the talking?" (Gillespie & Cornish, 2014, p. 442), I could investigate the types of perspectives the learners brought into the conversation, and how they positioned themselves relative to these perspectives. Additionally, the activity types were analysed to understand how the learners oriented to the situation, e.g., as a debate, a classroom-like situation or a conversation between friends (Marková et al.,

2007). This was recognised through, for example, perspective management, hedging/hesitation, rephrasing and audience resistance, indicating a focus on "What is the speaker doing", "Who is being addressed?" and "What are the responses?" (Gillespie & Cornish, 2014, pp. 440, 445). These clues were also used to explore the types of talk the learners were engaged in (Wegerif & Mercer, 1997). I also paid particular attention to changes in the situation or type of interaction, asking "What future is constituted?" and "What responses are enabled or constrained?" (Gillespie & Cornish, 2014, pp. 444, 445), thus addressing how the learners' contributions enabled or disabled further exploration of perspectives. This was also used to critically evaluate my own contributions as a researcher/facilitator in the interviews, focusing particularly on the power imbalance between the researcher/adult and learner/minor (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and the particular sensitivity the learners might have had to nuances in my questions/prompts as a consequence of this.

4.3.3   Semiotic analysis

As stated previously, semiotic analysis was used in Article III as part of the thematic analysis. That is, the learners' drawings were analysed using semiotic analysis which allowed me to code the drawings similarly to the verbal data in Nvivo. To do this, I utilised Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design, which describes "the way in which depicted elements […] combine in visual 'statements'" (p. 1). Building on social semiotics, the idea behind the framework is that in order to communicate, semiotic resources have to be produced and interpreted similarly within social contexts. Because of this, it is possible to describe the 'value' or 'possible meanings' of semiotic resources, within a social context. For example, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that when an image or a multimodal text utilises the horizontal axis by placing some elements on the left, and some on the right, the elements on the left are presented as something which is 'Given', or commonsensical. The elements placed on the right, on the other hand, will be presented as 'New', or contestable. This closely correlates to how sentences are constructed in English, and many other languages, but also the reading-pattern from left to right. Other languages, such as Arabic, utilises a right to left reading pattern, and it is thus likely that they will interpret visual images differently. This grammar is thus tightly bound to the Western context. Furthermore, by describing the 'possible meanings' or 'values' of semiotic resources, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) are, in a sense, participating in reshaping the semiotic landscape. That is, by developing a descriptive grammar, they are also partly contributing to prescribing how the semiotic landscape should be understood.

Despite the political nature of such a grammar, which they themselves recognise, the framework provides several useful tools which can be employed in visual analysis. In

Article III, which addressed the ways in which the learners *change the meaning(s) of an advertisement when engaging in a redesign task after explicit critical visual literacy instruction*, the visual grammar was utilised as a tool analyse the ways in which the learners changed the meaning through the use of visual structures. Particular attention was given to how they either changed or maintained similar structures to the original advertisement, for example in their use of angles and eye contact, which were analytical tools introduced during the intervention (see section 4.1.3), but also the potential meanings of elements such as salience, which attends to how the relative size, contrasts, etc. contributes to guiding the attention of the reader towards particular elements in the image over others. Through analysing both the original advertisement, and the learners' redesigned versions, the visual grammar allowed me to investigate further what types of meanings the learners engaged with in the redesign process. By analysing these together with, and interpreting them in relation to, the learners' deconstructions and individually written reflections, the analysis was triangulated and thus provided a more multifaceted and comprehensive account of the learners' redesigns.

4.4   Quality criteria

The quality of research is often judged based on the internal validity, i.e., "the extent to which the results of a study are a function of the factor that the researcher intends" (Mackey & Gass, 2012, p. 160) and the external validity, i.e., "the generalizability of our findings, or in other words, the extent to which the findings of the study are relevant not only to the research population, but also to the wider population" (Mackey & Gass, 2012, p. 172). One of the most recurrent and commonly accepted criticisms of the case study is related to external validity, or "low generalizability as a consequence of the fact that only one or two cases are studied" (Verschuren, 2003, p. 122). The supposition is that "since single members poorly represent whole populations, the case study is seen to be a poor basis for generalization" (Stake, 1978, p. 7). However, within social sciences, it is questionable whether generalisability can or should be an aim given that "social knowledge is inevitably tied to its context" (Munro, 2015, p. 60). Because of these issues, and others, several scholars are critical towards applying validity and reliability to assessing the quality of qualitative research (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

In the following, the strategies employed in order to ensure the quality of the current research are discussed in relation to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research: 1) credibility, i.e., the extent to which the results of a study can be said to provide a plausible representation and interpretation of the participants' views; 2) transferability, i.e., the extent to which the findings could be applicable to other, similar contexts; 3) dependability, i.e., whether the findings would

be reproduceable at another time; and 4) confirmability, i.e., the extent to which the data and interpretations would be verified by other researchers. Several strategies can be employed to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research, and these will often overlap, addressing more than one criterion. Table 7 provides an overview of the strategies employed in the current study in relation to the four criteria.

Table 7. *Strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness*

Criterion	Strategy employed
Credibility	Prolonged engagement
	Triangulation
	Data analysis
Transferability	Providing thick descriptions
	Sampling
	Methodological choices
	Data analysis
Dependability	Audit trail
Confirmability	Audit trail

One of the strategies employed in the current study was the use of triangulation, whereby the inclusion of multiple data sets helps broaden the understanding of the research problem (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 477). In the current study, data triangulation was addressed through the collection of data from the same learners individually (individually produced artifacts) and in groups (focus groups interviews, selection of artifacts), also including method triangulation by the multiple data collection methods. The use of data and method triangulation is a strategy to increase credibility, as it allows the researcher to provide a multifaceted and comprehensive account of the phenomenon of study. However, triangulation of data cannot in itself ensure credibility, and due to the article-length formats of the research reports, I have had to make difficult choices in relation to balancing rich descriptions and the amount of data included. Article II, for example, only utilises data from the focus group interviews. This choice allowed me to provide a more in-depth and multifaceted description of this particular data, but at the cost of including other data sources.

Another issue related to credibility is the extent to which my study can be said to accurately capture the learners' ideas as they were conveyed. The current study was concerned with meaning-making processes but did not attempt to capture these as they happened 'in the minds' of the individuals, but rather as they occurred in dialogue between them. I have attempted to be transparent in relation to this significant

difference, by accounting for the social context in which their ideas were developed in the analysis (see section 4.3.2), and by providing multiple interpretations and including longer excerpts from the interviews in the articles. Credibility was also strengthened by the audio-recordings, which allowed me to review them multiple times in order to identify not only exactly what was being said, but also how it was said.

Transferability is similar to the concept of generalisability; referring to how findings could be applicable to other, similar, contexts. However, unlike generalisability, "the responsibility of demonstrating transferability is believed to rest with the one who wishes to apply the results to different situations" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 475). Ruzzene (2012, p. 106) argues that external validity is in fact not a problem of representativeness, but of inference. The question then becomes how it is possible to infer that the results from the case study are transferable to other cases, to which Ruzzene suggests the concept of comparability. Rather than inferring generalisability based on the typicality of the case (in relation to a wider population), she suggests that comparability is granted through similarity between two contexts (Ruzzene, 2012, p. 110). This requires the case to be described in detail, with focus on all the possible factors that might have contributed to the results. Then, as "readers recognise essential similarities to cases of interest to them, they establish the basis for naturalistic generalizations" (Stake, 1978, p. 7). This approach to generalisability therefore leaves it up to the reader to infer whether and to what extent the results of the case study are applicable to their context of interest. In the current study, transferability has therefore been increased by providing thick descriptions of the context, which was also included in the analysis and interpretation of results, and the pedagogical approach and procedures employed in the intervention, within the limits of the article format.

Another strategy employed to increase transferability is related to the methodological choices made, and the sampling. This study was conducted in three intact classrooms working according to the national curriculum, which increases the transferability to other classroom contexts within Norway. Utilising focus group interviews as a major data collection method, although obviously an artificial setting, closely resembles regular group discussions, which are commonly employed in Norwegian classrooms. As such, the pedagogical implications drawn from the analysis, which included a focus on my own role in framing discussions etc., could be transferred to other classroom contexts.

Dependability relates to whether the results could be reproduced at another time and relies on systematic and methodical data collection and record keeping procedures. During the study, I kept detailed records of the classroom procedures and data collection process. Coding was performed systematically, and records were kept in

NVivo of the multiple rounds of analysis. This audit trail has been utilised in the three articles, and more elaborately so in the current thesis, and also addresses the issue of confirmability. However, given that the collected data was highly contextual, and that the learners bring their individual backgrounds into the discussions and creation of artifacts, a replication of the current study at another time is not likely to generate the exact same types of discussions and data.

Similar to dependability, confirmability relies on meticulous data recording and management (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In line with this, I've attempted to be transparent in the ways that the codes were developed, i.e., inductively or deductively, and how they were defined in the different articles. While having another researcher coding the entire data set could have improved the confirmability of the study, this was not possible for the current study given the large amount of data. However, other researchers were involved at different stages of the thematic analysis, confirming the consistency of coding in relation to a selection of the codes. In addition to the strategies described here, reflexivity was utilised in order to increase trustworthiness and address the relative lack of controllability and researcher-independence in case-study research (Verschuren, 2003), as described in the following.

4.5   *Researcher bias and reflexivity*

Through reflexivity, researchers consider "their position and influence during the study, and […] know how they have constructed and even sometimes imposed meanings on the research process" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 76). Reflexivity is important in all research, but perhaps particularly in qualitative research on social phenomena: "For we ourselves are human, and our beliefs about humankind are strongly held and are bound up with our feelings and our valuations" (Phillips, 2000, p. 174). Systematically reflecting on how one's own background influences interpretations, and being transparent about this, is therefore an important part of the qualitative research process. This was addressed in the introduction, where my personal background and philosophical stance were made explicit in relation to how they informed the multiple choices made when planning the study. However, researcher bias can also occur during the study. Miles and Huberman (2014) suggest that there are two possible sources of bias when researchers enter a field, namely 1) "[t]he effects of the researcher on the case", and 2) "[t]he effects of the case on the researcher" (p. 296). While engaging in a field over time can reduce the first type of bias, they argue, this will in effect increase the second type.

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) suggest that reflecting on the researchers' roles and responsibilities in the different phases of the study is important. In the current study, I

was an active participant in the field and had the role of both an 'insider' and an 'outsider'. Because of my previous experience as an English teacher, the research context was familiar to me, although the specific classroom context was new. My active engagement with the field would also influence the insider/outsider relationship, whereby I would become more of an insider throughout the study. This also meant that the learners became more familiar with me during the study. When researchers are familiar with the field they are researching, they need to be aware that their previous knowledge might lead them to miss important information, make false assumptions and wrongful interpretations of the data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This relates to the second type of bias, the case's effects on the researcher. However, the first type of bias is equally important. Although my presence in the field would have intentional changes on the classroom practices through the intervention, the relationship between the learners and me would also influence the types of responses elicited in the focus group interviews. The researcher needs to be aware that "participants will often craft their responses to appear amenable to the researcher and to protect their self-interests" (Miles & Huberman, 2014, p. 297).

The process of reflexivity was therefore consciously engaged in throughout the research project, from planning the study, through implementation, and finally during the data analysis and interpretation of results. For example, the focus group interview guide was developed to include open-ended questions, that is, questions which do not naturally lead to a particular answer (e.g., "Do you like this image?" vs. "What are your thoughts about this image?"), which significantly contributes to reducing researcher bias. Similarly, during the implementation of the interviews, I attempted to minimise researcher bias by remaining neutral; that is not providing positive or negative feedback. When applying thematic analysis, I worked in cycles, iterating the process, and ensuring that my codes, categories, and themes were representative of the data material (see section 4.3.1). In line with the exploratory approach taken, I also went back and forth between theory and the data during the analysis processes and utilised both inductive and deductive codes. Reflexivity was also employed by providing alternative interpretations of the data, and by continually making sure to account for my own involvement in the study as a teacher/researcher and how this might have influenced the results (see section 4.3.2), and by critically evaluating my own contributions (e.g., my impromptu questions in Article II).

4.6   Ethical considerations

According to the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committee (NESH), research ethics "refers to a wide variety of values, norms, and institutional arrangements that help constitute and regulate scientific activities" (NESH, 2016, p. 5). This research

project has been conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines outlined by NESH, and approval from The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) was granted before the data collection commenced (Appendix 11). To maintain the research participants' anonymity and confidentiality, their names have been replaced with pseudonyms or codes. All data was stored on an encrypted and password-protected network.

The concept of informed consent has been a cornerstone of research ethics, reflecting the principle that "[r]esearchers must respect the participants' autonomy, integrity, freedom and right of co-determination" (NESH, 2016, p. 13). Before approaching the direct participants in the current study, I sought informed consent and approval from the school's principal, who was contacted via mail and was provided with a document with information about the project (Appendix 12). This information document was provided to the teachers as well, who were also informed about the project orally. Both the principal and the teachers were given opportunities to ask questions.

The guidelines for research ethics in Norway state that informed consent "must be freely given, informed, and in an explicit form" (NESH, 2016, p. 15). Because the participants in the current study were over the age of 15, and because the research did not involve collecting sensitive information, parental consent was not necessary. However, due to the participants' relatively young age, particular considerations were made in relation to the content and form of the information, as well as the issue of coercion. In order for consent to be informed, participants should ideally receive "all relevant information concerning his or her participation in the project" (Alver & Oyen, 2007, p. 26). Following the general guidelines provided by NESH, the participants were provided information about the purpose of the research, who would receive access to the information, and what participating in the research would entail. Attention was also given to the language in which this information was conveyed, as information needs to be "adapted to the participants' cultural background and communicated in a language they understand" (NESH, 2016, p. 14). Efforts were therefore made to simplify the language used in the consent form (Appendix 1), while ensuring that the intent of the research was not distorted. Additionally, the information was provided to the participants orally by me, and they were invited to ask clarifying questions in plenary, or to approach me or one of the teachers involved in the project either directly or through email.

In relation to the issue of coercion, an important decision is how the participants will be asked to participate in the research, and who initiates this request. Many contextual elements might make potential subjects feel coerced to participate in research against their inclination, often related to a discrepancy in the power relationship between the

subjects and the person who requests their participation. In the context of the study in question, this is particularly sensitive, as "[c]hildren are often more willing to obey authority than adults, and they often feel that they cannot object" (NESH, 2016, pp. 20-21). When providing information about the research, I was therefore particularly careful to convey the information and request in a neutral manner. Additionally, it was stressed that the learners' choice to participate in the project or not would not in any way influence their relationship to the teachers or affect their grades in the subject. A further step taken to lower the risks of coercion was to include an option on the consent form to decline participation, and also to choose which parts of the project they wanted to participate in. This way, the form could be returned regardless of outcome, and thus make the learners' choices less visible to the class and the teachers. This anonymity was further supported by the fact that all the learners participated in the tasks during the intervention. The learners were also informed of their ability to execute their right to withdraw from the project at any point in time, without needing to provide any justifications. Although the learners were informed about this right both orally and in the consent form, Alederson (2005, p. 34) cautions that young research participants might be reluctant or afraid to refuse continuation once the project has started. In order to mitigate this risk, the learners were reminded of their right to withdraw at several points during the project.

So far, the discussion has revolved mainly around formal ethical decisions that are made prior to the actual execution of the research. However, as argued by Alver and Oyen (2007), "[n]either law nor guidelines – or common sense – can solve all of the moral problems of practical, day-to-day research work" (p. 20). Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest that microethics can provide a useful "discursive tool to articulate and validate the kinds of ethical issues that confront researchers on a day-to-day basis" (p. 273). They further suggest that reflexivity throughout the research project in regards to ethics is important, and that the researcher should be sensitive to "ethically important moments", both before and after they occur (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 276).

With all qualitative research, the nature of the research process is such that the outcomes cannot be predicted at the outset. The focus group interviews in the current project were not designed to elicit sensitive or personal information. However, due to the nature of the situation, "[i]nterviews can delve into areas unanticipated at the outset" (Allmark et al., 2009, p. 49). During the research process, some of these ethically important moments occurred during the focus group interviews, where learners shared personal and sensitive information and/or showed signs of being upset by the discussions. In the guidelines for research ethics, it is stated that "individuals have interests and integrity, which cannot be set aside in research in order to achieve greater understanding or to benefit society in other ways" (NESH, 2016, pp. 12-13). In the

interest of the research, it is important that the learners feel that they can be completely honest in the interviews, even if their opinions might hurt the feelings of the other participants. However, it is clear that a conflict between participants within the interview situation could also have repercussions for the learners outside of the interview. In these situations, I attempted to be sensitive to mood changes and potential tensions and tried to lead the discussion over to a different topic. I also followed up with these specific learners after the interviews in cooperation with the teachers. Information of personal and sensitive nature shared during the interviews was not included in the data analysis.

