



Høgskulen på Vestlandet

Bachelor in GBPEL412

Spring 2019

Title:

Norwegian teachers' perception of the benefits of using literature in the classroom

Candidate number 218

Pages: 33
Words: 8570

Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven skal undersøke hvordan norske engelsklærere opplever fordelene litteratur kan ha i språkopplæringen. Oppgaven ser på relevant forskning rundt bruken av litteratur i EFL (english as a foreign language) klasserommet. Den ser på hva "litteratur" er, fordeler og ulemper ved å bruke litteratur i språkopplæring, samt hva litteratur en bør bruke og hvordan. Metoden benyttet er kvalitative intervju. Intervjuene blir i diskusjonsdelen av oppgaven sett opp mot forskningsteorien.

Summary

This thesis will aim to answer what Norwegian EFL teachers' perceptions of benefits of using literature to learn language are. It will look at relevant academic literature of the use of literature in the EFL classroom, and look at what "literature" is, benefits and difficulties with it, what literature is good to use and also how to use it. The method used to collect data is qualitative. The interviews will in the discussion part be connected to the theory part of the thesis.

Innholdsfortegnelse

1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose and Research Question.....	4
3.0 Theory	4
3.1 What is “literature”?	4
3.2 Literature in the national curriculum for English	6
3.3 Literature in English language learning	7
3.3.1 Cultural awareness	8
3.3.2 Language improvement.....	8
3.3.3 Motivation	9
3.4 Difficulties with using literature in language learning.....	9
3.5 What literature to use?	11
3.6 How to use the literature	11
4.0 Method	12
4.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods	13
4.2 Data collection and interviews	13
4.2.1 Interview guide.....	13
5.0 Ethical considerations.....	14
6.0 Results	15
6.1 View of what literature is.....	15
6.2 Literature in the English Subject Curriculum.....	16
6.3 What literature do they use, and how do they use it?	17
6.4 Benefits reported by candidates.....	19
6.4.1 Cultural awareness	20
7.0 Discussion	21
7.1 The literature they use.....	21
7.2 How do they use the literature?	22
7.3 The benefits of literature	24
8.0 Conclusion.....	27
9.0 References	29
10.0 Appendix 1 – consent form and interview guide.....	31

1.0 Introduction

The theme for this thesis is how one may use literature as a tool to improve learning a foreign language. In an attempt to find an answer to this, it will firstly be relevant to look at what literature is. Secondly, it is relevant to present why literature may improve language learning in the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom. Research has been done on why literature is a good way to enhance language learning. However, very little research has been done on how Norwegian teachers of English approach it. In the theory part of this thesis, multiple positive reasons why teachers should use literature in their language teaching will be presented. Some difficulties will also be presented, as I believe awareness of some of these may enable teachers to better be aware of and use the benefits literature have on language improvement.

2.0 Purpose and Research Question

This thesis will focus on the use of literature in the Norwegian EFL classroom and its benefits. The purpose of the thesis is to find out what benefits teachers believe it has on the students' language. Therefore, the thesis aims to answer the following question:

What are Norwegian teachers' perception of the benefits of using literature in the classroom?

3.0 Theory

3.1 What is "literature"?

There have been countless attempts to find a definition to "literature". It is an English word constantly used by millions of people, and every user will have his or her own individual definition. An easy definition may be that anything is literature if it is being read as literature. Henning (2011) argues for this. A novel, a poem or a play will only be ink on paper unless a reader transform it into something meaningful.

There are different approaches to defining a concept, such as “literature”. One of them is the criterial approach, where the definition of a word is based upon a set of criteria (Meyer, 1997, p. 1). Of course, the criteria vary, but the following criteria is an example of a criterial definition. If “literature” matches all criteria, the definition applies (Meyer, 1997, p. 2).

- a form of written text that is in a literary genre
- a text that is read as literature
- works that a community defines as literature through history

Another approach is the prototype approach. This approach does not focus on criteria; it focuses on an established prototype. The prototype can be a particularly good example of the word or idea one is trying to define, or multiple texts with overlapping similarities (Meyer, 1997, p. 2). One characteristic of literature is that literary works most often are written text, and most good examples of literary texts are written. The fact that one needs to specify when a literary work is oral, shows that it is most often written text. It also shows that oral literature does not fit within the prototype. Moreover, the characteristic above includes all kinds of text that may be considered literature: Advertisement, shampoo bottle, shopping lists. It is personal if one chooses to call this literature, though it is arguable that fewer would do so, and they do not fit within the prototype (Meyer, 1997, p. 4).

Defining literature could be a thesis in itself, which means I should narrow down the definition. Henning (2011) writes that we are generally talking about fictional literature when we are speaking of literature. His definition is based on a prototype approach, and he states that one normally must specify if one includes anything else than a fictional text that is marked in a literary genre and its use and style of language; metaphors, alliteration and graceful syntax among other things (Henning, 2011, p. 22; Meyer, 1997, p. 4). When the term literature is being used in the following chapters, I am therefore thinking of mainly fictional texts that fit this description. I do at the same time believe that some non-fiction texts can be considered literature. This is because some texts are neither clearly fictional nor non-fictional, and through time genres have had different criteria. For example, novels were in the sixteenth and seventeenth century both fictional and non-fictional, and news were rarely based on facts (Eagleton, 2008, pp. 1-2).