5 Discussion and conclusions

The overall aim of the current PhD study is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning-making processes EFL learners engage in when reading images before and after introducing CVL, and to explore these from the perspective of intercultural learning. This overarching aim is operationalised into three sub-questions, addressing the aim from three orientations: the individual, the dialogic process, and the products. Similarly, the three questions address different theoretical concepts, namely, stereotypes, perspectives, and analytical tools. These different orientations and theoretical lenses are explored in the three articles respectively. An overview of the research questions for each of the three articles can be seen in Table 8. This chapter presents a summary of the main results from each article and an overarching discussion of the findings, followed by conclusions along with their pedagogical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Table 8. *Research questions for each article*

Article	Research questions
I	1. What stereotypes, if any, can be identified in the group discussions before and after the intervention?
	2. Is the learners' awareness of and willingness to challenge visual stereotypes displayed in group discussions before and after the intervention, and if so, in which ways?
II	Do the learners develop multiple perspectives in their readings of images through dialogues facilitated by critical questions before and after the intervention, and if so, in what ways?
III	In what ways do Norwegian upper secondary EFL learners change the meaning(s) of an advertisement when engaging in a redesign task after explicit critical visual literacy instruction?

5.1 Summary of articles

5.1.1 Article I

In the first article (Brown, 2019), I explore the visual stereotypes the learners employed in group discussions about images, their awareness of stereotypes, and their willingness to challenge these. By comparing pre- and post-intervention group discussions surrounding Task 1 (Appendix 6), in addition to texts written in response to the

American Born Chinese, Montage, and *Redesign of advertisement* tasks (Appendix 2), the article investigates how these processes can be facilitated through CVL instruction. The article contributes to further explorations of critical literacy as an approach to "interrogate taken-for-granted social beliefs" (Lau et al., 2017, p. 120), and provides new insights into the specifics of visual stereotypes. Unlike other studies focusing on the interrogation of stereotypical representations through critical literacy (Huh & Suh, 2015), the study compares pre- and post-intervention readings, thus contributing to more specific insights into whether and how CVL scaffold these processes. By taking a general approach towards stereotypes through CVL, the article also differs from studies which focus on stereotypes related to specific groups (Forsman, 2010).

Transcripts of the group discussions were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), using both inductive and deductive codes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Following this, elements of interaction analysis (Goffman, 1971, 1986; Marková et al., 2007) were applied to the interview data in an attempt to account for the influence of the social context on the learners' responses. Two main themes were developed through the analysis, namely, *explicit displays of stereotyping* and *stereotype awareness*. Stereotyping was coded deductively in accordance with Kanahara (2006) (see section 3.2.2). The theme *stereotype awareness* included codes related to acknowledging and challenging specific stereotypes or stereotypes in general, as well as challenges of the task itself and the process of stereotyping implied by it. To further explore the link between the instruction and the results from the group discussions, learner artifacts produced during the intervention were analysed deductively, applying codes from the second theme.

A comparison between the results from the pre- and post-interviews shows that the learners engaged in the process of stereotyping both before and after the intervention. However, displays of stereotyping were less frequent in the post-interviews. Simultaneously, a qualitative analysis of the displayed stereotypes revealed that the learners, following instruction, were more inclined to distance themselves from the stereotype through invoking other voices (Marková et al., 2007), and also to acknowledge that they were stereotyping. In line with this, the findings showed a substantial increase in stereotype awareness following the instruction. However, while challenges towards the process of stereotyping implied by the task increased, the learners did not challenge the stereotypes presented by themselves or others to a larger degree after the intervention. A connection was found between displaying awareness of stereotypes in the pre-interviews and displaying awareness of the process of stereotyping in general, as well as challenging this process, in the post-intervention interviews. This connection indicates that breaking with the commonplace ways of viewing the world, operationalised here as stereotypes, is a demanding process.

The findings in this study indicate that it is possible to scaffold how learners approach visual stereotypes when reading images through CVL practices. By encouraging the learners to reflect on the stereotypes they bring to, and take from, visual texts, the process of stereotyping can be brought to consciousness (Newfield, 2011). Previous research in experimental psychology has shown that stereotyping is an automatic process, and that inhibiting these automatically activated stereotypes requires time and conscious effort (Devine, 1989). Thus, when learners are made aware of this process through CVL, they can approach the automatic stereotypes with more critical distance and have more agency in deciding whether or not they want to act on them.

5.1.2   Article II

The second article (Brown, forthcoming) takes a more explicit social constructivist perspective and explores whether and how the learners develop multiple perspectives through facilitated dialogue about images. Building on previous research that has pointed to the importance of dialogue in relation to developing multiple perspectives through critical literacy practices without analysing this further (Kuo, 2014; Myers & Ebefors, 2010), and on research which has focused more on the teachers' role in this regard (Kearney, 2012), the article provides an in-depth analysis of dialogues facilitated by critical questions with a focus on learner contributions. Aiming to explore the ways in which the dialogue aids in the development of multiple perspectives, the article contributes to building knowledge in an otherwise under-researched area, while also contributing to expanding the pool of research investigating the "micro-processes" of critical approaches (Vossoughi & Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 143).

In order to investigate these processes in depth, a case group was selected on the basis of an initial thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The case was chosen based on coding density (i.e., all the codes were represented, and their frequency was high), thus providing a rich opportunity to investigate the research aim. Transcripts from Tasks 4 and 5 in the focus group interviews (Appendix 6) conducted with the case group were then analysed using interaction analysis (Marková et al., 2007), focusing on how the learners developed different perspectives throughout dialogue, also taking into account how the context shaped and influenced the learners' contributions. From this analysis, two main ways of developing multiple perspectives through dialogues were identified in the pre-intervention dialogues: *developing multiple perspectives through expansion* and *developing multiple perspectives through arguments and counterarguments*. In the post-intervention dialogues, another way was identified in addition to these, namely *developing multiple perspectives through taking a critical stance*.

The findings show that even without any previous CVL instruction, the learners were able to develop multiple perspectives through the facilitated dialogues, either through expanding on each other's contributions, or through providing arguments and counterarguments. The critical and authentic questions provided in the tasks, as well as the context of the interviews, whereby the learners were encouraged to exchange ideas freely and with only minor interventions by the interviewer, seem to have contributed to this exploration of perspectives. Evidence of the effect of less authentic questions is provided, demonstrating how these might be interpreted by the learners as attempts to guide them towards a particular viewpoint, thus inhibiting the co-construction process. While these results are promising for short-term engagement with critical approaches to images, they also showed that through gaining familiarity with CVL practices, the learners displayed agency in taking up a critical stance (Lewison et al., 2015). Extracts are presented to demonstrate how, in the post-intervention dialogues, the learners engaged with the dimensions of CVL practices with less, or no, prompting, and also developed the perspectives in more depth and more critically. Thus, this article shows how the dialogues were instrumental in enabling the learners to co-construct multiple perspectives; additionally, it demonstrates that through socialisation into the process of CVL practices, the learners engaged critically with images more independently and thus displayed a higher level of agency in their meaning-making processes.

5.1.3   Article III

In the third article (Brown, accepted with minor revisions), I focus on the final products created by the learners during the intervention. The aim of this article was to investigate what the intervention enabled the learners to do with visual texts, with a particular focus on redesign. Redesign is an interesting process to explore, since it incorporates all the four dimensions of CVL practices (Lewison et al., 2002). Despite this, very little research has been conducted on redesign, particularly in ELT settings. The research that has been conducted has either focused on verbal texts (Hayik, 2015b; Lee, 2020), or the creation of counter-narratives (Ajayi, 2012, 2015; Huang, 2015a). This article expands on the latter studies by providing knowledge about the redesign process, as embedded in a wider CVL framework. With its larger sample of learner artifacts, its focus on advertisements as everyday texts, and through being situated in the upper secondary EFL classroom, the study provides systematic and novel insights into how EFL learners can interpret and change texts from other cultural contexts following CVL instruction, a necessary ability in an increasingly multimodal and globalised world.

Data from the *Redesign of advertisement* (Appendix 2) task is presented in this article. While this data was also used in Article I, the current article analyses this data in much more depth, also applying other analytical approaches. Through thematic (Braun &

Clarke, 2006) and visual semiotic analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), group annotations, individually drawn redesigns, and individually written reflections are synthesised into four main themes: *engaging with power*, *engaging with identity*, *engaging with diversity*, and *engaging with symbolism*. During the redesign task, the learners engaged with one or several of these themes in their deconstructions, redesigns, and reflections.

Through engaging with these themes, and using knowledge they had gained through instruction, the learners were able to identify underlying ideologies in the original advertisement, problematise these, and address the problematic areas in their redesigns. The learners used knowledge they gained about social issues in specific contexts and applied this in their interpretations of a particular advertisement from those contexts, demonstrating an awareness of how production and reading of visual texts are situated in specific cultural contexts. Furthermore, in their deconstructions the learners demonstrated emerging awareness of how semiotic resources construct meaning by utilising the analytical tools introduced during the intervention. Similarly, they displayed awareness of how meaning can be created through employing different semiotic resources in their redesigns. However, the findings also showed that the learners were not always successful in conveying the meanings they intended, possibly due to lack of explicit instruction on some visual grammar elements. Additionally, the learners' texts showed few signs of critical reflection of their own personal positions.

5.2   Discussion

The main aim of the current thesis was operationalised into the following overarching research question:

> *What characterises the process of Norwegian upper secondary learners' readings of images before and after introducing CVL from the perspective of intercultural learning in the EFL classroom?*

A meta-analysis of the results from the three articles included in the present thesis has generated three overarching themes: *Learners as active co-constructors of meaning*; *Awareness as a foundation for agency*; and *Developing symbolic competence: A complex process*. In the following, the three overarching themes will be presented and discussed in relation to the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 in order to address the main research question.

5.2.1   Learners as active co-constructors of meaning

Co-construction of meaning was identified as a prominent overarching theme in the findings across the three articles. From a social constructivist view, knowledge is not transferred from one individual to another, nor is it constructed in the mind of the individual alone, rather, it is co-constructed in social interactions. However, very little research on critical literacy has focused specifically on this co-construction process, particularly between peers, focusing instead on the outcomes, most often on an individual level (see section 2.3). In the following, I will draw on theories from social semiotics, social constructivism, as well as Serafini's (2012) four resources model in order to discuss the kinds of co-construction identified in the data material, and how they relate to the kinds of intercultural learning the learners engaged with.

Firstly, similar to other studies (Ajayi, 2012; Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Luk & Hui, 2017; Takaya, 2016), the findings from the current study showed that the learners co-constructed knowledge *with* the visual texts; that is, they brought their own individual, social and/or cultural resources into the meaning-making process by acting in the role of interpreters (Serafini, 2012). In Article II, for example, the learners are found to bring in analogies and previous experiences in order to make sense of the images/situations. Similarly, in Article III, the learners bring in semiotic resources in their redesigns which are either acquired through the intervention (e.g., use of angles), or elsewhere (e.g., comic-based semiotic resources). The learners also more or less explicitly brought in their beliefs about cultural groups, as explored through the concept of stereotypes (Article I). For example, when some learners see portraits of dark-skinned teenagers and read into this that they are poor, and/or from Africa, this is not based on information present in the photograph itself, but rather the readers' individual, social and/or cultural experiences which have led them to associate a certain look with a certain (financial or social) status, place of origin etc. In social semiotic terms, the learners are here bringing in their own semiotic resources (i.e., stereotypes) to the image, and thus creating a new semiotic entity which is based on their interests and attention (i.e., emphasising skin colour) (Kress, 2010). Through being based on stereotypes, these interpretations were often indicative of an essentialist and reductionist view of cultures, and these stereotypes often remained unchallenged prior to instruction.

However, while sometimes overlapping, these interpretations based on stereotypes were not unanimous. For example, some thought the teenagers in question were poor and thus could not afford education, whereas others created semiotic entities which spoke of a willingness to work hard to overcome poverty (Article I). Similar to Kiss and Weninger (2017), the findings from across the three articles showed a diversity of interpretations within the group of learners based on the kinds of resources they brought into the meaning-making process and what they chose to focus on as designers

96

(Serafini, 2012). Furthermore, each participant could speak through different voices, drawing on multiple semiotic resources and discourses (Article II). Thus, as a group they had access to a wide range of interpretations, which could be harnessed to provide a more complex and multiperspectival view on the image or issue in focus, indicative of intercultural learning (Dervin, 2015; Kramsch, 2011). Article II demonstrated how the dialogue, guided by critical questions, was instrumental in bringing these different interpretations together in a co-constructed meaning-making process, where the learners expanded on and challenged each other's perspectives, providing a more complex view which could later be internalised (Swain & Watanabe, 2012). By acknowledging all interpretations as equally valuable (Freire, 1970/1993), it is likely that the learners can co-construct a more nuanced view on the issue-in-focus than if the teacher is trying to guide the learners towards a particular position or deconstruction, as shown in Article II. These findings thus support previous research which has pointed to the potentials of expanding perspectives when teachers allow learners to explore images through asking authentic questions (Heggernes, 2019), as well as research showing how structured questions, such as the critical questions included in the focus group interviews (Appendix 6), can facilitate an in-depth exploration of images (Lindner & Garcia, 2014).

In the post-intervention interviews, this co-construction process was further aided by the learners to a larger degree displaying awareness of the stereotypes they brought to the images and challenging the process of stereotyping (Article I), and through taking a critical stance (Lewison et al., 2015) (Article II). While they still interpreted the images based on their available resources, they used the role as interrogator (Serafini, 2012) to challenge or further develop these. Thus, like the participants in Huh and Suh's (2015) study, engaging in critical literacy practices seemed to encourage the learners to challenge racial and gender stereotypes. In the current study, the challenged stereotypes were largely brought into the meaning-making process by the learners themselves, as opposed to being identified in a text, thus showing an expanded potential of critical literacy practices to engage learners in negotiating stereotypes. Furthermore, unlike the learners in Forsman's (2010) study, in which instruction focused mainly on disrupting stereotypes related to specific cultural groups, the learners in this study reflected on the process of stereotyping in general, as opposed to modifying a selection of stereotypes related to specific cultural groups, and went a step further to challenge the process of stereotyping itself.

Furthermore, the findings show that, after instruction, the learners' role as navigators (Serafini, 2012) was further developed, displaying a focus on structure in addition to content, which allowed them to navigate focus towards other aspects of the image (Articles II and III). They also brought in knowledge from the English language course

(Appendix 3) as an additional resource in the co-construction process (Articles II and III). Thus, through CVL instruction, which was also integrated into regular instruction, the learners gained access to an expanded repertoire of semiotic resources which allowed them to progress further towards complexity (Dervin, 2015), and, through co-constructive dialogue, explore the cultural texts from multiple and often contradictory perspectives. Furthermore, through taking a critical stance and acting in the role as interpreters, the learners were engaging with these multiple perspectives, including their own, in more nuanced and multifaceted ways. As such, they were not just trying to understand and accept a different worldview, but rather navigating between different perspectives and questioning the effects of these, including their own.

5.2.2 Awareness as a foundation for agency

The idea of using literacy as a tool for empowering agency has been at the core of critical approaches to literacy since Freire's (1970/1993) critical pedagogy. In the current study, agency has been operationalised as the capacity to engage critically with images and make informed choices based on this engagement. More generally, agency is seen as dependent on, and closely related to, the cultural and social practices in which learners participate. Seeing the learners as social agents, who are, at least in principle, able to influence the world around them, the current study was therefore interested in the ways in which this could be enabled through CVL instruction; in other words, whether and how CVL can help the learners "shape the very context in which the language is learned and used" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664).

Similar to Luk and Hui (2017), the current study found that prior to instruction, the learners were not passive consumers of visual media. Rather, as co-constructors of meaning, they brought their own personal, social, and cultural meanings to the reading process, thus creating unique semiotic entities with each reading. However, this type of co-construction cannot always be qualified as agentive. In the current study, the learners displayed agency by, among other things, challenging or distancing themselves from their visual stereotypes (Article I), independently taking a critical stance (Lewison et al., 2015) in their dialogues about images (Article II), and critiquing and redesigning a visual text (Article III). As argued by the New London Group (1996), redesign "is the unique product of human agency: a transformed meaning" (p. 76). Thus, in the process of redesigning the advertisement, the learners displayed agency in creating alternative worldviews. Across the three articles, the findings indicated the importance of learners utilising awareness in order to engage agentively with the visual texts.

Firstly, the learners utilised awareness of themselves and their own meaning-making processes, for example to challenge the process of stereotyping (Article I), and to

entertain the idea that other perspectives could be explored (Article II). They displayed this awareness by for example commenting explicitly on their use of stereotypes (Article I), or by alternating between positioning themselves as speaking from an I-position and from other positions (Article II). These displays were found to be more frequent in post-intervention interviews, suggesting an increased awareness through instruction. Through focusing on disrupting commonplace ways of viewing the world (Lewison et al., 2002), which was the focus of the first phase of the intervention in the current study, this type of self-awareness is encouraged. In line with findings from other studies, therefore, the learners appeared to become "more socially conscious about the importance to (self-) interrogate taken-for-granted social beliefs" (Lau, et al., p. 120), and increased awareness of themselves in the process (Yol & Yoon, 2020).

The learners also utilised awareness of other possible ways of viewing the world to engage agentively in the meaning-making processes. As argued by Vasquez et al. (2013), understanding and engaging with the multitude of perspectives that can be explored is what advances thinking. This is supported by Huh and Suh (2015), who found that the participants in their study often struggled to suggest alternative worldviews, and that this inhibited them from advancing further in their critical reading. Seeing the world and making choices based solely on one's own perspective is not agentive from a social constructivist perspective, as one's own perspective will be influenced by and reflect the social and cultural practices which one participates (Ratner, 2000). Throughout the instructional period, the learners gained knowledge about social and cultural issues, which they were shown to bring into their co-constructive process (Article III). Thus, the combination of acquiring knowledge, and engaging in critical literacy practices which focus on exploring multiple perspectives (Lewison et al., 2002) allowed the learners to use this awareness of others to take informed choices. That is, not just accept their own perspective, and not just accept the other's, but use the multiple perspectives to create a 'thirdness', or rather a 'multiplicitiveness'.