3.2 Literature in the national curriculum for English

In the national curriculum for English there are clear guidelines about what literature to use. These are limited and can be found within the competence aims; nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales, short plays and stories. Otherwise stated, it clearly opens for the use of literature, and gives teachers freedom to choose much of the literature him- or herself. The national curriculum for English states that reading texts promotes understanding of the language, and it is important for the joy of reading, creativity and personal growth. The main subject area also engages working with and discussing literature (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 2). In the English subject curriculum (2013), there are competence aims after year two, four and seven that shows literature as a part of it:

After year two:

- Express own experiences from English nursery rhymes (...), songs, fairy tales and stories.
- Listen to and understand words and expressions in nursery rhymes (...), songs, fairy tales and stories.

After year four:

- Participate in presenting nursery rhymes (...), songs, short plays and stories in English.
- Express own thoughts and opinions in the encounter with English-language literature and child culture.
- Create own texts inspired by English-language literature and child culture.

After year seven:

- Express own reactions to English literary texts, film (...) and music.
- Express oneself creatively inspired by types of English literature from various sources.

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013)

A new national curriculum is now under construction at the time of writing and is being reviewed by teachers of English. It is not yet finished, however, I feel it is relevant to include what it says about literature so far, as it is later brought up by one of the interviewees. The curriculum being reviewed now includes a paragraph called "Encounters with English texts". It states that language learning happens when encountering texts. "Text" here, is widely

defined; oral and written, pressed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fiction and nonfiction from any period of time. It also says that the text may include pictures, drawings, tables etc. These texts will give students information and experience within the target language. The following competence aims regarding literature is from the new curriculum, meaning they do not apply yet, and may be changed. Although some of the competence aims are similar, for the most part they are new. In total, there are fewer competence aims for English. However, there are still the same number of competence aims regarding literature. Because the percentage of competence aims regarding literature in the new English Subject Curriculum is certainly higher, it shows how relevant it will be in the coming years.

After year 2

- Listen to and understand words and expressions in nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales and stories.
- Explore different types of text, including picture books (...).

After year 4

- Read text chosen by oneself and understand words from the context.
- Listen to and participate in presenting English rhymes, songs, fairy tales, plays.
- Give own expression of own thoughts about English literature (...).

After year 7

- Listen to and understand clearly communicated text, both adapted and authentic.
- Read English literature for children and teens and converse about content.

3.3 Literature in English language learning

There are clear benefits of using literature in the English as a second language classroom. The three main benefits according to the English subject curriculum and multiple other researchers, are cultural awareness, language improvement and motivation (Collie & Slater, 1987; Floris, 2004; Yimwilai, 2015 & Oktan, 2017).

3.3.1 Cultural awareness

Having a deep understanding of the culture in a country is for many learners a great benefit when learning a new language, according to Collie and Slater (1987). In today's world people are constantly moving between countries, meaning cultures are mixed. Hence, multiculturalism plays an important part in the world. Literature may help students establish awareness of other cultures and their ethics, manners, values and beliefs. Using Authentic literature can give students a connection to English culture, and thus a feeling of being closer to the English-speaking countries (Oktan, 2017, p. 73). Furthermore, it gives an opportunity to explore culture and therefore a possibility for a genuine understanding of literary works (Yimwilai, 2014, p. 15).

3.3.2 Language improvement

Language improvement is a great reason to include literature in one's language classroom. Hereunder, vocabulary is highly relevant. Vocabulary can arguably be the most important part of learning a new language, as lack of it will hinder any form of written and oral communication (Oktan, 2017, p. 73). Literature uses language in a more varied way which may make it more memorable for the students than, for example, explaining a lexical or syntactic item on the blackboard. Therefore, working with literature, especially literary texts, can give students valuable information about function and structure of sentences and texts, which again can enrich their skills in writing (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 7). Ponniah (2011) backs this up. He performed a study on the impact reading has on the development of vocabulary. The study was performed on forty-nine ESL learners in India, where one group was asked to find the meaning of a word in a dictionary, and the other group were asked to find the meaning by reading it in different settings. The results showed that the students who learned words subconsciously while reading were able to correctly use the word, whereas those who used the dictionary to translate the word were unable to use it correctly in a sentence (Ponniah, 2011, pp. 136-138).

As one would expect, for students to enrich their language through working with literature, there must be a considerable amount of effort from the student (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 7), which is where motivation and personal growth comes in.

3.3.3 Motivation

Motivation is a crucial component in any kind of learning, and learning would be near impossible without it. A part of many children's natural culture is reading and telling stories. They make up and retell stories constantly, so the motivation is already present when using literature in the classroom (Munden & Myhre, 2015, p. 105). Literature offers themes relevant to every students' experiences and interests (Floris, 2004, p. 3). In addition, there are countless songs and rhymes that are similar between English and Norwegian, which means that students will most likely recognize words and make meaning out of it. These factors will cause a sense of achievement that further will defuse the uneasiness some student may feel when learning a new language (Munden & Myhre, 2015, p. 106).

The interaction between a literary work and a reader is an important component when it comes to motivation. There is a great difference between how, for example, you read for information and how you read for pleasure. The main difference is on the focus of the reader. In reading for information, the focus of the reader is on what information remains after reading. While reading for pleasure, the focus of the reader is on what happens during the reading, and may therefore increase the enjoyment of reading (Meyer, 1997, p. 6).

3.4 Difficulties with using literature in language learning

Literature does, as one can read previously in chapter three, offer positive benefits for students' language learning. Nevertheless, there are several difficulties teachers may encounter when using literature to learn another language. This chapter will present factors that, if teachers are aware of, may decrease the difficulties some students experience when using literature to improve language.

According to Floris (2004), one of the most common problems to encounter when using literature in the classroom is the language. EFL learners and teachers may see literature as a hindrance because of the style and difficulty level of the language (Floris, 2004, p. 4). Although the literature used might be authentic, one must pay attention to the style. If one's goal is to provide students with a wider vocabulary, more recent works related to today's society might be better to use than older ones. This is because language changes with time, and language used in older works might not be time appropriate, and we may not speak like that anymore (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 7).