Thirdly, the learners used semiotic awareness; that is, awareness of how semiotic resources can be harnessed to advocate a particular view of the world. As argued in section 3.2.2, images, as social and cultural meaning-making resources, have agency and can influence how we perceive the world, realised, for example, as visual stereotypes. Thus, understanding the ways in which a text works to create a certain position is a prerequisite for making informed choices about whether or not to accept that positioning. The learners were found to use this awareness to be agentive in their readings of images, both in terms of deconstructing the positions on offer and the effects of these, and in suggesting and/or creating alternatives (Articles II and III). In line with Huang (2015a) and Lau (2020) therefore, their increased semiotic awareness allowed

99

them to both deconstruct and produce multimodal texts with agency. Additionally, similar to Kearney (2012), the learners adopted a critical stance modelled through instruction, which allowed them to do this more independently. In this process, they used the analytical tools introduced in Phase 2 of the intervention, which enabled them to justify their interpretations, and ground these justifications in specific design structures. This is unlike findings from other studies in which no instruction was provided (Luk & Hui, 2017), which suggests the importance of providing analytical resources, also supported by previous research (Ajayi, 2012, 2015; Huang, 2015a; Lau, 2020).

To summarise, the current study found that the learners were agentive readers of images, and that this agency increased after CVL instruction. This supports findings from previous research which has shown how ELLs can critique dominant ideologies at play in various visual texts and create counter-narratives to challenge these through engaging in critical literacy practices (Ajayi, 2012, 2015; Huang, 2015b). The current study found that the leaners utilised three types of awareness when engaging agentively in the meaning-making process: self-awareness, other-awareness, and semiotic awareness – all of which were found to be heightened through the intervention. This combination was acquired, in part, due to the integrated nature of the intervention, whereby the CVL tasks were closely connected to the topics the learners were working with in the English language course (Appendix 3). Consequently, the findings provide further support for the argument that the EFL classroom provides a particularly useful context for engaging with and developing the learners' agency in the types of meaning-making processes which are so important in contemporary society.

5.2.3   Developing symbolic competence: A complex process

Based on the understanding of symbolic competence outlined in Chapter 3, the current study found that the learners did develop symbolic competence. Evidence of symbolic competence could be identified for example in the learners' focus on how forms produce meanings, and how different forms could be utilised to produce different meanings (Articles II and III), how symbolic forms "can be used to support conflicting and historically contingent truths" (Kramsch, 2006b, p. 251) (Article II), producing complexity and "reframing ways of seeing familiar events" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201) (Articles I, II and III), and "creating alternative realities and refram[ing] the balance of symbolic power" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 666) (Article III). As discussed in the previous two subsections, these displays were found to be closely connected to and reliant on co-construction processes and the learners using their increased awareness. However, a third overarching theme identified across the three articles was the complexity and challenges of these processes.

In relation to reframing ways of seeing familiar events, the learners demonstrated symbolic competence when they displayed an understanding of how social and cultural meaning-making experiences made them see certain things in certain ways, e.g., related to visual stereotypes (Article I) or multiple perspectives (Article II). I discussed above how working with disrupting commonplace ways of viewing the world (Lewison et al., 2002) and thus becoming more aware of this process allowed the learners to challenge the process of stereotyping. However, the findings also pointed to how, despite awareness, the learners were not always successful in this, illustrated by quotes such as "I don't want to be stereotypical, but…" (Article I), and by how the learners brought their personal semiotic resources into the redesigns, seemingly unintentionally (Article III). These findings demonstrate the challenges inherent in changing the 'ways of seeing' which one has been socialised into. As Berger (1972) points out, "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak" (p. 7). From a social semiotic perspective, the 'ways of seeing', i.e., the meaning-making process, will have been influenced by the semiotic resources one is exposed to, and the types of literacy practices one experiences through social life, school life, etc. The learners in this study thus had at least 15 years of experience of seeing, and the complex interconnectedness between text, culture, and reading was thus not easy to disrupt over a period of 16 weeks. The necessity of time was also indicated by the fact that learners who displayed awareness of stereotyping prior to instruction, went further towards challenging the process in general in the post-instruction interviews (Article I). Furthermore, along with other studies (e.g., Huang, 2015b; Lau, 2020; Lau et al., 2017), the current study suggests the importance of not just enacting objective, academic deconstructions, but also engaging actively in reflexivity (Article III).

The learners also demonstrated symbolic competence when they interrogated the socio-political contexts of the texts, and how symbolic forms could be used to privilege some forms of truths over others (Articles II and III). As shown in Article II, the learners were partly able to do this in the pre-intervention interviews, by drawing on, for example, previous experiences and following critical questions. In the post interviews, the learners were shown to take a critical stance more independently, and also utilising awareness they had gained through the course in order to further develop complexity. As in Walsh (2009), therefore, instruction appeared to provide "the critical analytic tools with which to assess the sociocultural and political consequences" of texts (p. 134). It was suggested that the learners had been socialised into a way of thinking (McConachy, 2018) through engaging in CVL practices, which meant that they took a critical stance more independently, e.g., interrogating whose interests are served by the positioning of the text and thus focusing on the socio-political (Article II). As suggested by Kramsch (2011), asking these types of questions is characteristic of "an interculturally competent speaker" (p. 360). However, navigating multiple socio-

101

political contexts, as is required in an EFL setting, is complex and the learners were shown to have more resources to draw on when talking about more local issues, as they were more familiar with the context and discourses surrounding these (Article II), while simultaneously sometimes perhaps being 'blind' to their personal perspectives (Article III). Engaging with social and cultural structures which might be completely unfamiliar can be challenging, particularly if learners are unaware of their own 'familiarities', for example, perceptions of gender and egalitarianism, as was suggested in Article III.

Through the analysis of the learners' redesigned advertisements, Article III showed how the learners were able to create alternative realities, in which symbolic power was redistributed (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008), which is ultimately the aim of both symbolic competence and CVL. By deconstructing the perspectives on offer in the original text, and critically evaluating them (Articles II and III), the learners were able to take informed action (Lewison et al., 2002). As argued by Janks (2014), one "has to be able to read the content, form, and interests of the text, however unconsciously, in order to be able to redesign it" (p. 35). This requires a focus on form as meaning (Kramsch, 2006b), which was facilitated in the current study through introducing visual grammar elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) as analytical tools in the second phase of the intervention. However, the findings also disclosed some discrepancies between the learners' statements of what they wanted to convey, and the possible messages that were conveyed through their redesigns (Article III). Due to lack of explicit instruction of certain visual grammar elements, the learners may not have noticed these in the same way, and therefore did not address them. Although some caution should be exercised when making conclusions based on the visual grammar due to its contextual and political nature (see section 4.3.3), this does suggest a) that Overt Instruction (New London Group, 1996) is important, as indicated by numerous other studies (e.g., Callow, 2006; Kearney, 2012; Walsh, 2009); but also b) that such instruction needs to be "continued and sustained" over a significant amount of time (Lau, 2020, p. 56). The visual grammar and the learning resulting from it is too complex and extensive to cover in its entirety within the frame of an intervention such as this, particularly given that this is only one of many important contributions towards agency and symbolic competence, as discussed in these last few sections.

5.3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have outlined the findings from the three articles included in the current PhD thesis, and discussed how these findings contribute to *characterising the process of Norwegian upper secondary learners' reading of images from other cultural contexts before and after the introduction of CVL practices*. Three overarching themes were identified, which contribute to different characterisations of this process.

Drawing on the discussion in this chapter, the process of Norwegian upper secondary learners' reading of images from other cultural contexts can be interpreted as a *co-construction process*, in which the learners utilised a range of resources in order to create new meanings in dialogue with themselves, and with others. The learners were found to draw on each other's experiences and ideas, and, together, co-create new and more nuanced knowledge about social and cultural issues. In this process, the learners also utilised *awareness as a foundation for agency*. That is, they utilised their awareness about their own meaning-making processes, their awareness of how others might perceive things differently, and their awareness of how the semiotic resources in themselves carry and create social and cultural meanings, in order to take more control of the meaning-making process and engage with the images in critical and informed ways. By increasing this awareness throughout the intervention, the learners *developed symbolic competence*. They started challenging their own meaning-making processes, understanding meaning-making processes as culturally and socially mediated, and investigating the different contexts in which meaning-making takes place. However, reflecting the complexity of meaning-making processes, the process of developing symbolic competence was also found to be *complex and challenging*.

The current thesis has thus offered empirical findings which contribute to shedding light on an under-researched area, namely, how learners engage in meaning-making processes surrounding visuals in EFL settings. Furthermore, it has provided empirical evidence which points to the potentials of utilising critical visual literacy in EFL settings to encourage the development of increased semiotic control and agency, i.e., symbolic competence. By marrying the two concepts – critical visual literacy and symbolic competence – the study has further contributed to a theoretical investigation of the link between the two, building on Kearney's (2012) pioneering work in this area.

5.3.1   Pedagogical implications

Adolescents have much experience reading visual texts from engaging in the expanding semiotic landscapes inherent in today's society, and the learners in the current study were by no means passively receiving static information, as some textbook studies seem to suggest. Simultaneously, the study demonstrated a tremendous potential for increasing the learners' agency in their meaning-making processes through engaging in CVL. While I am by no means suggesting that the EFL classroom is the only place in which such practices should and can be engaged with, the EFL classroom, with its inherent focus on texts from other cultural contexts, has a particular potential for engagement with texts and contexts outside of the local. This type of engagement is critical for learners who are daily participating in a world where national cultural boundaries are increasingly blurred, and where texts are consumed from a multitude of

different cultural contexts through the Internet, social media, etc. This strongly suggests that the EFL classroom needs to go beyond treating images "as *support* for learning written and oral English language and culture" (Jakobsen & Tønnessen, 2018, p. 50), and start treating them as important meaning-making resources.

By engaging in CVL, the learners in the current study treated images as meaning-making resources from which they co-constructed nuanced and complex knowledge about cultural and social issues. Given the growing use of English as a *lingua franca*, and the increased recognition of the complexity and fluidity of cultures, it is no longer sufficient to provide information about people's 'way of life' in selected target cultures in order to prepare learners for their future lives, as is also reflected in the changing conceptualisations of culture in the Norwegian English subject curriculum. Through engaging with culture as complex and multifaceted, the current study provides suggestions for how to address this in the EFL classroom in line with the recent curricular developments.

In addition to the more general call for symbolic competence suggested by the current study, the findings also point to some more specific implications for teachers who wish to engage in these types of literacy practices. Firstly, the findings strongly suggest the importance of dialogue in the learners' co-construction of complexity. In line with other research, the current study indicates how teachers need to engage in the role as *facilitators*, i.e., creating a safe environment, displaying interest in the learners' contribution to the knowledge development by asking authentic questions, as opposed to acting as *instructors*, i.e., attempting to lead the learners to construct a certain type of knowledge. As argued by McConachy (2018), teachers need "to be cautious so that they do not impose their own ideologies onto the students" and avoid "guiding them towards the ideological position [they] would like them to take" (p. 86). Secondly, due to the complexity of changing 'ways of seeing', encouraging the development of a critical stance is likely to require consistent and maintained focus over time and can also be supported through integration with other kinds of work in the EFL classroom. Finally, the findings point to how the leaners utilised awareness of self, others, *and* semiotic resources in order to engage agentively with the images. Teachers who wish to encourage such agency, therefore, should consider focusing on facilitating increased awareness within all three areas.

5.3.2 Limitations and personal reflections

This study is a small-scale investigation of how three EFL classes, invited to participate through convenience sampling, engaged in meaning-making processes surrounding visual texts. The findings draw on interview data and on learner artifacts collected

throughout the study, which was based around an intervention initiated and designed by me. I was a participant observer during the project, which also included providing instructions and facilitation during lessons. Given this, the empirical knowledge constructed through this research is closely connected to the context and the specific groups of learners, where my presence influenced the situation, and *vice versa*, in predictable and unpredictable ways (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

The study took an exploratory approach to investigate the main research aim, an approach which is supported by the scarcity of research in this area. This means that the specific research questions were developed and changed throughout the project, based on inductive analyses of the data material. If I were to conduct the study again, I would be likely to have made some changes to the design of the intervention and interview tasks. For example, the learners engaged in two redesigns tasks, *Redesign of photomontage* and *Redesign of advertisement* (Appendix 2), during the intervention. While setting up the *Redesign of photomontage* task, I did not have in mind that I would later investigate the redesign process and did not collect data from this task. As such, Article III was based solely on data from the *Redesign of advertisement* task, and a potentially interesting comparative aspect was lost. However, as argued by Pearce (2015): "At times we aim to explore and discover, and at other times we aim to test and confirm." (p. 46). Given the novelty of the study, I aimed to 'explore and discover', and I hope that I and others will use the knowledge developed here to 'test and confirm' at a later stage.

This study is based in a social constructivist tradition, which has influenced the research design, e.g., in the choice of focus group interviews. It is important to acknowledge that through these choices, the study investigated meaning making processes as *social* processes, and as such, the findings do not necessarily reflect the types of meaning making processes learners engage with when encountering an image when alone. Simultaneously, the current study is primarily interested in meaning-making processes as they are constructed, or can be constructed, in classroom settings. From this view, the findings can be said to more closely relate to the types of processes that can occur in Norwegian classrooms, where discussion tasks are common. Furthermore, from my viewpoint, meaning-making processes cannot be observed neutrally and objectively. Even in the case of individually written responses, as in, for example, Kiss and Weninger's (2017) study, these are written *for someone* and *for something*, i.e., for research purposes.

Other limitations are due to restrictions of time and space. Temporally, the current study investigated a case over a limited amount of time, 16 weeks, and no delayed interviews were held in order to see whether the changes identified in the meaning-making

processes remained over time. Additionally, no data was collected which might shed light on whether the learners brought these changes into their everyday interactions with visual texts. Based on initial inductive analyses of the data material, I chose three angles from which to investigate the main research aim. However, these three angles by no means exhausts the potentials of the data material, and other angles could have been taken. Thus, although I have attempted to account for the complexity of meaning-making processes as they develop through engaging with CVL by providing in-depth analyses, the level of complexity and richness of descriptions is, by default, limited by space in an article-based thesis.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that through this four-year journey, my perceptions of culture and intercultural learning have expanded and developed. At the start of the project, I (unknowingly) placed myself within the neo-essentialist traditions of intercultural competence. Thus, although I viewed cultures as dynamic and fluid, I had a rather naïve outlook on how intercultural learning could be, and should be, understood and addressed in the EFL classroom. As I became more familiar with the critical approaches to intercultural learning, through reading the works of scholars such as Prof. Claire Kramsch and Prof. Fred Dervin, I came to view the theoretical connections between CVL and intercultural learning as more complex and multifaceted. In particular, this development is due to Prof. Fred Dervin, who kindly agreed to critique my work at the halfway point, and whose discussions and suggestions very much influenced the direction of the remaining two articles. In light of this development, Article I, which was published prior to this, addresses a perhaps too narrow focus on stereotypes, which, although important, could have been expanded to investigate a more fluid, and thus less stringent, concept such as, for example imaginaries.

5.3.3 Recommendations for future research

Based on the limitations related to the study design and scope of investigation, as well as findings pointing to new areas of interest, a number of possibilities for further research can be suggested from the current study.

First of all, given the complexity of the issues in focus and the case-study design of the current study, more classroom-based research is needed in order to increase our understandings of meaning-making processes as they develop in relation to learners interacting with visual and multimodal texts in the EFL classroom. In particular, I would like to suggest that future research should consider investigating the possibilities of cross-curricular approaches, whereby learners can engage in critical literacy practices within a range of contexts, and the possibilities this might afford for the

learners' critical engagements and intercultural learning. As was shown in the current study, the learners drew on their knowledge from the English language course in their meaning-making processes in order to develop more complex and multifaceted meanings. However, given the restricted time provided for the English subject, cross-curricular approaches might have the potential for expanding meaning-making resources even further, also indicated by previous research (Lau, 2020; Lau et al., 2017).

I would also like to extend the call for research on the 'micro-processes' of critical literacy practices (Vossoughi & Gutiérrez, 2016), to provide more knowledge about *how* CVL can be enacted in FL settings. The current thesis focused on a small selection of transcripts from focus group interviews, with a particular focus on perspectives. Other research might want to consider how these dialogues might develop with less facilitation and from other theoretical perspectives. For example, the actual micro-processes in relation to visual stereotypes were only partly investigated. This knowledge is imperative to expand our theoretical understandings of CVL in FL settings, but also, importantly, to provide implications for how teachers and learners can enact CVL in their classrooms.

Another relevant area to investigate identified based on the limitations of the current study is the fact that it is unknown whether and how the learners bring the type of meaning-making practices identified here into their everyday lives. Although this type of exploration can prove challenging and might need to rely on learners' own reflections as opposed to a more 'objective' measure, this could have important implications for CVL classroom practices and merits investigations.

Topically, the current study suggests a number of possible perspectives to explore further. One of these is the connection between the practice of engaging with 'disrupting the commonplace' on the one hand and *decentring* on the other. The current study indicates that the learners used their increased awareness of themselves in order to take a step back from their personal perspective, i.e., decentring, and explore fuller and more nuanced understandings. Other studies have also pointed to the importance of self-awareness in relation to intercultural learning (e.g., Khanukaeva, 2020). Given the central role of decentring in intercultural learning (Byram, 1997, 2008; Kearney, 2016), the ways in which learners can decentre through gaining an increased understanding of their own meaning-making processes and by disrupting their commonplace ways of viewing the world could thus provide an interesting avenue for future research.

Another unexplored aspect here was the role and use of a metalanguage with which to talk about images. While the learners' use of analytical tools was explored in Article

107

III, the role of the language itself, i.e., angle, framing, etc., and whether and how this type of metalanguage enabled or repressed their critical dialogues remained uncharted. As argued by Macken-Horarik (2016), "[a]ny metalanguage needs to have the capacity to engage, rather than inhibit, dialogue about dimensions of multimodality between teachers and learners and amongst diverse learners." If thinking is mediated by language (Vygotsky, 1978), then it is essential to understand the ways in which FL learners engage with this type of metalanguage, and how teachers might best facilitate this process.

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111

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consent form

Note: Translated from Norwegian.

Request to participate in the research project

"Developing intercultural competence through images"

Background and purpose

The background for the project is that we live in an increasingly globalised and visual world. It is therefore necessary to develop abilities to critically read and understand visual texts, and competence in communicating with people from other cultures. The purpose of the project is therefore to explore the method "critical visual literacy" as an approach to develop intercultural competence in the English subject.

Three questions will be explored: 1) What characterises the learners reading of images showing people from other cultures before and after the project? 2) Can experience with critical visual literacy contribute to develop intercultural competence? 3) How do the learners' ability to understand cultural meanings in images develop throughout the project?

The project is a part of a doctoral study at the University of Stavanger.

You have been asked to participate in the research project because you are a pupil in one of three classes that will participate in the project during the English lessons in the school year of 2017/2018. Your participation in the lessons will be the same regardless of whether you wish to take part in the study or not, but data will only be collected from learners who consent to this.

What does it mean to participate in the study?

All participants in the study will be asked to answer two questionnaires, one at the start and one at the end of the project. The questions will be about your opinions and thoughts

about people from other cultures. It will take about 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire.[23]

Additionally, a selection of the participants will be invited to participate in group interviews, with 4-5 learners in each group. These will last for about 40 minutes. During the interviews the participants will be asked to discuss different images and their thoughts and reactions to these. The interviews will be audio recorded. Video recordings will also be taken, but the video camera will be directed at the table and the images. Only hands will therefore be included in the video recordings, and it should therefore not be possible to recognise people from these.

The questionnaires and group interviews will be conducted during the English lessons, since the topics covered will be relevant for the curricular aims. Those who do not wish to participate in the questionnaire will get alternative tasks. Teaching will proceed as normal for the learners who are not participating in the group interviews.

Observations will be made during the project by the researcher. These will focus on the procedures and methods. Audio recordings can be used during group discussions. Finally, documents that you have produced during the project, for example reflection texts, will be collected.

What happens to the information about you?

All information gathered through the project will be handled confidentially. Personal information will only be shared with the project leader and supervisors. Name lists and key will be stored separately from the other data, and only the project leader will have access to these. Publications will be written such that it will not be possible to recognise individual participants.

The project is planned to finish on the 31st of December 2020. Personal information and audio recordings will be deleted on this date.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the study, and you can withdraw your consent at any time without providing reasons. If you withdraw, all information about you will be anonymised. It will not influence your education or your relationship with your teachers

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[23] In the time after this document was written, the research design underwent major changes, which meant that the post-intervention questionnaire was excluded. This decision was supported by two external commentators on my 50% seminar.

if you do not wish to participate in the study, or if you choose to withdraw at a later time.

If you have questions about the study, please contact Cecilie Waallann Brown. Telephone: 92470087. Email: cecilie.w.brown@uis.no.

The study has been reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Service.

Consent to participate in the study

I have received information about the study and wish to participate

_____

(Signed by project participant, date)

Please select whether you are willing to participate in the different parts of the study:

I consent to participate in the questionnaires   Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to participate in group interviews   Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent for the collection of texts produced at school   Yes ☐ No ☐

Appendix 2 – Tasks included in the intervention

Blindfold task

Inspired by: Vasquez et al. (2013)
Introduced by: The teachers in their respective classrooms
Activity type: Full class/group discussion
Time on task: 10 minutes
Week of intervention: 1

Slide and instructions for the teachers:

Show the PowerPoint slide with just the title (the photograph will appear only after clicking). Tell the learners that you are going to show them a photograph depicting several Native Americans. Ask them to discuss what they think the photograph will look like, using the questions on the slide as a guide. What is the age of the people in the photograph? What are they wearing? What are they doing? What other things do you think you will see in the image (the surroundings)? What type of colours will it have? The learners can discuss this in pairs/groups. After this, the learners can volunteer to share their thinking in a full class discussion. Ask also why the learners think they guess the way they do. Show the learners the photograph and ask them whether or not their guesses conformed with the actual photograph. Ask them if they can say something about why this was or was not the case.

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(1) Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work
(4) Recognise the role of images in society

LK06 aim:
- discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

Are images universally understood?

Introduced by:	The teachers in their respective classrooms
Activity type:	Full class/group discussion
Time on task:	10 minutes
Week of intervention:	1

Slides and instructions for the teachers:

Are pictures universally understood?

On page 5 in Alexie Sherman's "The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" the protagonist writes:

I draw because words are too limited.
If you speak and write in English, or Spanish, or Chinese, or any other language, then only a certain percentage of human beings will get your meaning.
But when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it.
If I draw a cartoon of a flower, then every man, woman, and child in the world can look at it and say, "That's a flower."

Do you agree with this? Do pictures communicate in a universal language?

The learners can discuss the questions in pairs/groups first, and then full class (Do you agree with this? Do pictures communicate in a universal language?
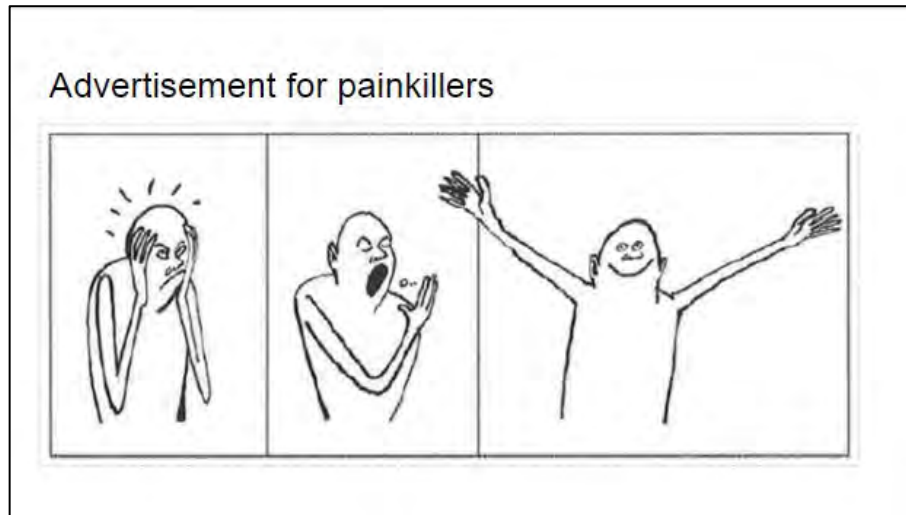
Cartoon from Dahl (2013, p. 17).

This is a cartoon that was made for an advertisement for painkillers from a pharmaceutical company. Ask the learners to describe the cartoon. What message do they think the pharmaceutical company tried to convey with the cartoon? Then tell the learners that this advert was actually printed and distributed in an Arabic speaking country. Try reading it from right to left. What message do you get now? Do you think it made for a successful advertising campaign?

Photograph of a snowy mountain-landscape with typical Norwegian Easter treats: Solo, a type of soda water, and Kvikk Lunsj, a type of chocolate.
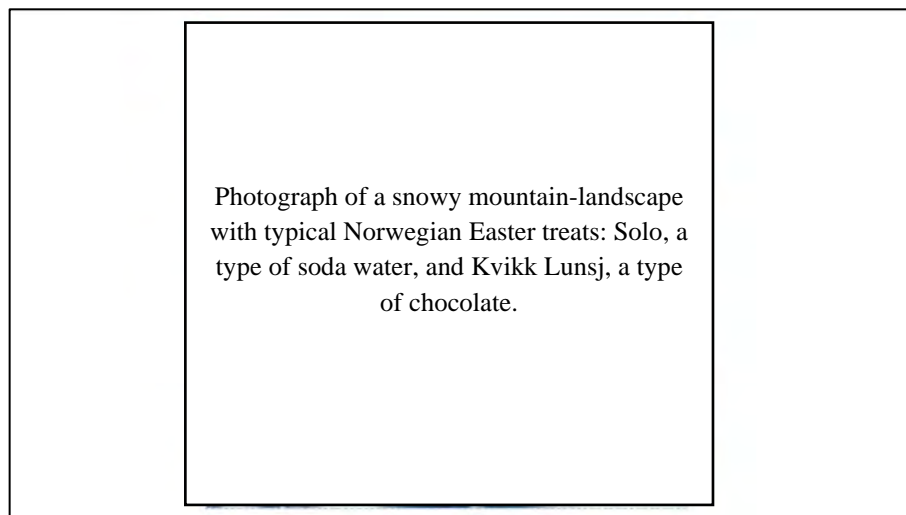
Ask the learners what they associate with this image and to individually write down the first word that comes to their mind. Ask them to share the word, and then write it on the whiteboard. If the words are similar, a discussion can then be had about why that is. Do the learners think for example an exchange student from China, or a child living in Denmark would associate the same meanings with the image as they? If the results are varied, a discussion can then be had about the reasons for that.

Main learning aims:

CVL aim:
(3) Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives

LK06 aim:
- Discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

AIEVM

Adapted from:	Council of Europe (2013)
Introduced by:	The teachers in their respective classrooms
Activity type:	Individual
Time on task:	30-45 minutes
Week of intervention:	1-2
Data collected:	The learners' individual responses

Description of task:

This task consisted of an adapted version of the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media (AIEVM) (Council of Europe, 2013). The adapted version featured four photographs of indigenous people, from which they learners were asked to choose one. Questions were selected from the original version[24] based on their suitableness for these particular photograph. This meant that certain questions related to where the learners found the photograph and why they chose it etc., were not included

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(1) Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work

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[24] The full version can be accessed through https://www.coe.int/en/web/autobiography-intercultural-encounters/images-of-others.

(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways

LK06 aims:
- Discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media
- Discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- Discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

Taking pictures of the school

Adapted from:	Janks et al. (2014, p. 85)
Introduced/facilitated by:	One of the three teachers introduced in the auditorium. The three teachers facilitated the group work in their respective classrooms
Activity type:	Full class/individual/group
Time on task:	30 minutes
Week of intervention:	2

Description of task:

The class read and discussed the poem "The blind men and the elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887). They were then asked to go out of the auditorium and take a picture of the school using their phones individually, before returning to the classroom to do the following:

- Work in groups. Show each other the photographs you have taken and compare them. Discuss the following questions:
    - What decisions did you have to make when you took the photograph?
    - What effects do these decisions have on how the school is represented?
    - Which of the photographs do you think would have been the most likely to be chosen as an illustration photograph on the school's website? Why?
    - Which of the photographs do you think would have been the least likely to be chosen as an illustration photograph on the school's website? Why?
- Write two (or more) topic sentences using your photograph as inspiration.

- Do the same with the photographs taken by the other people in your group.
- Discuss the different topic sentences written for each photograph.
    o Does the photograph influence what type of topic sentence you write? Why/why not?
    o Does the topic sentence influence the way you view the photograph? Why/why not

Main learning aims:

CVL aim:
(2) Recognise that all texts are partial re-presentations of the world

LK06 aims:
- discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world
- introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education programme

Visual stereotypes and redesign of photomontage

Introduced/facilitated by:	Lecture and introduction were given by the researcher. Pair work facilitated by the three teachers and the researcher
Activity type:	Full class/pairs
Time on task:	80 minutes
Week of intervention:	4

Description of task:

The learners were given a lecture on visual stereotypes in relation to indigenous peoples. Following this, they were asked to complete a task in relation to a montage from an English textbook for Norwegian lower secondary school learners (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007, pp. 28-29). The montage includes eight photographs depicting persons, mostly wearing traditional clothing, who are representing different indigenous peoples (Inuit, Native Americans, Aboriginals, and Maoris). Short texts are included in relation to each people, mainly focusing on their historical origin, e.g., "The Native American people probably came from Asia some 35,000 years ago" (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007, p. 28).The learners were given the following task:

Work in pairs of two and redesign the montage. Use the internet or other sources of information and create a new montage that you think gives a better and more nuanced

(less stereotypical) introduction to the topic of indigenous peoples. The montage must include:

- The three indigenous peoples that we have focused on: Native Americans, Aboriginals, Maori and (optionally) Inuit.
- At least two images from each indigenous people
- A short text about each indigenous people (minimum two sentences)

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(1) Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work
(7) Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world

LK06 aims:
- discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

<u>American Born Chinese</u>

Adapted from:	Schieble (2014) and Davis (2013)
Introduced/facilitated by:	The three teachers and the researcher
Activity type:	Individual/group/full class
Time on task:	80 minutes
Week of intervention:	8
Data collected:	The learners' written responses

Description of task:

The learners read Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of *American Born Chinese* (Yang, 2006) and answered questions provided by the teacher, as well as a number of CVL questions added by the researcher (adapted from Davis, 2013 and Schieble, 2014). These were:

- On page 30-31 and then again on page 36, Jin Wang and Wei-Chen are introduced by teachers to their classmates. Discuss how the images and text work together to communicate the actions and reactions of the students and teachers. Which stereotypes of Chinese and American people can you identify?
- How are the other boys at Jin's school depicted on pages 32-33? What does this suggest about power relationships?

- Compare and contrast the opening images and words for each of the stories (page 23 and 43). How do the words and the images help distinguish the stories and set their respective tones?
- Compare the drawing styles used for Chin-Kee in comparison to the other characters in the story. What is the effect of this?

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
(6) Be able to recognise how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning

LK06 aims:
- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world

<u>Visual grammar and positioning</u>

Based on:	Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), Janks et al. (2014)
Introduced by:	The researcher
Activity type:	Full class/individual
Time on task:	60 minutes
Week of intervention:	8
Data collected:	The learners' written responses

Description of task:

The learners were given a lecture on the grammar of visual design, based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). They were then given the following task:

Choose one or two images(s) from chapter 3 in your textbook or from the images at the end of this document and write two paragraphs:

- How do this (or these) image(s) position you in relation to the people in it and what is the effect of this?
- How could you have been positioned differently, and to what effect?

Tips:

- Do not forget to provide a short description of the image(s) early in the first paragraph. If you choose image(s) from the textbook, please include the page number(s) as well.
- It might be helpful to choose two images that are different in some way because of the content and/or structure and compare them (for example p. 127 and 134, p. 129 and 141, p. 136 and 137, or image 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6).
- When you write about the effects of the positioning, you can focus on the individual effect on you as a viewer, but also the broader consequences of this kind of positioning. Who could benefit from these people being represented in this way?
- See below for an overview of the concepts we have talked about today. You can also include information about salience, colour or other aspects that you find relevant for the image(s) you have chosen.
- There are no right and wrong answers here! If you think the grammar does not fit to the image you have chosen (if, for example, they are presented from a low angle, but do not appear powerful) that is okay, just explain why you think so ☺

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
(8) Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images

LK06 aim:
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation

Optional task on montage

Activity type:	Individual
Week of intervention:	9
Data collected:	The learners' written responses

Description of task:

Montage from the Visual stereotypes and redesign of photomontage task, Bromseth and Wigdahl (2007, pp. 28-29).

The learners were asked to write a five-paragraph essay based on one of five topics, of which the following was related to the intervention:

136

Focusing on both the text and the images, write an analysis of the possible messages communicated about indigenous people through this montage. Discuss the potential implications of these messages, and how they relate to the situation of indigenous peoples today. + something about choosing one or several native people in English-speaking countries.

White privilege

Introduced by:	The teachers in their respective classrooms
Activity type:	Group/individual
Time on task:	30 minutes
Week of intervention:	12
Data collected:	The learners' written responses

Description of task:

A poster includes a photograph of four children with different ethnicities, standing close together and smiling at the viewer. The title of the poster, placed above the photograph, reads "Everybody deserves to be treated equally!", and a caption below the photograph states: "It doesn't matter if you are black or yellow or brown or normal!".

Look at the poster above and write 1-2 paragraphs answering the following questions:

- What do you think the people who created this poster intended to communicate by it?
- What other messages could this poster communicate (think of the use of the term "normal")?
- What do you think white people in general think about being defined as "normal"?
- What do you think the people labelled as "not normal" ("black, yellow or brown" in this ad) think about this?
- Who benefits from white people being defined as normal? Who does not benefit? In what way?