The teacher must select literary works with language that is appropriate for his or her students. For students to correctly guess the meaning of literary works, he or she needs to know approximately ninety-five percent of the words. To "incidentally" learn a word from reading literary texts, the student must be exposed to the word between five and sixteen times (Ramos, 2015, p. 159). If the language is too difficult, students' motivation will drop. If the language is at the correct level, students will want to have more access to literature (Floris, 2004, p. 5).

When it comes to length, longer texts may seem more overwhelming and therefore more difficult for some students. At the same time, shorter texts might not be any easier. This is because they do not offer contextual support and repetition. This means it is up to each EFL teacher to decide and prioritize what is best for the students (Floris, 2004, p. 4).

The literature used must also stimulate the students interest. If the learners' interests, ideas and experiences are not similar to what they are asked to read, they cannot be expected to be motivated to read. Yet, if the literature meets the students' interests and are found meaningful and enjoyable, learners are more likely to try to overcome the language difficulties (Floris, 2004, p. 5).

3.5 What literature to use?

As established previously, nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales, short plays and stories are genres that must be covered when teaching, as these are part of the competence aims. There is great freedom in where to find these. Examples are authentic texts or course books.

When thinking of using literature, it is natural to think about authentic material as a source (Henning, 2011, pp. 22-23). Literature offers a significant amount of authentic material. Authentic material is in this thesis defined as most literary works that are not designed with language learning or teaching in mind (Birketveit & Rimmereide, 2012, p. 37). By using authentic literature, students will be exposed to genuine language that has not been edited with learning in mind, and therefore they can gain familiarity with the use and forms of written language (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 6).

Picture books are a great source of authentic material, and teachers may use them with less worry about language barriers. This is because picture books tell stories through iconotext, a combination of visual and verbal representation: The text narrates and the illustrations describe. Therefore, the decoding of meaning is assisted by illustrations that can help students to easier guess the meaning of words and context. Texts in picture books are commonly shorter than in other authentic works. Thus, the combination of pictures and manageable length texts, may help assist the students with improving their language (Birketveit, 2016, p. 17).

In a classroom setting, literature from course books may be more accessible, and are therefore also a popular source for literature. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) claims that course books may be a tool for assisting teachers, and most teachers consider course books to be a great source of material. Further, they argue that course books provide a teaching and learning structure, and methodological support.

3.6 How to use the literature

How the literature is being used depends on the group of students and their needs, interests and language. As established in section 3.2, the English subject curriculum does tell us that the genres that must be covered are nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales, short plays and stories. It is up to each teacher to decide how to use this literature. Fortunately, it exists professional literature that suggest how.

There are different approaches to teaching literature depending on the teacher's conception of what literature is. As reported by Beach, Appelman, Fecho & Simon (2016), the three major theories are the transmission theory, the student-centered theory and the socio-cultural theory.

Firstly, the transmission theory views learning in terms of gathering facts and knowledge about literature. The primary focus when teaching lies in how to best give student knowledge through lectures and/or presentations. The students learn mechanically with a goal to reproduce facts. A transmission theory is highly effective in an educational practice with large focus on testing. Hence why it is still in use. Secondly, in the student-centered theory it is the students who have responsibility for their own learning. They may choose the literature and the material for themselves, because they know what fits their needs and wants best. A common critique against this theory is that there is little social growth, and learning is limited to only the students' own experience. Lastly, the socio-cultural theory is based upon Vygotsky's theory that learning is a social practice. Students best learn from each other, and this way develop their knowledge and way of thinking. This can, in literary studies, enhance their ability to use different criteria lenses and be open to others' interpretation (Beach, Appelman, Fecho & Simon, 2016, pp. 4-7). In addition, Jean Piaget's cognitive learning theory which takes base in that every new thing that is presented to us, is understood out of knowledge one already possesses. The knowledge one is in possession of is saved in schemas, and when we learn new things the schemas are adapted and enlarged (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, p. 56).

4.0 Method

4.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods

Within research, one can find various research methods, including qualitative and quantitative methods. The method chosen for this thesis is qualitative interviews. This is the most common way to collect qualitative data (Christoffersen & Johannesen, 2012, p. 77), and it was the method that could give me the most detailed answers. The qualitative interviews were semi-structured. This form of interview has set questions, but still allows for flexibility for both the interviewer and interviewee (Longhurst, 2016, p. 145), because of the ability to immediately construct the next question. Performing a qualitative interview was the right method to answer my research question because there has been very little research done on Norwegian teachers' thoughts on benefits of literature. This means that there is little research for me to connect to the professional literature in the theory part of this thesis, and it is necessary to collect the data myself.

4.2 Data collection and interviews

The selection of candidates was chosen from acquaintances. There were two females and one male. They were contacted via text, where we decided on the time and place to perform the interview. To prepare, the candidates received an interview guide and a consent form a week in advance. The purpose of the consent form is to give the candidates an overview of why and how the interviews are being done, and also what will be done with the data afterwards. The interview guide consists of eight questions, where four of them has supplementary questions, making it a total of fourteen questions. All candidates were informed that the interview would be recorded, transcribed and then deleted, and this was accepted.

The interviews were recorded on a smartphone. The equipment was tested out beforehand to ensure that it worked. The phone records from both sides, which is why I found it necessary to only have one device.