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(3) Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives
(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways

LK06 aims:
- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation
- English-speaking countries
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation

Political cartoons

Introduced by: The teachers in their respective classrooms.
Activity type: Individual/group
Time on task: 25 minutes
Week of intervention: 14
Data collected: The learners' written responses

Description of task:

The learners were provided a description of some persuasive techniques commonly used in political cartoons: symbolism, i.e., the use of people or objects to represent larger concepts or ideas, exaggeration, i.e., overdoing physical characteristics of people or objects to make a point, labelling, i.e., making the meaning clearer though labelling people or objects, and analogies, i.e., comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one. They were then provided four political cartoons addressing racial issues in the USA with the following instructions/questions:

Look at the four political cartoons on the next pages. Choose one and answer the following questions:

- What issue is this political cartoon about?
- What is the cartoonist's opinion on this issue? How can you tell?
- Which persuasive techniques can you identify in the cartoon?
- What other opinion can you imagine another person having on this issue?
- Did you find this cartoon persuasive? Why or why not?
- What other techniques could the cartoonist have used to make this cartoon more persuasive?

Write your answers in a document and upload to itslearning. Make sure to include a copy of the cartoon you have chosen or refer to it by number.

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:

(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
(6) Be able to recognise how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning
(8) Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images

LK06 aim:

- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries

Redesign of advertisement

Inspired by:	Annotation of visuals, idea taken from Arizpe et al. (2014)
	Question based on Stevens and Bean (2007)
Introduced by:	The researcher
Activity type:	Group/individual
Time on task:	80 minutes
Week of intervention:	16
Data collected:	The learners' written and drawn responses

Description of task:

In this task, the learners were first provided a copy of an advertisement for a computer processor. The advertisement depicts a white male standing in the centre of the image, in what appears to be an office environment. He has his arms crossed and is looking directly at the viewer. On both the left and right side of the advertisement, there is a row of three desks and next to each desk the same dark-skinned man is standing in a crouching position wearing running gear and looking like he is getting ready to run. A caption placed above the white man in the centre reads: "Multiply computing performance and maximize the power of your employees".

They were asked to discuss this advertisement in groups of 4-6 learners, while also making annotations. Following this, the learners were given a work sheet to complete individually. Here they were first asked to think about the potential problems of the advertisement and sketch a suggestion for how it could be redesigned. They were then asked to explain the changes they had made in their redesigns and the reasons for these changes, as well as how they thought this had improved the original advertisement.

Main learning aims:

CVL aims:
(5) Recognise how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
(7) Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world
(8) Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images

LK06 aims:
- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation

Appendix 3 – Overview of lesson content

Note: CVL tasks have been included in bold.

Theme	Week	Relevant topics/content
Stereotypes, indigenous people, and multiculturalism	1	Learners read Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Lecture about stereotypes **Blindfold task** **Are images universally understood task** **AIEVM task**
	2	Lecture about stereotypes cont. **Taking pictures of the school task** **Finish AIEVM task** Current situation of Native Americans
	3	Lecture about indigenous people Group work related to Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.
	4	**Visual stereotypes and redesign of photomontage task** Discussions about Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, with a focus on the character of Arnold and living conditions.
Politics and multiculturalism	5	The poem *Dear John Wayne* by Louis Erdrich; cultural battle between Native Americans and colonizers.
	6	Discussions about Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, with a focus on social challenges. The short story *Tony's Story* by Leslie Marmon Silko; racial violence and oppression.
	7	Watching the movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002), directed by Philip Noyce. Lecture with a focus on the situation of indigenous people and the reasons behind this.
	8	*American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang, chapters 2 and 3.

		Lecture about the book, focus on minority and identity.
		American born Chinese task
		Visual grammar and positioning task[25]
	9	Exams
		Optional task on montage
	10	N/A
	11	Group work and presentations on ethnic groups and stereotypes in the USA.
		Watching the documentary *Chelsea Does Racism* (2016), directed by Eddie Schmidt
Race and class	12	Watching MTV's documentary *White People* (2015), produced by Jose Antonio Vargas.
		Reading about and discussing the concept of 'white privilege'.
		White privilege task
		Hispanics in the USA
		Latin-American immigration
	13	School systems in the UK, the USA and in Norway.
		Redlining in the USA.
	14	Watching the documentary *Drone* (2014), directed by Tonje Hessen Schei.
		School visit by Brandon Bryant, who participated in the documentary.
		Lecture on education in the USA, with a focus on how and why race is a matter of concern.
		Financing of schools in the USA and in the UK.
		Political cartoons task[26]
	15	N/A
	16	**Analysis of advertisement task**

---

[25] Included introduction of visual grammar elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).
[26] Included brief descriptions of some techniques often employed in political cartoons, i.e., symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, and analogies.

Appendix 4 – Introduction to focus group interviews

Note: The language used during the introduction was Norwegian.

- Thank you for being willing to participate!
- Aim of the interview: gain insight into your thinking about different images
- The procedures:
  o I will show you some images that I wish for you to discuss
  o I will ask questions about the images, and everyone is free to respond
  o The interview will be audio- and video-recorded. The video will be pointed towards the table, in order to identify which images, or parts of the images, you are referring to in your comments.
    ▪ The recordings will not be shared with others, and pseudonyms will be used in publications
- Rules:
- Contribute to the discussion
  o I wish for everyone to participate
  o I might ask you directly if you have been quiet a while
- There are no right or wrong answers
  o Everyone's opinion is equally valuable to me
  o Therefore, do not be afraid to contribute with new ideas or thoughts, or to disagree with each other!
- Confidentiality
  o What is being said in this room should stay in this room, please do not share with others (this goes for both teachers and other learners)
- Show each other respect
  o Try to avoid interrupting each other
  o Avoid negative comments or body language
- Language
  o English is the main language for the interviews, but you can use Norwegian whenever you feel like it

When the recordings start, it would be great if you could state "My name is …", to make it easier for me to identify the different voices.

Appendix 5 – Focus group interview groups

Group	Participants (pre)			Participants (post)		
	Code	*Gender*	*Number of parents born outside of Norway*	*Code*	*Gender*	*Number of parents born outside of Norway*
1	P5	Female	One	Same as pre-intervention interview		
	P15	Female	None			
	P37	Female	Both			
	P33	Male	None			
	P52	Male	None			
	P73	Male	Both			
2	P28	Female	None	P28	Female	None
	P40	Female	None	P40	Female	None
	P44	Female	None	P44	Female	None
	P23	Male	None	P69	Male	One
	P69	Male	One	P80	Male	None
	P80	Male	None			
3	P43	Female	None	Same as pre-intervention interview		
	P45	Female	None			
	P53	Female	None			
	P18	Male	None			
	P65	Male	None			
	P83	Male	None			
4	P29	Female	One	Same as pre-intervention interview		
	P31	Female	None			
	P7	Male	Both			
	P34	Male	Both			
	P47	Male	Both			
	P81	Male	One			

Group	Participants (pre)			Participants (post)		
5	P20	Female	None	P38	Female	None
	P38	Female	None	P12	Male	One
	P12	Male	One	P63	Male	None
	P64	Male	None	P64	Male	None
	P67	Male	None	P67	Male	None
	P76	Male	None	P76	Male	None

Appendix 6 – Interview guide

Task 1

Pre-interviews: Who will have which job and why?

The learners are shown the six photographs depicting teenagers with different gender and ethnicities.

   1.   Give a brief description of each person.
        a.   What are they like?
        b.   What type of job are they likely to have when they are adults?

They are then provided eight job titles printed on cards (builder, farmer, doctor, nurse, teacher, scientist, computers, cleaner) and are asked to work together to assign a job title to each photograph, while also discussing the reasoning behind their choices.

   2.   Who will have which job and why?

Post-interviews: Who will have which job and why?

The learners are shown the same six photographs as in the pre-interviews. They are then provided the same eight job titles, as well as eight hobbies (gaming, reading, basketball, comics, chess, fishing, singing, computer programming) and are asked to work together to assign one job title and one hobby to each photograph, while also discussing the reasoning behind their choices.

   1.   Who will have which job and why?
   2.   Who has which hobby and why?

Task 2

Pre-interviews: Donald Trump in the news I

The learners are shown two photographs from the news depicting the crowd at Donald Trump's inauguration speech from two different angles. They are asked if they know the context of the images, and if not, they are provided with a brief explanation.

Questions/prompts:

   1.   In what way(s) do the two photographs differ from each other?
   2.   Why do you think that press secretary Sean Spicer was so concerned about the spreading of the first photograph?
   3.   (One photograph at a time) How does this photograph make you feel about Donald Trump as a president?

a. What are the elements in the photograph that contribute to these feelings?

Post-interviews: Nazi propaganda posters

The learners are asked to look at two Nazi propaganda posters, one advertising the documentary "Der Ewige Jude", and one depicting Hitler with the title "Es lebe Deuthcland!".

Questions/prompts:

1. (One poster at a time) How does this poster make you feel about Jews/Hitler and their support?
   a. What are the elements in the image that contributes to these feelings?
2. In which ways do the two posters differ?
3. Why do you think the Nazi's distributed propaganda posters like these?
4. Can you think of any examples where people use similar strategies today?

Task 3

Pre-interviews: Donald Trump in the news II

The participants are shown two photographs of President Donald Trump, taken from two different newspaper pieces. The first piece is about endorsing Donald Trump as a presidential candidate, and the accompanying photograph depicts Trump from a frontal angle, leaning slightly over a table and looking directly at the viewer from a slightly high angle. The second piece is about how Trump's rating has gone down since his inauguration, and the photograph accompanying this piece depicts Trump from an oblique angle, looking towards what appears to be a person behind a microphone. In both the photographs, Trump is depicted with a serious facial expression, not smiling. Questions/prompts:

1. Compare the two photographs.
   a. How do each of them make you feel about President Trump?

The participants were then given the headlines and a selection of quotes from the two newspaper pieces.

2. Assign the quotes and headlines to the different photographs, based on which ones you think fit best.

Before proceeding, the participants were told if they have made the correct guesses, and if not, the correct answer will be provided.

3. Why do you think the newspapers chose to use these images for their articles?
    a. In what way do the images support or contradict the text?

Post-interviews: Hillary Clinton in the news

The participants are shown two photographs of Hillary Clinton, taken from two different opinion pieces published in American newspapers, one which supports Clinton as a presidential candidate and one which talks about the problems the Democratic party is facing. The photographs accompanying the pieces depicted Hillary from a low, frontal angle and from an oblique angle, looking down respectively. The same questions/prompts applied in the pre-interviews were used.

Task 4

Pre-interviews: Native American-themed sports teams

The participants are shown images depicting Native American-themed sports mascots: two images depicting team logo's (Redskin's - American football and Cleveland Indians' - baseball), and two photographs depicting people using Native American sports merchandise while watching a match (Kansas City Chiefs – American football and "The Tomahawk Chop" – sports celebration).

Questions/prompts:

1. What are these images depicting? (If the participants do not know the context of these images, it will be explained to them)
2. How do these images portray Native Americans? Consider both the text as well as the visual.
3. What do you think Native Americans think about these types of images?
4. What do you think the supporters of the sports teams think?
5. What is your personal opinion about these images?
6. Can you think of similar occurrences in Norway?

Post-interviews: Native Americans in Thanksgiving picture books

The participants are shown four different representations of the first thanksgiving. Three taken from three picture books for children, as well as the painting "The first thanksgiving" painted by Jean Leon Gerome. The latter was included as it was found in a Norwegian lower secondary EFL textbook. The learners are asked if they know anything about the first thanksgiving, if not they will be provided a brief explanation.

Questions/prompts:

1. How do these books portray the first thanksgiving? Consider both the text as well as the visuals.
2. What do you think the author/illustrators might have been thinking when creating/choosing the texts?
3. What do you think the target group (young children/teenagers) might think about these texts?
4. What do you think Native Americans might think of these texts?
5. What is your personal opinion about them?

Task 5

Pre-interviews: Mexican migrants

The learners are shown a photograph depicting a group of Mexicans in the process of crossing a river to get to America. The photograph is taken in the night-time, and a strong light is shining on the people in the photograph, while the water surrounding them is dark. The people are depicted from a high angle, and in a wide frame, while none of the people make eye-contact with the viewer. No information was provided about the content of the image before the following questions/prompts:

1. What can you see in this photograph?
2. Based on this photograph, what is your initial impression of these people?
    a. Positive or negative?
3. What makes you think so?
    a. Is there anything about the way the photograph has been taken that influences your impression?
4. Do you think the people in the image would like this photograph?
    a. Why/why not?

This is a photograph of Mexican migrants crossing the border to the USA.

5. Where do you think you would find these types of photographs?
    a. Why do you think people would choose to use this photograph?
6. Do you think this type of photograph influences your or other people's impression of Mexican migrants in general?
    a. Why/why not?
7. Do you think anyone could gain something from giving this type of impression of Mexican immigrants?
    a. If so, who?
8. Could the photograph have been taken differently in order to give a different impression of the people in it?
    a. If so, how?

149

Post-interviews: Mexican migrants

The learners will be shown the same photograph as in the first interview. Questions/prompts:

1. Do you remember this photograph? What was it depicting?
2. Can you say something about what type of impression this photograph gives of Mexican immigrants?
   a. What are the elements of the photograph that contributes to this impression?
3. Who could gain something from representing Mexicans in this way?
4. Could the photograph have been taken differently in order to give a different impression of the people in it?
   a. If so, how?

Appendix 7 – Transcription codes

Adapted from Halkier (2010, p. 71).

[ ]:   overlaps in speech

( ):   incomprehensible speech

[laughter]:   other oral expressions

[pointing]:   non-verbal expressions

…:   pauses less than 3 seconds, trailed off speech

[silence]:   pauses more than 3 seconds

Appendix 8 – Overview of interview duration

In minutes, divided by tasks and groups

Task		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Total
1	Pre	9.5	9.5	9	6	8.5	42.5
	Post	8.5	8	9	10	8	43.5
2	Pre	5.5	7	6.5	6	8.5	33.5
	Post	10	12	10	9	11.5	52.5
3	Pre	13	14	9.5	12.5	15.5	64.5
	Post	10	9	10	12	10.5	51.5
4	Pre	11	7.5	7	10.5	12.5	48.5
	Post	13.5	14	13.5	14.5	14	69.5
5	Pre	9.5	7	12	8.5	13.5	50.5
	Post	16.5	8.5	11	9.5	9.5	55
Total	**Pre**	**48.5**	**45**	**44**	**43.5**	**58.5**	**239.5**
	Post	**58.5**	**51.5**	**53.5**	**55**	**53.5**	**272**

Appendix 9 – Questionnaire

Note: Translated from Norwegian.

Pre-intervention questionnaire

Hi!

Thank you for participating in the survey.

Read the questions thoroughly, and answer as honestly as possible!

Personal data

Gender
(1) ❑ Girl
(2) ❑ Boy
(3) ❑ Other

Age
(13) ❑ Younger than 15
(1) ❑ 15
(2) ❑ 16
(3) ❑ 17
(4) ❑ 18
(5) ❑ 19
(6) ❑ 20
(7) ❑ 21
(8) ❑ 22
(9) ❑ 23
(10) ❑ 24
(11) ❑ 25
(12) ❑ Older than 25

Which of the following countries have you been to and for how long?

	Have not been	Less than 1 week	1 - 2 weeks	3 - 6 weeks	7 weeks- 4 months	5 - 12 months	More than 1 year
Great Britain	(7) ❑	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑
USA	(7) ❑	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑

	Have not been	Less than 1 week	1 - 2 weeks	3 - 6 weeks	7 weeks- 4 months	5 - 12 months	More than 1 year
Australia	(7) ☐	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐
Sweden/Denmark/Finland	(7) ☐	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐
Spain/Italy/France/Greece	(7) ☐	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐
Other countries	(7) ☐	(1) ☐	(2) ☐	(3) ☐	(4) ☐	(5) ☐	(6) ☐

You answered that you have stayed in Great Britain for a longer period of time. What was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____
_____

_____
_____

You answered that you have stayed in the USA for a longer period of time. What was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____
_____

_____
_____

You answered that you have stayed in Australia for a longer period of time. What was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____
_____

_____
_____

You answered that you have stayed in Sweden/Denmark/Finland for a longer period of time. What was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____
_____

_____
_____

You answered that you have stayed in Spain/Italy/France/Greece for a longer period of time. What was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

You answered that you have stayed in other countries for a longer period of time. Which country, or countries, was this and what was the reason(s) for your stay(s)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Friends and family

Do you have family members who were born in countries other than Norway? (Select all that apply)

(1) ❑ One parent

(2) ❑ Both parents

(3) ❑ Grand parents

(4) ❑ Other family

(5) ❑ No

Do you have friends who were born in countries other than Norway? If so, how many?

(1) ❑ Yes, 1-2

(2) ❑ Yes, 3-5

(3) ❑ Yes, 6-8

(4) ❑ Yes, 9-10

(5) ❑ Yes, flere enn 10

(6) ❑ No

You answered that you have one parent who was born in a country other than Norway. Which country is he or she from?

_____

_____

You answered that you have two parents who were born in a country other than Norway. Which country, or which countries, were they born in?

_____

_____

Travelling

Which countries would you like to visit in the future? (Select all that apply)

(1) ❑ Great Britain

(2) ❑ USA

(3) ❑ Australia

(4) ❑ Spain / Italy / France

(5) ❑ Other

(6) ❑ I would not like to visit other countries

Why would you like to visit other countries? (Select all that apply)

(1) ❑ To recover from the stresses of everyday life

(2) ❑ Because I want to swim and have fun

(3) ❑ Because I wish to experience an adventure

(4) ❑ Because I've gained information about the country and want to learn more

(5) ❑ Because I would like to get to know another culture better

(6) ❑ Because I want to visit friends and/or relatives

(7) ❑ Because I wish to visit the tourist sights there

(8) ❑ Other reasons

(9) ❑ I would not like to visit another country

How did you gain your current knowledge about other countries and cultures? (Select all that apply)

(1) ❑ School

(2) ❑ Family / relatives / friends

(3) ❑ Holiday / stay abroad

(4) ❑ Books / Internet / TV

(5) ❑ Other

You answered that you do not wish to visit other countries. Could you say something about why you do not wish to do so?

_____
_____
_____
_____

You answered "other" to the question about where you gained your current knowledge about other countries and cultures. Which other places or situations did you gain your knowledge from?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

You will need help to fill in this page. Please raise your hand and wait for help.

Personal password

_____

Thank you for participating!

Appendix 10 – Sensitising questions and clues

From Gillespie and Cornish (2014, p. 447).

Clues	Sensitizing questions
Utterance seems out of place	*What is the context?*
Contradictions, disagreements, tensions, perspective management ('but', 'however', 'yet' etc.), caveats	*Are there overlapping contexts?*
Out of context, strong initiation	*What is the speaker doing?* *What prompted the utterance?*
Perspective management ('but', 'however', 'yet' etc.), implications, resistance	*What is the alternative that is being argued against?*
Connections between present and future	*What is the speaker trying to set up?*
Hesitation, rephrasing	*Who is being addressed?*
Audience resistance	*What is assumed about the audience?*
Utterance seems disconnected from immediate context	*Does the utterance address any third parties?*
Utterance 'sounds foreign in the mouth'	*Who is doing the talking?*
Direct quotes, indirect quotes	*Does the utterance contain a quotation?* *How does the speaker respond to the quotation?*
Common turns of phrase, out of context, different style	*Is the utterance voicing a cultural trope?*
Repetition of pattern	*What is the genre of interaction?*
Change in the situation or genre of interaction	*What future is constituted?* *How does the utterance make history?*
Morally loaded words, identity implications, resistance	*How does the utterance position people?*
Topic cut short, topic change	*What responses are enabled or constrained?*

Clues	Sensitizing questions
Possible proof of interpretation, plurality of meanings	*What are the responses? What is the response of the interlocutor?*
	What is the response of third parties?
Explicit responses to self, hesitation, truncation, rephrasing, subsequent actions seem out of place	*What is the response of the speaker?*

Appendix 11 – Approval from NSD

NSD

Cecilie Waallann Brown
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 22.08.2017   Vår ref: 54888 / 3 / LAR   Deres dato: Deres ref:

Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 26.06.2017.
Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

54888	*Utvikling av interkulturelle kompetanser gjennom bilder i engelskundervisning*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Cecilie Waallann Brown*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2020, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS   Harald Hårfagres gate 29   Tel: +47-55 58 21 17   nsd@nsd.no   Org.nr. 985 321 884
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data   NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY   Faks: +47-55 58 96 50   www.nsd.no

160

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Lasse André Raa

Kontaktperson: Lasse André Raa tlf: 55 58 20 59 / Lasse.Raa@nsd.no
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Appendix 12 – Information document

This information document was provided to the principle and teachers prior to the project start.

Note: Translated from Norwegian.

Developing intercultural competence through images in the English subject

The purpose of this research project is to explore the use of critical visual literacy as an approach to develop intercultural competence. Research shows that images depicting other cultures in English language textbooks often give a one-sided and stereotypical representation of the cultures and the people who are depicted. This can encourage an ethnocentric mindset, where one thinks that one's own culture is more sophisticated and nuanced, and therefore also better, than other cultures. By discussing the content and structure of images, it is possible to raise the pupils' awareness of how images can be decoded, and they can therefore make informed decisions of whether they want to accept the message that is being communicated through the images or not. This way, critical visual literacy can contribute to the pupils learning about their own and others' cultures in such ways that it stimulates "increased cooperation, understanding and respect between people with different cultural backgrounds", which is one of the aims of the English subject in LK06.

In short, the project will mean that the learners in the project group, over a period of 3-4 months, will be introduced to terminology and methods for critically analysing images. They will also be given tasks of different extent and duration in relation to this. These will be developed in such a way that they address the competence aims in the curriculum. This relates to competence aims within the area "culture, society and literature", but also "written communication" as the curriculum defines texts in a wide sense which also includes images. The tasks will range from short, oral discussions regarding an image in a textbook, to bigger projects where the pupils, for example, can redesign a smaller part of the textbook. They will then be working multimodally, processing both images and verbal texts. The details surrounding the project will be developed in cooperation with the teacher(s), and the aim is that the tasks should be introduced as an integrated part of the regular English subject lessons. The project will therefore not include more than a smaller percentage of the total number of lesson-hours during the period.

The research methods that will be used are focus group interviews, observations, collection of material in relation to different tasks (for example pupil texts and/or audio

recordings of group discussions during specific tasks), as well as questionnaires. In the interviews, the learners will, for example, be shown images of people from different cultures, and be asked to discuss these. Possible questions could be: "What are your thoughts about the people in this image? What is it about the image which makes you think this?"

Part 2 – The articles

Article I

Brown, C. (2019). "I don't want to be stereotypical, but…": Norwegian EFL learners' awareness of and willingness to challenge visual stereotypes. *Intercultural Communication Education, 2*(3), 120-141.

"I Don't Want to be Stereotypical, but…": Norwegian EFL Learners' Awareness of and Willingness to Challenge Visual Stereotypes

CECILIE WAALLANN BROWN [a]

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Abstract

This article reports on a study that investigated Norwegian upper secondary pupils' visual stereotypes, as well as their awareness of and willingness to challenge these stereotypes before and after participating in an educational intervention. In the intervention, critical visual literacy was introduced as one approach to teaching about culture in three English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. Over the course of 16 weeks, the pupils were engaged in tasks that required them to reflect on visual stereotypes embedded in commonplace ways of representing the world, the origins of these stereotypes, their socio-political consequences, and ways of promoting social justice through taking informed action. Focus group interviews conducted with 30 pupils before and after the intervention comprise the main data set for the current article. These were supplemented by texts produced by the pupils during the intervention. The results of the study showed that the pupils were less inclined to explicitly stereotype based on ethnicity or religion after the intervention. The pupils also displayed an increased awareness of stereotyping as a process, which led some of the groups to challenge specific stereotypes and one group to challenge the process of stereotyping in general. These findings are encouraging for EFL teaching, where one of the aims is to encourage greater understanding between people with different cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Stereotypes, critical visual literacy, EFL education, intercultural communication.

Introduction

The current small-scale study explores Norwegian upper secondary EFL pupils' visual stereotypes, as well as their awareness of and willingness to challenge these stereotypes before and after participating in an educational intervention. Through new communication technologies available to a majority of people living in the Western world, ideas and information in visual form circulate globally at an unprecedented speed and scope (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 1). This is also the case for EFL

classrooms, where pupils experience other cultures through a variety of visual media, such as textbooks, online videos, and movies. Consequently, visual media are important sources of information when pupils construct their knowledge about and understanding of other cultures.

Simultaneously, any reading of an image, here understood as including all visual texts, is deeply rooted in the viewers' previous knowledge, belief systems and cultural references (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 49). These often take the form of stereotypes. When we try to create an idea of who a person is without getting to know them intimately, "we notice a trait which marks a well known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry about in our heads" (Lippmann, 1922/2017, pp. 88-89). Images might therefore enforce stereotypes, while stereotypes simultaneously influence the meaning taken from images, as we read both from and into them. This is not always a conscious process that readers are able to critically reflect on. Rather, "because images appear to offer a direct, unmediated view of the reality they depict, they tend to be taken as credible representations of that reality" (Sherwin, 2008, p. 184).

According to the national curriculum in Norway (LK06), the English subject should aim to "promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013, p. 2). Research on visual representations of cultures and ethnicity in different media, including EFL textbooks (e.g. Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Poindexter, 2011; Taylor-Mendez, 2009), suggests that if readers are not critical towards the images they are exposed to, they may obtain knowledge about other cultures and/or ethnic groups that reinforces stereotypes and encourages a dichotomy between "us" and "them." The essentialising effect of stereotypes (Hall, 2013, p. 247) is problematic in the interaction between people of diverse cultures, often referred to as intercultural communication, because it does not account for the plurality of individuals' identities (Dervin, 2012).

One approach to raising awareness of the ways images communicate is through critical visual literacy (CVL), which in this study is understood as an approach to images that focuses on uncovering the social interests and power relationships embedded in the production, reading, and challenging of images (Rose, 2001, p. 3). CVL builds on the principle that all images are constructed, that they are never neutral, but instead work to position the readers to accept a certain version of the "truth" (Janks, Dixon, Ferreia, Granville, & Newfield, 2014). CVL provides "strategies for making these workings conscious" (Newfield, 2011, p. 92), allowing the reader to decide whether or not they want to take up the position on offer.

Based on this, an educational intervention was designed in which CVL was introduced as an approach to teaching about cultures within a non-essentialist framework, viewing cultures as complex, dynamic and with blurred boundaries (Holliday, 2011, p. 5), in three Norwegian upper secondary EFL classrooms. Focus group interviews conducted with pupils before and after the intervention were analysed in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What stereotypes, if any, can be identified in the group discussions before and after the intervention?
2. Is the pupils' awareness of visual stereotypes displayed in group discussions before and after the intervention, and if so in which ways?
3. Is the pupils' willingness to challenge visual stereotypes displayed in group discussions before and after the intervention, and if so in which ways?

Through its unique positioning at the intersection of CVL and EFL teaching, the study establishes and explores the connection between CVL and the foreign language classroom. With its focus on

instructional effects of the CVL approach on stereotyping, as well as acknowledging and challenging visual stereotypes about culture(s), this research aims to contribute to the growing pool of studies investigating the link between critical literacy or visual literacy and fostering intercultural communication in foreign language teaching.

Theoretical background and previous research

The current study defines a stereotype as "a belief about a group of individuals" (Kanahara, 2006, p. 318), and the process of stereotyping as "the application of a belief about a group of individuals to an individual from the group" (p. 314). This definition does not differentiate between positive and negative, simple and complex stereotypes, which is consistent with a non-essentialist approach to cultures. Research within experimental psychology (Devine, 1989) has shown that both low and high prejudice people are equally knowledgeable about stereotypes, and that both groups automatically retrieve these stereotypes when encountering an individual from a stereotyped group. The difference between these groups is the willingness to inhibit these automatically activated stereotypes, a process which Devine (1989) argues requires both time and conscious effort. Categorizing and stereotyping groups of people is therefore a natural and automatic process and impeding this process requires both awareness and willingness to "stop short-circuiting critical thinking" (Perkins, 1979).

CVL can be used as an approach to raising awareness of this process, as it acknowledges "that texts work to position us, and that this happens below the level of consciousness" (Newfield, 2011, p. 92). Building on critical theory, critical pedagogy, and critical literacy, CVL goes beyond understanding and analysing visual texts as it interrogates images' role in shaping individuals' and groups' attitudes, beliefs and values, with the aim of promoting social justice (Chung, 2013, pp. 4-6). Four interrelated dimensions of critical literacy practices can be outlined, namely disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues, and taking informed action (Lewison, Flint & van Sluys, 2002; Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2015). Two of these dimensions are particularly relevant for the current intervention. Firstly, in order to build awareness of the role of stereotyping in relation to seeing, it is necessary to disrupt the commonplace, view the world through new lenses, and question what is considered "normal." Secondly, through focusing on the dimension of taking informed action, the pupils can become aware of their agency in relation to accepting or rejecting stereotypes and challenging the way they view the world with the aim of promoting social justice.

Several studies have addressed the use of different approaches to reducing stereotyping in the English classroom. These include cultural portfolios (Su, 2011), systematic reflection on visual media (Forsman, 2010), and critical literacy practices (Lau, Juby-Smith, & Desbiens, 2017). This research suggests that it is possible for instruction to have an influence on pupils' perception and understanding of stereotypes, allowing them to modify and reconsider their previous assumptions. While findings by Lau et al. (2017, p. 120) suggest a tendency for the pupils to become "more socially conscious about the importance to (self-) interrogate taken-for-granted social beliefs," Su (2011) and Forsman (2010) found that the insights gained were mainly attached to the specific stereotypes addressed. There is therefore still a need for research that addresses more general approaches to inhibiting stereotyping, as opposed to focusing on awareness of specific (national) stereotypes, as well as research that addresses the use of CVL for this purpose in an EFL context. Additionally, previous research has focused on primary school pupils, or university students, rather than upper secondary school pupils. The current study attempts to contribute towards filling these gaps.

Methodology

This small-scale study was conducted as a part of the author's doctoral research, which aims to investigate how Norwegian upper secondary pupils approach the reading of images depicting other cultures before and after being introduced to CVL. For this purpose, an intervention was designed in which CVL was incorporated as an approach to teaching about cultures in the EFL classroom. The current study draws upon parts of the total data set, as described in the following. Ethical permission was granted by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data for the collection of data and informed consent was gathered from the individual participants.

Participants and context

The participants in the intervention were selected through convenience sampling and consisted of 83 pupils (38 girls and 45 boys) from three EFL classes at the same upper secondary school in a medium-sized city on the west coast of Norway. The classes were a compulsory part of their first year of general studies. At the start of the intervention, the majority of the pupils were aged between fifteen and sixteen and their expected English proficiency level was around B1/B2 (Council of Europe, 2007), although individual variations were observed. The three classes' regular teachers' were involved in the intervention.

Pedagogical approach and procedures

The intervention ran over a period of 16 weeks. During this time, the four dimensions of CVL practices were integrated into the three EFL classes, as one of several approaches to teaching about culture(s). Before the intervention, the researcher developed a selection of tasks designed to address a number of learning aims created specifically for the intervention, anchored in the theoretical discussion of CVL and the national curriculum for teaching English (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013). These were:

> The visually critically literate reader should:
>
> 1. Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work
> 2. Recognize that all texts are partial re-presentations of the world
> 3. Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives
> 4. Recognize the role of images in society
> 5. Recognize how the choices made by image makers and users position the viewer to respond in particular ways
> 6. Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world

Over the course of the intervention, the pupils were therefore engaged in tasks that required them to reflect on the role of visual stereotypes in commonplace ways of representing the world (aim 1), the origins of these stereotypes (aims 1 and 2), their socio-political consequences (aims 4 and 5), and ways of promoting social justice through taking informed action (aim 6). As the teachers took a topic-based approach to the curriculum, the tasks were also designed to fit within the topics covered during the intervention period, namely "stereotypes, indigenous people and multiculturalism," "politics and multiculturalism," and "race and class." Taking a social constructivist view of learning and knowledge, the tasks focused on encouraging the active co-construction of meaning, either through full class or group/pair discussions, on learning rather than performance, and with the teachers/researcher functioning as facilitators and guides rather than instructors (Adams, 2006, p. 247). In addition to

focusing on visual stereotypes in general, the pupils also worked with their own specific visual stereotypes, as well as those of their peers (aim 1) through asking the pupils to identify visual stereotypes embedded in images and using these as a starting point for critical reflection.

During the intervention, the researcher met weekly with the three teachers to discuss the tasks, which were then implemented in one of two ways. When accompanying lectures were provided in relation to the task, the researcher held these and introduced the task in an auditorium with all three classes attending simultaneously. Otherwise, the tasks were implemented in the classrooms by the teachers. To reduce variability and potential influence of individual teaching styles, the greatest part of the instruction was provided by the researcher. In total, 12 tasks were implemented, taking up about 9 hours (20% of the total teaching time for the subject in the period). An overview of the tasks can be found in Appendix 1.

Data collection

Two data sets were used for this study. The main data set consists of transcripts of focus group interviews, analysed with the aim of answering the three research questions. In addition to this, a supplementary data set consisting of pupil texts produced during the intervention have been included in order to enrich the understanding of the interview data, and more clearly link them to the instruction.

Focus group interviews

Thirty pupils (13 girls and 17 boys) divided into five groups of six were selected for focus group interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted at the beginning of the intervention and immediately afterwards (referred to as pre- and post-interviews in the following). The interviews were semi-structured and based on five tasks, but only the task eliciting the data for the current article will be elaborated on in the following (see also Appendix 2 for the interview guide). This task, named "Who will have which job and why?", has been taken from "A toolkit of activities to measure attitudinal change" (RISC, n.d.). Six photographs, provided in the toolkit, were used as prompts. These depicted six teenagers, one male and one female from three different ethnicities. When referring to the different photographs in the following, the terms used by RISC will be applied, namely Asian, European and African ethnicity. This also correlates well with the terms applied by the pupils during the interviews. No reference was made to the photographed teenagers' ethnicities or their countries of residence by the interviewer before or during the task. The photographs are all portraits, each depicting one teenager from the shoulders up, smiling and looking straight at the viewer.

In the pre-interviews, the pupils were asked to give a brief description of each teenager in the photographs, including what type of job they thought each person might have in the future. Following this, they were given eight job titles written on cards (builder, farmer, doctor, nurse, teacher, scientist, computers and cleaner) and asked to assign one job title to each person. In the post-interviews, the pupils were not asked to describe the teenagers before being given the job titles, but were instead given hobbies (basketball, shopping, social media, singing, chess, reading, gymnastics, and gaming) to assign in addition to the job titles. The closed nature of this task encourages the use of stereotypes, thus enabling investigation of the pupils' willingness or reluctance towards engaging in this type of process. Simultaneously, however, it might limit the transferability of the results, as it might not provide an accurate indication of the pupils' inclination to stereotype in general. This also applies to the use of interview data generally, as they are not naturally occurring events.