4.2.1 Interview guide

The questions in the interview were inspired by both what could answer my research question and theory read prior to this thesis. The questions were open, and the candidates could answer in any way they felt comfortable. Moreover, this was done to ensure that the questions were not leading. The interview aimed to identify what the candidates' perception of how literature can benefit their students, and also what literature is. Since all candidates' native language is Norwegian, the interviews were performed in Norwegian. This is to ensure that they can give the most detailed answer.

1. Do you have education as an English teacher?
2. How many years have you worked as an English teacher?
3. What do you put in the term "literature"?
4. When was the last time you used literature in the classroom?
 - a. What did you do and why?
5. Do you ever use literature in a different way?
 - a. What do you do then?
 - b. How often?
6. What benefits does these ways of using literature have on your students?
7. Do you feel that the English subject curriculum opens for the use of literature?
 - a. Is the literature easy to get a hold of?
8. What are clear benefits you experience when using literature?

Question 1. and 2. serves the purpose of establishing how long the candidates has worked as EFL teachers, and if they are educated on it. Because more experienced teacher might have very different answers than non-experienced teachers, I feel it was necessary to include. Question 4. is based on a concrete situation rather than an abstract one. This was done because it may be easier to remember one situation rather than multiple.

5.0 Ethical considerations

When doing interviews, I will be in possession of audio recordings of the candidate's interviews. This means that I must ensure the candidates that their information will be safe, and that I respect them in every way possible. The audio recordings from the interviews

were stored on a server managed by Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Only I had access to it, and no names and audio were stored together. Christoffersen and Johannesen (2012) presents three ethical considerations every researcher must consider, where the two following are especially important for me throughout the entire time working on the thesis:

The candidates right to decide for him/her self and autonomy: The candidates is entitled to withdraw participation at any moment without reason or consequences (Christoffersen & Johannesen, 2012, p. 41).

The researchers' duty to respect the candidate's privacy: Everyone has the right to decide who they want to share information with, and the candidates have the right to deny the interviewer information about themselves. The candidates need to ensure that the interviewer does not use the information given in a way that can be traced back to them, and that confidentiality is kept (Christoffersen & Johannesen, 2012, p. 42). Doing audio recordings means that the recorded voice can be used to identify the interviewees, which is why I applied and got approved by the NSD. NSD are the Norwegian center for Research Data.

Through the consent form and interview guide I sent out to the candidates, I hope to eliminate these challenges. The consent form and interview guide was written as one paper, and can be found as appendix 1. It is written in Norwegian, and the interviews were conducted in Norwegian to ensure that candidates were comfortable and able to answer all questions to the best of their ability.

6.0 Results

6.1 View of what literature is

As stated in chapter 3.1, defining literature is near impossible as every person has their own opinion, including the candidates interviewed for this thesis. This chapter will give an overview of their personal thoughts on what literature is.

All candidates recognize that the term “literature” is broad. Candidate A agrees with Henning (2011) that the term is very often narrowed down to ‘only’ fiction. She further believes that “it can kind of mean a lot, and in the broadest sense it is all written text”. She also states that her first thought of what literature is in this context, is fiction and poetry.

While candidate A believes that literature is simply fictional, candidate C believes all kinds of text are literature. From what she says, one can gather that she also believes that non-fiction is counted as literature:

Eh, literature? I think text from different sources. I think different types of text, just text, whether it is fiction or facts. The textbooks too.

Like candidate C, candidate B is also clear that all written material can be counted as literature. Simultaneously, he states that he often thinks of books rather than shorter texts.

As one can read above, all candidates believe that literature is, to some degree, all written material. It is perhaps the most common and easy definition, and given that the research conducted for this thesis was over a relatively short period of time, I cannot expect a more in depth answer. What they do not agree on, is whether they include non-fiction in their definition or not. Keeping in mind that non-fiction is very often read in the EFL classroom in connection to learning about culture, it could be expected that all candidates would mention this. However, as stated before, defining the idea of “literature” is individual.

6.2 Literature in the English Subject Curriculum

In chapter 3.3, I argued that the English subject curriculum opens for the use of literature as a tool to enhance language learning. In the following section I will present the candidates view on the curriculum regarding literature based on one of the questions they were asked: “Do you feel that the English subject curriculum opens for the use of literature?”.

It came across as very clear that all candidates believe that the English subject curriculum opens for the use of any kind of literature. Candidate B says that how one interprets the curriculum depends on the strengths one has as a teacher and the strengths of the class one is teaching. The students are, according to the curriculum, supposed to read a selection of English texts. Therefore, he believes there is a wide range of opportunity depending on how you read the curriculum. Candidate A agrees with this: “I think it (curriculum) opens for using whatever you feel fits your needs. There are few limitations”. Candidate C says one are mostly free, as the competence aims are very open. “You are free to choose any kind of text, as long as you reach the competence aims and do what you are supposed to do”.

Even though the new English subject curriculum is highly relevant and now under revision, only candidate A mentioned it: “(...) The coming curriculum is more open and has fewer competence aims. The new one is more easy to grasp (...)”. This does match with what is written in section 3.2 regarding the new curriculum.

6.3 What literature do they use, and how do they use it?

All the candidates use literature in very different ways, and the connection between literature and motivation was mentioned multiple times by all.

Candidate A believes that the course book for her fourth graders does not provide sufficient literature. She states there is no famous literature or authors presented in the book. Because of this, and that the texts are constructed with the L2 learner in mind, she chooses to find her literature elsewhere. There is a lot of resources for finding free, authentic literature online, such as Oxford Owl. She chooses to use sites like this and all students has access to them. These kind of pages offers literature at the right level for students, and one can find books that the students are familiar with from their L1 language, which again is motivating because they will understand more. Candidate A uses “The Hungry Caterpillar” and “Little Red Riding Hood” as examples. When they use authentic material, such as “The Hungry Caterpillar”, they often make their own version of the book. The candidate feels that this literature and this way of working with it may better the student vocabulary and teach them how to structure

sentences. In addition, she states that because the text is familiar for the students, they can more easily understand them.