The interviews were conducted in English, which could be considered a limitation as it is not the pupils' first language. However, the pupils' level of English was generally high, and they were also given the

opportunity to use Norwegian when needed to ensure a more accurate expression of ideas. Other limitations include the external and internal framing of the interviews, which are likely to influence the type of discussions elicited from them and means that they cannot necessarily be considered "a window to people's true opinions" (Marková, Linell, Grossen, & Orvig, 2007, p. 90). These will be discussed in more detail in the following, but also include the possible influences on the pupils' responses caused by the researcher being both actively involved in the pedagogical side of the intervention and facilitating the focus group interviews.

The choice of focus group interviews as the main data collection method for this study is grounded in the researcher's philosophical position within social constructivism, whereby individuals' knowledge is seen as being constructed through social interactions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, pp. 28-29). Focus group interviews encourage dialogue, which is central to social constructivist research. The opportunities for co-construction of knowledge also better reflects the interaction patterns employed throughout the intervention than for example individual interviews. Additionally, group interviews are often experienced as less threatening for young research participants than individual interviews (Eder & Fingerson, 2002, p. 183). The advantages of focus group interviews were therefore considered to outweigh the possible limitations. The pupil texts also provide insight into individual understandings, balancing out the limitations of the interview data.

The interviews were audio and video recorded. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Cues from video recordings, such as pointing and placing of job titles, were then included in the transcription. In total, the transcriptions of this task in all the five groups pre- and post-intervention (86 of a total of 511 minutes of audio and video recordings) comprise the interview data for this study. The transcription conventions used can be found in Appendix 3.

Pupil texts

The supplementary pupil text data set consists of 115 texts produced during the lessons in relation to three classroom tasks that focused on visual stereotypes. All the texts submitted by the 62 pupils who had consented to the use of their texts for the study have been included in the data set; however, not all pupils completed or submitted each task. The data set therefore consists of 45 texts written in response to questions related to the graphic novel American Born Chinese (Yang, 2006), 16 texts written as an optional task on an exam in response to the Montage task, and 54 texts consisting of a drawn redesign of an advertisement, accompanied by an explanation, made for the task Race in Advertisements. Through these tasks, the pupils explored visual stereotypes related to Asian ethnicity, indigenous peoples, and African ethnicity respectively (see Appendix 4 for details about the tasks).

Data analysis

Multiple qualitative analytical methods were applied, thus increasing the rigor and trustworthiness through triangulation (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 575). The main analytical approach drew on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, and the interview data was coded systematically using the qualitative analysis software NVivo (version 12.4). Both deductive codes that were identified theoretically prior to analysis and inductive codes that were identified empirically from the data material itself were employed in the analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 565). Following the initial coding process, codes were sorted into potential broader level themes and a thematic map was developed (see Table 1 for an overview of the codes and themes). Codes and themes were constantly revisited, defined and redefined in an iterative process throughout the analysis. Finally, the entire data set was re-read in order to make sure all the relevant data was coded in the respective themes and individual extracts and cases were selected for deeper analysis.

Elements from a Goffman-inspired interaction analysis were incorporated to account for the influence of the social context of the focus group interviews (Halkier, 2010). This includes the idea that people in social interactions attempt to sustain their performance and direct the impressions formed of them by others (Goffman, 1971, p. xi), that they are concerned with maintaining their own face and that of others (Goffman, 1967/2003, p. 7), as well as the contextual frame of the interaction shaping what can or cannot, should or should not be said or done in any specific situation (Goffman, 1986). Following Marková et al. (2007), both the external framing, such as the timing and place of the interview, instructions given, etc., and internal framing, i.e. how the discourse is developed by the participants during the interaction, were considered.

Finally, the codes and themes were quantified, both in order to give a more objective representation of the frequencies and to search for patterns in the data (Sandelowski, 2001, p. 232). In particular, this was applied to compare the pre- and post-interviews. An overview of the themes and codes applied and developed can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 *Overview of themes and codes applied in the analysis*

Theme	Codes	Explanation
Explicit displays of stereotyping *Deductive*	***Ethnic/religious stereotypes*** *Inductive*	Explicit displays of stereotyping where the group is defined based on ethnicity and/or religion
Instances of stereotyping, as defined by Kanahara (2006)	***Gender stereotypes*** *Inductive*	Explicit displays of stereotyping where the group is defined based on gender
	Other stereotypes *Inductive*	Explicit displays of stereotyping where the group is defined based on profession
Stereotype awareness *Deductive*	***Acknowledging specific*** *Deductive*	Explicit displays of acknowledging a stereotype in a specific instance
Instances where the pupils display some awareness of the concept of stereotyping	***Acknowledging general*** *Deductive*	Explicit displays of acknowledging the process of stereotyping in general
	Challenging specific *Deductive*	Explicit displays of challenging a specific stereotype
	Challenging general *Deductive*	Explicit displays of challenging the process of stereotyping in general
	Challenging task *Inductive*	Explicit displays of challenging the task, or the process of stereotyping implied by the task

Subsequent to the analysis of the interview data, the pupil text data set was analysed deductively, applying a subset of the codes. The codes applied in the analysis of this data set have been shaded in Table 1. As the stereotypes elicited through the tasks were not the pupils' own stereotypes, but rather stereotypes they identified in the different images, codes related to explicit displays of stereotyping were not applied. Results from this analysis were used to supplement the main data set, adding clarifications of findings from the interview data as well as linking the results to the intervention.

Results and discussion

As the two themes, explicit displays of stereotyping and stereotype awareness, are related to research question 1, and 2 and 3 respectively, they will be presented and discussed separately in the following.

Explicit displays of stereotyping

In order to answer the first research question, the interview data was analysed with the aim of identifying explicit displays of stereotyping. Based on the content of the stereotype, three codes were identified and applied in the analysis (Table 2).

Table 2 *Overview of codes applied in the theme "explicit displays of stereotyping"*

Code	Example
Ethnic/religious stereotypes	**Tiana:** Like, from what I know…most like people from, I don't know, middle east or like other types of countries that she's from they want to become doctors or something, because like it's the…one of the best jobs. So I think like she [referring to the Asian female] wants to become a doctor. *Group 1, pre-interview*
Gender stereotypes	**Alexander:** Most men go into computer-ish fields. *Group 1, pre-interview*
Other stereotypes	**Oscar:** [...] I think he reminds me of a… computer technician at least. All he needs are the glasses… and … then he is the… stereotypical. *Group 2, pre-interview*

Table 3 shows the number and distribution of the statements in the different codes. A notable change from the pre- to the post-interviews is the substantial reduction in explicit displays of stereotyping in relation to ethnic/religious groups. This indicates a positive result from the intervention, as stereotypes related to ethnicity were explicitly addressed and previous research has shown that addressing stereotypes can enable the pupils to re-evaluate their previous assumptions about cultures (Forsman, 2010; Su, 2011). Simultaneously, there was an increase in the number of gender stereotypes in the post-interviews. This could have been due to the external framing of the interviews, as the place (school) and time (during lesson hours) might have encouraged a classroom-like interaction (Marková et al., 2007, p. 88), in which the pupils are generally encouraged to complete the task given to them. As the task encourages the use of stereotypes, the pupils might have felt it necessary to do this, regardless of their inclination to stereotype in other situations. However, it is interesting that, in the post-interviews, they increasingly resorted to the kinds of stereotypes that were not explicitly addressed during the intervention (i.e. gender stereotypes).

The number of statements in the three codes related to the individual ethnicities is displayed in Table 4, and reveals that the majority of the ethnic/religious stereotypes were related to the Asian or the African ethnicities. The largest reduction in number of ethnic/religious stereotypes was related to the Asian ethnicity. Interestingly, the European teenagers were rarely stereotyped based on ethnicity and were the only ones stereotyped (exclusively) based on gender. The gender stereotypes were mainly related to the job title of "computers" in connection to the European male.

176

Table 1 *Number of statements in the different codes based on groups, in pre- and post-interviews*

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Group 5		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Ethnic/religious stereotypes	4	1	0	0	5	3	2	2	3	2	14	8
Gender stereotypes	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4
Other stereotypes	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2
Total	6	3	2	1	5	3	2	3	3	4	18	14

Table 4 *Number of statements in the different codes based on ethnicity of the stereotyped group, in pre- and post-interviews*

	Asian		European		African	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Ethnic/religious stereotypes	10	3	1	1	7	5
Gender stereotypes	0	0	0	4	0	0
Other stereotypes	1	1	2	0	0	1
Total	11	4	3	5	7	6

The prominent stereotype presented in relation to the Asian teenagers was that they are "very smart, clever," and have "high ambitions" (Anna, pre-interview). This stereotype was present in both the pre- and post-interviews. In the pre-interviews, an additional stereotype of the Asian female was that she is oppressed "because in their culture [...] the men decide how the woman is going to live" (Monica, pre-interview). Neither of these stereotypes were explicitly addressed in the intervention. However, the pupils worked with many other Asian stereotypes present in the graphic novel American Born Chinese. Through working within the dimensions of CVL, the pupils were encouraged to look past the surface level of the text and images in the novel, and question how racism can be encouraged through stereotypes, as illustrated in the following quotation from a text written by Monica in response to the novel:

> They [referring to the protagonist's (Jin's) classmates] are relatively racists because of their prejudices. They have assumptions and pictures of how they think Chinese people are, and act out of them.
> *Monica, pupil texts*

Through critically reading both the images and the text, the pupils identified how the "assumptions and pictures" of Asians have real-life consequences. Other pupils also pointed to how "no-one makes an effort to correct the students' racist tendencies" (Ellinor, pupil texts), indicating that they see a possibility for taking informed action (Lewison et al., 2002). The reduction in Asian stereotypes in the post-interviews could therefore be a result of an increased understanding of the problems related to Asian stereotypes in general.

A stereotype about Africans identified in the pre-interviews was that they come "from a poor family and a poor country [...] with no education" (Kenneth, pre-interview). However, they were also stereotyped as being hard-working, wanting to better their lives and "help the next generation" (Anna,

pre-interview). In the post-interview, no reference was made to poverty, and there was only one explicit stereotype related to having low education. Instead, the African male was stereotyped as being "good at basketball" (Tiana, post-interview), likely encouraged by the addition of the hobby "basketball" in the post-interviews. During the intervention, the pupils worked with African stereotypes through the task Race in advertisement. In this task, the pupils focused on the power imbalances between "white" and "black" people, connected this to the history of slavery as well as the stereotype of the athletic African. Through redesigning the advertisement, the pupils demonstrated how they used this awareness to take informed action (Lewison et al., 2002), by for example removing "the sprinters who were a metaphor for fast computers, because you can advertise fast computers without stereotyping people" (Eva, pupil texts). However, the reduction in number of explicit displays of stereotyping in relation to the African ethnicity is considerably smaller than in connection to the Asian. This could imply that working with American Born Chinese had a greater effect on the pupils than the advertisement, possibly due to the differences inherent in the two media, the type of questions asked, or the time for reflection allowed after the task.

In addition to a reduction in number and the changes in content outlined above, several differences in the form in which the stereotypes were presented were also identified between the pre- and the post-interviews. Firstly, a change in footing (Goffman, 1981) can be noted. Whereas the pupils frequently marked their position as subjective in the pre-interviews, as identified through "I think," or "I feel," they often invoked other voices in the post-interviews (Marková et al., 2007). This change of footing can, for example, be noted in the case of Tiana, who in the pre-interview marked her position as subjective through the use of "I feel":

> **Tiana**: Because I feel like most like… ehh, people that come from other countries they want
> to like want the best job […]
> *Group 1, pre-interview*

In the post-interview, rather than speaking from a subjective position, Tiana invoked the "voice of common sense" (Marková et al., 2007, p. 124):

> **Tiana**: Because ehh… black people are considered to be good at basketball, so yes.
> *Group 1, post-interview*

She also invoked other voices: "when we… like see movies and stuff they are like playing more base… basketball" (Tiana, post-interview). On the one hand, the subjective position tones down the statement, opening up the possibility that not everyone adheres to it (Marková et al., 2007, p. 127). In that sense, the change in footing could be interpreted as a decrease in hedging. However, the pupils might also have brought in other voices as a way of distancing themselves from the statement, letting "others" advocate the position, without having to commit to this position themselves (Marková et al., 2007, p. 157).

Another change is the complexity of the statements containing explicit displays of stereotyping. Whereas the statements in the pre-interviews were generally quite elaborate, the stereotypes in the post-interviews were mostly short and with few or no explanations attached. Additionally, these simple statements frequently contained an acknowledgement of the specific stereotype: "being stereotypical, ehm… a lot of […] guys from India… are doctors" (Leon, post-interview). These acknowledgements might indicate that the pupils were guiding the interviewer's and the other participants' impression of them (Goffman, 1971), by demonstrating that they were aware of what they were doing. In combination with positioning themselves at a personal distance from their statements, this could create an impression that the pupils were just completing the task due to the classroom-like external framing

of the interview (Marková et al., 2007, p. 88). They might therefore have been producing the type of statements expected by the task, while not necessarily committing to this position themselves.

Stereotype awareness

In order to answer research questions 2 and 3, the data set was coded for instances of acknowledging (indicating awareness) and challenging (indicating willingness) stereotypes, following Devine (1989). Following Forsman (2010), these were further divided into addressing specific instances of stereotyping and stereotyping in general. As both acknowledging and challenging stereotypes necessarily implies an awareness, these codes have all been included in the theme "stereotype awareness." Some challenges were also directed at the task itself. These were coded in the inductive code "challenge, task" and have been included in this theme as they challenge the process of stereotyping implied by the task. Examples of statements in the different codes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 *Overview of themes related to stereotype awareness*

Code	Example
Acknowledging specific	**Leon**: Ehh, being stereotypical ehm… a lot of like Indian… maybe Indian guys from India… are doctors.
	Group 4, post-interview
Acknowledging general	**Robert**: The… the only thing I can use to like place these different hobbies and jobs is stereotypes, I feel so…
	Group 4, post-interview
Challenging specific	**Monica**: Just because he is white doesn't mean that he has money.
	Group 3, post-interview
Challenging general	**Monica**: So I think it's wrong to place… ehm… to just go for, well stereotyping.
	Group 3, post-interview
Challenging task	**Kristian**: Don't really know it's… kind of hard to base it on the look.
	Group 5, post interview

Table 6 shows the number and distribution of the coded statements related to this theme. Some of the statements have been double-coded, as they addressed more than one aspect of stereotype awareness (e.g., Robert's statement in Table 6 was coded as both "acknowledging general", and "challenge task"). In total, more than twice as many statements were coded in this theme in the post-interviews, compared to the pre-interviews. In particular, there was a marked increase in the codes "acknowledging specific" and "challenging task."

Table 6 *Number of coded statements within the themes related to stereotype awareness based on groups, in pre- and post-interviews*

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Group 5		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	**Pre**	**Post**
Acknowledge specific	0	1	3	2	2	1	0	3	0	3	**5**	**10**
Acknowledge general	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	**1**	**2**
Challenge specific	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	**2**	**1**
Challenge general	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**0**	**1**
Challenge task	1	0	0	1	1	4	0	2	0	2	**2**	**7**
Total	*2*	*1*	*3*	*3*	*4*	*8*	*0*	*6*	*1*	*5*	**10**	**23**

The acknowledgements of specific stereotypes often preceded or followed explicit displays of stereotyping in the post-interviews, indicating that even though some of the pupils still stereotyped explicitly, they had an increased awareness of what stereotyping is and how it is connected to reading images. In the post-interviews, some of the specific acknowledgements were included the phrase "I don't want to be stereotypical, but...", as in the following statement made in relation to the African female:

> **Sofie:** I don't know, I don't want to be stereotypical, but I feel like she... looks like a cleaner.
> *Group 2, post-interview*

Here, Sofie signalled not only that she was aware that her statement "she looks like a cleaner" could be perceived as stereotypical but also that this is something with which she did not want to be associated. Such statements indicate either that the pupils did not want to be stereotypical but were struggling to complete the task without the use of stereotypes, or, at the very least, that they did not want to be perceived as being stereotypical. The first interpretation indicates that they were concerned about who they are, reflecting a change in willingness to be stereotypical, while the second indicates that they were guiding the other participants' impression of them (Goffman, 1971). From a non-essentialist approach to culture, the first would be preferable as willingness is a necessary pre-condition for impeding the automatic process of stereotyping (Devine, 1989). However, although both awareness and willingness are required in order to inhibit stereotypes, challenging does not automatically follow as it requires time and conscious effort (Devine, 1989). Statements including "I don't want to be stereotypical, but..." could therefore indicate that the pupils were struggling to move from awareness, and perhaps also willingness, to taking action and challenging.

The struggle to complete the task without the use of stereotypes is also evident in the challenges directed at the task. All but one group displayed an increase in explicit task challenges from the pre- to the post-interviews (Table 6). This could indicate that the pupils were more aware of the "lack of information" in images (Benjamin, pupil texts), and the difficulty, or even impossibility, of making assumptions when they "don't know them" (Caroline, post-interview). However, the classroom-like external framing of the interview (Marková et al., 2007) could have had an influence on the extent to which the pupils felt that challenging the task was appropriate in that situation. As the pupils got to know the researcher better during the intervention, they might have felt more comfortable challenging the task in the post-interviews, which also needs to be considered as a possible interpretation.