Candidate B finds that the literature he uses is very well accessible, as he has much of it himself from when he did his education. He also finds a lot of it from the city library, where he says one can find a book for everyone. When it comes to the course book, he is not a fan, as he feels the texts are too fabricated for the EFL classroom. He further believes this can work as a demotivating factor.

The last time he used literature in his classroom, they read a part of "Robin Hood" as preparation for a role play they were going to make. The plays are based on literature the students have read in class, and transformed into dialogue. Candidate C has also worked with literature this way before. Although this is not her preferred method, she does experience a lot of the same benefits as candidate B does. They both believe that the plays are a great source of motivation, and a way to defuse any scariness some students feel with learning another language because the students are allowed to be creative in their own way. In addition, because the literature the plays are based on had been gone through in class, all students will be able to come with input, which is motivating for each individual.

Candidate B also says that they do not always make role plays. Sometimes, they read together or the students read to each other, and they do tasks related to the texts. By using texts and tasks outside of the course book, the teacher feels that the students get more motivated and that they better their vocabulary, along with the possibility for better orthography.

All candidates use the same course book, "Stairs". Unlike the others, candidate C believes that the course book is a great source for literature. She gathers most of the literature she uses from the course book, and uses the online course book a lot. The online resource has all the texts read by a native speaker of English, and she believes this is a great way to learn pronunciation. After listening to this, they usually read the same text in pairs, and then work with related tasks. She believes the texts in the course book are motivating, as they cover almost all genres and therefore every student's interests, as well as they go through each text rather carefully.

6.4 Benefits reported by candidates

In chapter 3.3, it was stated that there are three major roles that literature may have on language learning: cultural awareness, language improvement and motivation. Many researchers have backed this up (Collie & Slater, 1987; Floris, 2004; Yimwilai, 2015 & Oktan, 2017). All the candidates have a higher education in teaching English, so it is expected that these benefits will be brought up in the interviews. This chapter will analyze to what degree the candidates raised attention to the benefits of working with literature.

Arguably, one of the greatest reasons to include literary works in one's education, is the benefit it may have on students' language. Literature uses language in a more memorable way than, for instance, just explaining a lexical or syntactical item for the students. For candidate A, this is exactly the case for using literature in her education:

I have used, for example, *The Hungry Caterpillar*. Easy texts that they (students) can relate to and remember from when they were little and have read in Norwegian. I think it is good to use the knowledge they have in Norwegian. [...] I can use what they know from before [...] to learn new words and sentence structure in a correct way when they are reading.

For Candidate A, literature is her preferred tool for language learning, and her favorite way to reach one of the main goal of Norwegian English learning; to be able to use the English language and to have knowledge of how it is used in different contexts (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 1). She continues with mentioning that English is a subject that needs constant adaptation for everyone, and by using the knowledge they already have and combining it with literature they already know, she feels that she manages to have a positive input in every student's language. Candidate B also recognizes the benefits literature has on the students' language as long as the literature can give enough input:

If you use text that are not from the course book, they get a better language. They get more from that, than from the easy course book texts. In my experience, they get a better vocabulary.

Learning vocabulary is, as Ramos (2015) and Oktan (2017) puts it, an important part of language learning. This is also one of the main reasons why candidate C chooses to include literature in her classroom: On one of the questions during the interview, she answered that she chooses to work with literature because it helps her students to increase their vocabulary. Working with literature in another language will undoubtedly have an impact on the students' language learning, and all candidates agrees that literature works in a positive way in students language improvement.

Motivation is a crucial component in any kind of learning, and it was brought up by all candidates. Reading about relevant and interesting themes, and relating to characters and situations is especially motivating for students (Yimwilai, 2015 p. 15; Floris, 2004, p. 3; Munden & Myhre, 2015, pp. 105-106). This is why Candidate A chooses these kinds of works when using literature in teaching. She also chooses to use texts that are familiar from the students' native language. Because the text is familiar for the students, they can more easily understand them, which works as a motivating factor. Another motivating factor she uses, are short movies, as she experiences this always get the students attention.

Course books are almost never used by candidate B, because he believes that literature found elsewhere is more motivating. He has experienced that role plays based on authentic material that the students have read is especially motivating. Concurrently, candidate C is a fan of the course books. She states that they include a topic for everyone's interest. Because they go through every text rather carefully, candidate C says that her students get motivated. This is because she has experienced her students are motivated by working with texts for a purpose, which in this case is learning and understanding.

6.4.1 Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is discussed to be a factor in language learning. It may lead to a genuine understanding of the target language, and a feeling of being closer to the English-speaking country (Oktan, 2017, p. 73). None of the candidates mentioned this.

7.0 Discussion

Chapter seven of this thesis will discuss the findings from the qualitative interviews performed. It will do so by comparing the findings to the professional literature.

7.1 The literature they use

In previous chapters, it was mentioned that candidate A and B are not big fans of the course books, and that they rely their teaching almost exclusively on authentic material. According to Kilickaya (2004), EFL teachers have for the last couple of years learned that foreign language presented for students in the language classroom should be authentic. Authentic material is great to use because it presents 'real', authentic language for students. Language that has not been edited with a language learner in mind. It further has benefits for students' motivation, and may provide a more creative approach to teaching (Kilickaya, 2004, p. 1).