The increased awareness of stereotyping as a process can be linked to the intervention through the pupils' texts, as in the following excerpt written by one of the pupils about the montage analysed in the Montage task:

> This text does not give a fair impression about who the indigenous people are and it can cause more stereotyping.
> *Benjamin, pupil texts*

In this excerpt, Benjamin displayed a recognition of the role of images in relation to stereotyping, focusing both on the (lack of) promotion of social justice and its role in shaping people's attitudes (Chung, 2013, p. 6) towards indigenous people. Other pupils also displayed their attitude towards stereotyping. Several stated that although it is "normal," it is not necessarily needed "because you can advertise fast computers without stereotyping people" (Eva, pupil texts). In their redesigns, both of the montage and the advertisements, the pupils generally challenged the stereotypes presented in the images, choosing instead to provide more nuanced representations. Through disrupting commonplace ways of thinking about the world (Lewison et al., 2002), the pupils appeared to become more aware that stereotypes are not necessary, and that these can be challenged, which appears to point to a clear link between instruction and performance on the task in the post-interviews.

Acknowledging stereotyping in general was identified in Group 3's pre-interview. This occurred after a pupil-initiated activity in which the group sorted the photographs based on who they thought would have low, middle, or high education. During the activity, the pupils made many explicit displays of stereotyping, but exhibited no stereotype awareness. The final distribution made by the group included the European male and female in the high level of education group, the Asian male and female in middle education, and the African male and female in the low education group. Once the distribution was made, the following exchange took place:

Tobias:	Well it's like… it's funny, because… if we see them now… the o… the ones who has the white skin…
Stefan:	Yeah.
Tobias:	Gets the good education, but with the one who have dark skin gets the worst. And those with the middle education have like… in between dark and white.
[…]	
Stefan:	Ehh… if we like just… being stereotypical, it seems like those who's have the lighter skin… gets the better education.
[…]	
Monica:	We already have stereotypes about people cause we have heard different… things from different persons, and it's like you categorize… [Laughter]
Int.:	Yeah?
Monica:	People from their skin colours.
Int.:	Mhm.
Monica:	So we already have a… thought of… yes.
Group 3, pre-interview	

In this exchange, Tobias started by bringing the group's attention to the fact that their beliefs about the level of education coincided with the skin colour of the people in the photograph. Stefan then introduced the concept of stereotyping to explain this (acknowledging specific). This was followed by Monica acknowledging the use of stereotypes in general, showing a level of sophistication in her understanding of the concept (i.e., stereotypes as pre-conceived understanding of people, and

stereotypes as categorization). The sequence of the student-initiated activity and the displays of stereotype awareness could indicate that although both Stefan and Monica were aware of the concept of stereotypes before the pre-interviews, they did not immediately connect this to the task. In fact, it was only after seeing the photographs laid out in that way (refer to Tobias' comment: "when we see them now") that they were able to recognize the stereotypical pattern of their decisions. It would therefore appear that the pupils co-constructed new knowledge through the exchange by building on each other's statements and thus together arriving at new realizations (Marková et al., 2007, p. 65). Seeing the photographs through new lenses (Lewison et al., 2002) allowed them to take a step back and question what they had previously considered normal.

There were individual differences between the groups in the number of displays of stereotype awareness, both in the pre- and post-interviews. Whereas an increase can be found in Groups 3, 4, and 5, Group 1 had a decrease in the number of stereotype awareness and no change was found in Group 2 (Table 6). One possible explanation for this is the relatively low number of explicit displays of stereotyping present in Group 1 in the post-interviews and in Group 2 in both pre- and post-interviews (see Table 3), providing less reason and fewer opportunities for displaying awareness.

Specific and general challenges towards stereotypes were sparse in both the pre- and post-interviews. Furthermore, in cases where the pupils did challenge stereotypes presented by others, this was generally performed hesitantly. The following example is from the post-interview in Group 3, where Stefan guessed that the European male would have the hobby of gaming because he was "white" and therefore "had money." Monica immediately laughed, and upon being asked why she laughed and if she disagreed, she explained:

Monica:	Ehh… ehh… it's just like it's stereotyping. Like we always do. It's like the same as we think that she [points at the Asian female] is a cleaner because she is… a Muslim.
Int.:	Mhm.
Monica:	And we often think that Muslims are… employed for jobs that we don't want ourselves.
[...]	
Int.:	So you think the fact that he put gaming on him [points at the European male] because he has money is a stereotype?
Monica:	Yes.
Int.:	Yeah, mhm.
Monica:	Just because he is white doesn't mean that he has money.
Int.:	No?
Monica:	And just because someone is black it doesn't mean that they don't have money.

Group 3, post-interview

In her first statement, Monica hesitated (marked by two instances of "ehh" followed by a short break), indicating reluctance or discomfort (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 72). Rather than answering whether she disagreed with Stefan's comment, she stated that his comment was an instance of stereotyping, followed by a statement on stereotypes in general as well as an example of a different stereotype. Only after the interviewer asked Monica directly whether she thought Stefan's statement was a stereotype did she challenge it.

Her resistance towards challenging Stefan could be interpreted as a concern about maintaining her fellow pupils' face (Goffman, 1967/2003), which could have contributed to the scarcity of challenges towards stereotypes. In an interaction, agreement is generally the preferred response to a statement and

disagreement is seen as unpleasant, risking insult (Pomerantz, 1984). Moreover, even if the pupils had the awareness and willingness necessary to inhibit the process of stereotyping, thus challenging their own stereotypes, it does not necessarily follow that this would be done explicitly.

One group challenged the use of stereotypes in general in the post-interviews. This was done by Monica, when she was asked directly if she wished to place a job title or a hobby:

Monica:	I don't think that these pictures can tell us anything about... who they are going to be when they... in the future, because we just get a... picture of them, so everyone can be everything.
Int.:	Mhm.
Monica:	So I think it's wrong to place... ehm... to just go for, well stereotyping.
Int.:	Mhm.
Monica:	So, I don't know because... she [points at the Asian female] could be a basketball player and she [points at the African female] could be a builder, but we don't know because we don't know them.
Int.:	No.
Monica:	So I think it's difficult to just... place some... jobs for them.

Group 3, post-interview

In this extract, Monica challenged the task in several ways, starting by stating that she did not think that the pictures could tell them anything about who they were going to be in the future. She also recognized that in order to make assumptions about a person without knowing them, it was necessary to use stereotypes (Lippmann, 1922/2017), and displayed her attitude towards this by stating that this was "wrong." She was therefore displaying both awareness of stereotyping as a process in relation to making assumptions about people, and a willingness to challenge this process, both of which were argued to be necessary in order to inhibit automatically activated stereotypes (Devine, 1989). Interestingly, the one group that moved all the way towards challenging the use of stereotypes in general in the post-interviews was the only group to acknowledge stereotypes in general in the pre-interviews. This could suggest that this group, through the co-construction of awareness in the pre-interviews, was at a different starting point at the beginning of the intervention than the other groups, which might have allowed them to advance further towards challenging during the period of the intervention than their peers.

Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to investigate if introducing CVL practices as an approach to teaching about cultures in the EFL classroom could have an effect on (1) the pupils' visual stereotypes, (2) the pupils' awareness of these, and (3) their willingness to challenge them. The results indicate that although the pupils engaged in the process of stereotyping both before and after the intervention, they were less inclined to make explicit displays of stereotyping in relation to ethnicity/religion afterwards. Simultaneously, the pupils who did stereotype explicitly after the intervention mainly did so with less personal involvement, distancing themselves from the stereotype by invoking other voices and were generally less inclined to elaborate on the stereotype. It was suggested that through disrupting stereotypes as a commonplace way of viewing the world (Lewison et al., 2002), the pupils might have gained insights that allowed them to "interrogate taken-for-granted social beliefs" (Lau et al., 2017, p. 120). In some instances, this led the pupils to take informed action (Lewison et al., 2002) and choose not to stereotype, while in others, it appears to have at least raised some awareness that stereotyping is not "the thing to do."

183

Simultaneously, the results showed a substantial increase in stereotype awareness from the pre- to the post-interviews, which was further explored through the texts produced by the pupils during the intervention. Overall, a change in the internal framing can be noted in most of the groups (Marková et al., 2007), whereby acknowledging and challenging stereotypes and the process of stereotyping became a more significant part of the groups' discourses. The results therefore indicate that it is possible for the pupils to increase their awareness of, as well as their willingness to challenge, the process of stereotyping through engaging in CVL practices.

The findings also indicate that although many of the pupils displayed an increased awareness of stereotypes, they struggled to move towards actually challenging them. Additionally, the results suggest that the pupils' different starting points related to awareness of and willingness to challenge stereotypes before the intervention may have had an influence on the extent to which they moved towards focusing on the general, and towards challenging, indicating that this is a process that requires time. Furthermore, this process might not have a clear end-point, as people are likely to move back and forth depending on the context surrounding individual instances of stereotyping. Thus, a possible avenue for further research could be a longitudinal study aiming to explore whether the effects of a longer intervention would be greater.

This study has therefore provided empirical evidence regarding the potential benefits of combining the CVL approach and EFL instruction, a link that has hitherto not been explored empirically to the best of the researcher's knowledge. These findings indeed look promising for the EFL classroom if one of the aims is to encourage greater understanding, as well as increased respect and interaction, between people with different cultural backgrounds. This article has argued that stereotypes can be problematic in intercultural communication, since people's identity is plural rather than essential (Dervin, 2012), and stereotypes encourage essentialism. Some scholars have raised a concern that explicitly addressing stereotypes in education could reinforce existing stereotypes, or even introduce new ones, for example through the pupils filtering new information in a way that confirms previous beliefs and attitudes (Byram, 1994, p. 39). However, as stereotyping is a natural and automatic process, the alternative is to leave this process unexposed, risking a continuation of sub-conscious stereotyping. Instead, teachers could aim to mitigate these risks by using stereotypes that the pupils already hold, or are aware of, as a starting point, and to facilitate critical reflection of these. Through encouraging the pupils to critically reflect on the stereotypes they bring to and take from images, teachers can support the development of strategies that make the workings of images, and stereotypes, conscious (Newfield, 2011). In this way, CVL practices can provide the pupils with agency to choose whether to act on the automatic stereotypes present in commonplace ways of viewing the world, and in images.

Viewing CVL as an approach to teaching cultures, rather than an aim in itself, also allows for the integration of the approach into regular instruction, while still attending to the other learning aims set by the teacher and the school curriculum. In this way, CVL practices can be implemented throughout the years of education, rather than as a one-off intervention, allowing more time for reflection and maturation of the pupils' thinking in relation to stereotypes. Although the current article has focused on the implementation of CVL practices in the EFL classroom, it is the researcher's belief that it would be beneficial to introduce such practices in other subjects, such as history and/or social science, as the issue of visual stereotypes is relevant beyond the EFL context. These subjects also have the advantage of being mostly taught in the pupils' first language, which might be particularly beneficial for encouraging engagement in critical reflections with young learners.

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185

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Appendix 1 – Overview of tasks in the intervention

Topic	Task	Description	Time (min.)	Learning aims
Stereotypes Indigenous people Multiculturalism	Blindfold task. *Inspired by Vasquez, Tate, and Harste (2013)*	The pupils were asked to guess what a photograph depicting Native Americans might look like and reflected on the source of these assumptions in a class discussion.	10	Recognize the role of images in society Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work
	Are images universally understood?	The pupils explore different ways of understanding the same images from different positions using an ambiguous cartoon taken from an advertisement for painkillers as well as an image containing items with strong cultural associations in Norway.	10	Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives
	AIEVM. *Adapted version from Barrett, Byram, Ipgrave, and Seurrat (2013)*	The pupils analyse an image depicting indigenous people, using questions from the AIEVM as a guide.	30	Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work Recognize how the choices made by image makers and users positions the viewer to respond in particular ways
	Taking pictures of the school. *From Janks et al. (2014, p. 85)*	The pupils read and discuss the poem "The blind men and the elephant. They then take pictures of the school individually, and compare the images and the impression they give of the school in group discussions.	30	Recognize that all texts are partial re-presentations of the world
	Visual stereotypes, redesign of photomontage *Montage taken from Bromseth and Wigdahl (2007)*	Following a lecture on visual stereotypes, the pupils redesign a montage from a Norwegian EFL textbook depicting indigenous people in pairs.	80	Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world Be aware of their own visual stereotypes and how these work

187

Politics Multiculturalism	American Born Chinese (Yang, 2006) Questions adapted from Schieble (2014) and Davis (2013)	The pupils read chapter 2 and 3 of the novel and answer questions related to stereotypes, positioning and power relationships.	80	Be able to recognize how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning
	Visual grammar and positioning. *Based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Janks et al. (2014)*	The pupils were introduced to key concepts from Kress and Van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design (angle, frame, focus, colour etc.). They then analysed images of their choice using these tools.	60	Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images Be able to recognize how the choices made by image makers and users positions the viewer to respond in particular ways
	Test (optional task on montage)	As an optional task on a test, the pupils wrote an essay discussing the montage depicting indigenous people used in previous task with the following prompt: Focusing on both the text and the images, write an analysis of the possible messages communicated about indigenous people through this montage. Discuss the potential implications of these messages, and how they relate to the situation of indigenous peoples today.	80	Be able to see how texts can be re-designed in order to give a more just representation of the world Recognize the role of images in society
Race Class	White privilege	The pupils discussed their own experiences of white privilege. They then analysed a poster that represents "white" people as "normal" from different perspectives.	30	Be able to interrogate multiple perspectives Be able to recognize how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning
	Political cartoons	The pupils analysed political cartoons addressing race issues in America	25	Maintain analytical tools to interrogate images Be able to recognize how the different elements of a multimodal text work together to create meaning Be able to recognize how the choices made by image makers and users positions the viewer to respond in particular ways
	Analysis of advertisement *Annotation of visuals, idea taken*	The teacher modelled a critical reading of two advertisements.	80	Be able to recognize how the choices made by image makers and users positions the viewer to

188

from Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell, and McAdam (2014) List of question based on Stevens and Bean (2007)	The pupils then discussed an advertisement based on a list of questions, focusing on representations of race, power relationships and socio-political consequences. Following this, the pupils redesigned the advertisement individually.	respond in particular ways Recognize the role of images in society Maintain a metalanguage and analytical tools to interrogate images

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Task 1, pre-interview

The pupils are shown the six photographs depicting teenagers with different gender and ethnicities.

1. Give a brief description of each person.
   a. What are they like?
   b. What type of job are they likely to have when they are adults?

They are then provided eight job titles printed on cards (builder, farmer, doctor, nurse, teacher, scientist, computers, cleaner) and are asked to work together to assign a job title to each photograph, while also discussing the reasoning behind their choices.

2. Who will have which job and why?

Task 1, post-interview

The pupils are shown the same six photographs as in the pre-interviews. They are then provided the same eight job titles, as well as eight hobbies (gaming, reading, basketball, comics, chess, fishing, singing, computer programming) and are asked to work together to assign one job title and one hobby to each photograph, while also discussing the reasoning behind their choices.

1. Who will have which job and why?
2. Who has which hobby and why?

Appendix 3 - Transcription codes

Adapted from Halkier (2010, p. 71):

[ ]:	overlaps in speech
( ):	incomprehensible speech
[laughter]:	other oral expressions
[pointing]:	non-verbal expressions
…:	pauses less than 3 seconds, trailed off speech
[silence]:	pauses more than 3 seconds

189

Appendix 4 – Pupil text tasks

American Born Chinese

The pupils read Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of *American Born Chinese* (Yang, 2006) and answered questions provided by the teacher, as well as a number of CVL questions added by the researcher (adapted from Davis, 2013 and Schieble, 2014). These were:

- On page 30-31 and then again on page 36, Jin Wang and Wei-Chen are introduced by teachers to their classmates. Discuss how the images and text work together to communicate the actions and reactions of the students and teachers. Which stereotypes of Chinese and American people can you identify?
- How are the other boys at Jin's school depicted on pages 32-33? What does this suggest about power relationships?
- Compare and contrast the opening images and words for each of the stories (page 23 and 43). How do the words and the images help distinguish the stories and set their respective tones?
- Compare the drawing styles used for Chin-Kee in comparison to the other characters in the story. What is the effect of this?

Optional task on exam – Montage

The pupils were shown a montage depicting indigenous people taken from an EFL textbook used in lower secondary school in Norway (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007, pp. 28-29). Prior to the exam, the pupils had discussed this montage in a full-class discussion and had produced re-designs of the montage in pairs. On the exam, the pupils were asked to write a 5-paragraph essay about one of five tasks, of which the following was related to the montage:

Focusing on both the text and the images, write an analysis of the possible messages communicated about indigenous people through this montage. Discuss the potential implications of these messages, and how they relate to the situation of indigenous peoples today.

Race in Advertisements

Prior to this task, the pupils participated in group discussions about an advertisement from Intel. Following this, the pupils were asked to redesign the advertisement individually:

Think about potential problems of the advertisement. How could it be re-designed? Sketch a suggestion below. Write annotations if necessary to make your points clearer.

They were also asked to give an explanation behind their choices:

Write about your re-designed advertisement. Explain the changes you made, as well as the reasons why you made these changes. In what ways do you think your re-designed advertisement is better than the original one?

Article II

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Article III

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