While authentic material may be argued to be the best source for literature, there are some disadvantages teachers may face while using it. One of these are that the language used may be difficult for the students. Because the literature is written for someone who is fluent in the target language, it may contain quite complex language. If authentic material with too difficult language is used at too low levels, it may cause students to feel demotivated because of their lack of lexical items and structures. This is also the cause for why some teachers choose not to use authentic material. The language in some of the materials may be too difficult which results in too much valuable time being spent on preparation. However, with choosing the right difficulty and with pedagogical support from their teacher, students can be involved in the use of authentic material. The material should be used in accordance with the class' ability, and the topics and themes should be fitted to the students in order for them to be motivated (Kilickaya, 2004, p. 2).

While talking about authentic material, candidate A hereunder mentioned her use of picture books. They are a great source of authentic material, and unlike written, authentic material, the teacher needs not to worry as much about the language barrier. This is due to the combination of visual and verbal representation which makes the decoding of the second language easier. One aspect teachers should be careful of when using picture books are the themes and topics. Although understanding a text in another language is motivating in itself, students must be able to connect it to their own interests. Many picture books are designed for younger, native speaking children, and does not always appeal to students. It is something the teacher must keep in mind when choosing material.

While candidate A and B are fans of multiple forms of authentic material, candidate C relies most of her education on the course books, and other material designed for the EFL classroom. Like everything else, using literature from a course book has both its advantages and disadvantages. In the Norwegian classroom, it may be argued that the course book is the most accessible form of literature - that is if the teacher does not have any for him- or herself. It provides teachers with teaching and learning strategies, and also provide methodological support. Although it is good that these books provide this support, teachers need to keep their responsibility, and not let the course book rule their education. Those who wrote the book and its guide, do not know what is best for the individual class.

7.2 How do they use the literature?

All candidates use literature in very different ways, and they all keep their methods varied. However, they also have different ways that they feel benefits their students the most. For candidate A, the most used method is to read literature she and her students have worked with before in Norwegian, and therefore have knowledge about. Her way of using literature fits within Piaget's cognitive learner theory: We understand everything new based on the schemas we make up in our brain. The schemas are the "rocks" in our thinking, and they are in essence fairly basic. When one learns something new, the schemas becomes more advanced (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, p. 56). As candidate A stated, her students already has

a schema about the literature they have read. The schemas are based on their knowledge of the literature in Norwegian. When the students are presented with the same literature in English, they will try to make sense of it. To do so, they will try to interpret the new information (the literary text in English) out from their schema - they will try to assimilate the new information. Assimilation takes place when old schemas are used to produce new knowledge. Because the literary text is in English, the students will also have to accommodate their schemas. This means that they must modify, add and make new schemas. In this case, they may use their existing schema about the Norwegian text to create a new one for the English version. It is important that candidate A uses texts that the students already have a schema about, as completely new things may be so hard they are not able to create a one (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, p. 57).

After reading literary texts, candidate A has experienced that her students language benefits from reproducing text. They often do so by creating their own version of the same text. Piaget expresses that learning should be done so that the student is a co-constructor. As it appears from the interview, candidate A was, when working this way, not focused on students working together. Nor was Piaget's focus in his theory. He stated that students should acquire knowledge through their own activity. Thus, Piaget and candidate A means that learning is a result of action (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, pp. 60-61).

Candidate B reported that he has seen great improvement in his students language after he started using role plays based on literature they have read. After reading literature, the students work together in groups. The groups consists of students that are on different language levels. Together, they make up dialogues based on the literature, and perform this for the other groups. In it self, role plays have proven to be a great way to learn language. Boudreault (2010) mentioned in his article multiple benefits dramatization may have on pupils language. He states that it puts the teacher in a supporting role for the students. Students will be able to take responsibility of their own learning, and every student may get the chance to be the "teacher" in their group. Further, dramatization may help students pronunciation, vocabulary and the structure on their language. In addition, it may help students gain confidence in the target language (Boudreault, 2010).

Candidate B's way of using literature in the EFL classroom takes a socio-cultural stance. Candidate A did not focus on oral language in her method of teaching literature. For candidate B, oral language and teamwork is the core when using literature in the EFL classroom. Both candidate B and Vygotsky (the "father" of the socio-cultural theory) agrees that a crucial factor for learning is teamwork, and that the use of oral language is highly relevant. Candidate B's way of using literature in the EFL classroom matches with Vygotsky's theory that the students must create new knowledge through working in groups and using their language. This way, competent students can assist those in the group who needs it. The students will all support each other through a "scaffold" (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, p. 64).

Candidate C tells in her interview that, together with her co-worker, candidate B, has used role plays as a method. However, more often she chooses to work with the literature otherwise. She feels her students benefits mostly from listening to a native speaker of English reading the text, followed by the students reading out loud. After reading, the student are likely to do tasks related to the literature they have read. Her method takes base in the transmission theory. This way of teaching is effective in an educational practice, and focuses how to best give students knowledge through lectures and presentations. Because they go through the texts in depth, candidate C states that she feels ensured that all students understand what they are reading, and hence that they learn vocabulary and grammatical structures better. The point of candidate C's way of using literature is, like in the transmission theory, to transmit knowledge from the teacher to the student. The teacher will be in the centre of teaching, and his or her job is to give the student knowledge. For the students, academic achievement is seen as the ability to replicate that knowledge. In this case, that knowledge is the English language. From this perspective, the tasks after reading will work as a test to reveal what the students may have learned.

7.3 The benefits of literature

From the interviews and theory, one could expect the teachers to report especially three benefits literature may have on language learning: the motivational effect, language

improvement and cultural awareness. Chapter 7.3 will discuss to which degree the candidates reported these benefits.

All candidates agreed that literature was a great way to indirectly improve students language. Candidate A reported that her use of familiar literature worked as an especially motivating factor on her students language learning. As in a cognitive learner theory, she believes motivation for learning happens when the new information is more difficult than one's existing schema. Here, one's existing schema is the text in Norwegian, and the motivational factor will be the same text in English. A cognitive conflict will happen, and new information will be added to the schema by creating an equilibrium. The motivation will be natural. It will also be a motivating factor to be able to use the newly possessed knowledge, which will expand the schema and motivation even further (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007, p).

Candidate B stated that he enjoys using role plays in his teaching. Students will then be able to take more control of their own learning, and their vocabulary, pronunciation and language structure may get better. However, motivation is also a great reason to include role plays in EFL teaching. A modern teacher wants to create a motivating and open environment in his or her classroom, where the students take part in the planning and execution of their learning (Ogden, 2012, p. 19). Like in a socio-cultural method, this teacher will put the students in the centre, and let them take active part in their learning. In candidate B's case, the students will be active when creating a role play version of a literary text, and the teacher will have a supporting role. Not only is it a motivating factor for students to be able to take control in the classroom, like to create their own role plays. It is also motivational to present their work for the class and teacher, as ensure that they are seen and heard by the teacher.

Like candidate A and B, candidate C also spoke about motivation when using literature. Unlike the other two candidates, she enjoys using the coursebook, and finds that it covers most of her student's interests. Student's interests are closely connected to motivation. Without interest there is no base for motivation, and hence little ground for learning. Candidate C's view of motivation and use of literature in the EFL classroom takes an incentive motivational stance. Incentive motivation is related to how one's goal is influenced

by one's action. For example, literature that appeals to students interest is more likely to make them work harder, than uninteresting literature is. The different literature have different incentive values and motivate students different (Petri & Govern, 2012).

Although motivation was the benefit mentioned the most in the interview, improvement of language was also mentioned. Hereunder, improvement of vocabulary is relevant, and perhaps one of the most important parts of learning a language. Using literature to learn both grammatical structures and improving vocabulary has been proven to be highly efficient. It is a benefit also reported by all candidates.

Based on academic literature, language improvement is arguably the largest benefit of using literature in the EFL classroom. From the presentation of the interviews in chapter six, it seems they agree. Candidate A agrees with Collie and Slater (1987) that literature uses literature in a more memorable way than, for example, only explaining it. She believes that they learn sentence structures more easy when reading literary texts. All candidates also recognizes the fact that students vocabulary becomes more authentic by reading literature. They will get examples of the vocabulary being used in correct ways, and will be able to keep using it correctly. Although important for language learning, candidate B and C did not elaborate on their student's vocabulary and language structure improving.

Culture is mentioned as one of the main focus areas in the English subject curriculum, and it is closely connected to literature. The curriculum states that knowledge of cultures is critical when working with and understanding literature. Collie and Slater (1987) also agrees with the relation between literature and culture: having an understanding of the culture in a country is for many learners a great benefit when learning another language. The understanding of the relevant culture may also open for the possibility for a better understanding of the literature. It is undoubtedly an important relation between culture and literature. However, none of the candidates mentioned the cultural benefits of working with literature. Because this is a great benefit, it was expected that the candidates mentioned it. However, since they did not, it is difficult to further discuss the relation between the theory and the interviews.

8.0 Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to explore what benefits Norwegian teachers' experience when using literature in their EFL classroom. I presented theory based on the new English subject curriculum that shows how relevant literature will be in the EFL classroom in the coming years. Further, I believe this research may give teachers awareness around their use of literature to help their students improving the foreign language.

What the idea of what "literature" is, can be very personal. This thesis takes base in "literature" being fictional texts marked in a literary genre with a certain style of language. However, it also includes some non-fictional texts, depending on how, when and where it was written.

To answer the research question, it was relevant to look at what literature the candidates use, and how they preferred to use it. The genres that must be covered according to the English subject curriculum, are nursery rhymes, songs, fairy tales, short plays and stories. Theory has proven that using authentic versions of these genres works great with language learning. They may also be found within a course book, which also has proven to show great results. It is up to each teacher to decide how he or she wants to use these texts. Their teaching may be based around three major theories; the transmission theory, the student-centered theory and the socio-cultural theory. They all have their own benefits, and different student groups may benefit more from different methods.

Candidate A's method of teaching takes on a cognitive learning theory. She believes that what her students are able to learn, is based on knowledge the students already possesses. This is the reason for why she chooses to use literature that is already familiar for her students. Candidate B use a lot of role play in his teaching, which is based on a socio-cultural theory. He believes that teamwork is critical for learning, and together with the students' use of language they are the largest factors for learning. Candidate C's teaching fits within a transmission theory, where the goal is to transmit knowledge from the teacher to the

student. This has shown to be a highly efficient way for students to be able to replicate knowledge.

Based on academic theory, the three most common benefits literature have on language learning, is cultural awareness, language improvement and motivation. Because a lot of academic theory claims these benefits as the three greatest ones, it could be expected that all candidates mentioned them as potential benefits. However, this is not the case, and the candidates only laid their focus on the benefits of language improvement and motivation.

Motivation was the benefit clearly mentioned the most by all candidates. All candidates find that their students are motivated from the use of literature, and as one may see in chapter 7.3, the motivation stems from different teaching methods. Although motivation was the most mentioned benefit, language improvement seems to be the most important benefit. Hereunder, all candidates' focus lied especially on vocabulary. All candidates reported that the use of literature to learn grammatical structures and vocabulary was highly effective.

9.0 References

- Beach, R. Appleman, D. Fecho, B. & Simon, R. (2016). *Teaching Literature to Adolescents* (Third edition). New York: Routledge.
- Birketveit, A. (2016). Picturebooks. In Birketveit, A. & Williams, G. (eds.), *Literature for the English Classroom: Theory Into Practice* (pp. 17-53). Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Birketveit, A. & Rimmereide, H. E. (2012). Does reading stories enhance language learning? In Sørheim, B. Drew, I. & Hasselgreen, A. (eds.), *The Young Language Learner: Research-Based Insights into Teaching and Learning* (pp. 37-50). Bergen: Fagbokforlaget
- Boudreault, C. (2010). The Benefits of Using Drama in the ESL/EFL Classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 16(1).
- Christoffersen, L. & Johannesen, A. (2012). *Forskningsmetode for lærerutdanningene*. Oslo: Abstrakt forlag
- Collie, J. & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the Language Classroom. A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2008). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. From: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hogskbergen-ebooks/reader.action?docID=827065>
- Floris, F. D. (2004). The Power of Literature in EFL Classrooms. *kata*, 6(1), pp. 1-12.
- Henning, Å. (2011). *Litterær forståelse. Innføring i litteraturredaktikk*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Hutchinson, T. & Torres, E. (1994). The Textbook as Agent of Change. *ELT Journal*, 48(4), pp. 315-328.
- Kilickaya, F. (2004). Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10(7), pp. 1-5
- Longhurst, R. (2016). Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups. In Clifford, N. Cope, M. Gillespie, T. & French, S. (eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp.143-156).
- Lyngsnes, K. & Rismark, M. (2007). *Didaktisk arbeid* (2nd edition). Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Meyer, J. (1997). *What is Literature? A Definition Based on Prototypes*. From: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED461270.pdf>

- Munden, J. & Myhre, A. (2015). *Twinkle Twinkle* (3rd edition). Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Ogden, T. (2012). *Klasseledelse. Praxis, teori og Forskning*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Oktan, D. (2017). Using Literary Texts in EFL Classrooms: Cultural Awareness and Vocabulary Enrichment. *International Journal of New Trends in Arts, Sports & Science Education*. 6(4), pp. 70-85.
- Petri, H. L. & Govern, J. M. (2012). *Motivation: Theory, Research, and Application* (6th edition). Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Ponniah, J. R. (2011). Incidental Acquisition of Vocabulary by Reading. *The Reading Matrix*, 11(2), pp. 135-139.
- Ramos, F. D. R. (2015). Incidental Vocabulary Learning in Second Language Acquisition: A Literary Review. *Profile* 17(1), pp. 157-166.
- Utdanningsdirektoratet. (2013). *Læreplan i engelsk* (ENG1-03). From: <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03>
- Yimwilai, S. (2015). An Integrated Approach to Teaching Literature in an EFL Classroom. *English Language Teaching*, 8(2), pp. 14-21.

10.0 Appendix 1 – consent form and interview guide

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet ”litteratur i engelskundervisningen”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut hvordan engelsklærere i Norge oppfatter fordelene ved å bruke litteratur i engelskundervisningen. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Hvordan engelsklærere i Norge oppfatter fordelene ved å bruke litteratur i engelskundervisningen er et tema som ikke har vært forsket mye på fra før. Forskning har vist at litteratur kan ha positive fordeler på engelskundervisningen, og formålet med bacheloroppgaven er dermed å finne ut hvor norske engelsklærere står i forhold til dette.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskulen på Vestlandet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget er trukket gjennom bekjentskap. De aktuelle vil være undervisere av engelsk.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du blir intervjuet. Det vil ta deg ca. 45-60 minutter. Intervjuet vil inneholde spørsmål om hvordan og når du bruker litteratur, og litteratur i forhold til læreplanen. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak av intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Jeg, Serina Løtveit, vil ha tilgang til lydfiler. Veileder, Monika Bader, vil ved behov ha tilgang til transkribert og anonymisert intervju.

Lydfilen vil bli lagret under ”deltaker a”, ”deltaker b” osv. Lydfilene vil bli overført til en ekstern harddisk og slettet fra andre steder umiddelbart etter intervjuet.

Du vil ikke være gjenkjennbar i publikasjon.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 1. Juni 2019. Lydfilene vil bli slettet fra ekstern harddisk etter endt sensur.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Høgskolen på Vestlandet ved Monika Bader, på epost (monika.bader@hvl.no) eller telefon: 55 58 59 64.
- Vårt personvernombud: Personvernombud for administrative behandlinger av personopplysninger ved HVL (personvernombud@hvl.no)
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Monika Bader
Prosjektansvarlig
Veileder

Serina Løtveit
Student

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet litteratur i engelskundervisningen, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervjuet

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 1. Juni 2019

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Intervjuguide

1. Har du utdanning som engelsklærer, eller andre språkfaglig utdanning?
2. I hvor mange år har du jobbet som engelsklærer?
3. Hva legger du i begrepet "litteratur"?
4. Når var sist gang du brukte litteratur i klasserommet ditt?
 - a. Hva gjorde dere?
 - b. Hvorfor gjorde dere det på den måten?
5. Pleier du å bruke litteratur på andre måter?
 - a. Hvor ofte?
 - b. Kan du komme med eksempler på hva dere gjør da?
6. Hvilke fordeler tror du din bruk av litteratur har på elevene?
7. Hvordan føler du at læreplanen i engelsk åpner for å bruke litteratur?
 - a. Er litteratur lett tilgjengelig?
8. Ser du noen klare fordeler ved å bruke litteratur i engelskundervisningen?
 - a. Hva da?