The Role of Literary Texts in Swedish Upper Secondary EFL Education

Department of Languages and Literatures

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The Teacher Perspective

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For my mother, Margareta Wickberg

Abstract

Titel: *The Role of Literary Texts in Swedish Upper Secondary EFL Education: The Teacher Perspective*
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Nyckelord: skönlitterära texter i EFL, gymnasiet, litteraturdidaktik, *mixed methods approach*, *curricular domains,* ämnesplanen i engelska, *teachers' beliefs*, EFL-repertoarer, lärares litterära repertoarer, kollektiva former för textengagemang, undervisnings- och lärandeteorier, litterär kompetens, kulturellt lärande, språkinlärning

Lärare i Sverige har en inverkan på hur kunskapsmål behandlas, vilket kursmaterial som används, och även i vissa fall hur ett visst innehåll kan motiveras. Hur stor påverkan lärarens roll kan ha i denna bemärkelse beror delvis på hur explicita läroplanerna och ämnesplanerna är beträffande ett specifikt fenomen eller fokus. Detta gäller alla ämnen, nivåer och utbildningsformer, oavsett om det rör grundskolan eller gymnasiet. I ämnesplanen för ämnet engelska på gymnasiet legitimeras exempelvis användningen av skönlitterära texter i första hand genom *authorization* (jfr. Dodou, 2021b; van Leeuwen, 2008), dvs. genom att de helt enkelt ska användas (Skolverket, 2021). Deras syfte är dock oklart. Ska de främst användas som en källa till språkinlärning, kunskap om kultur och läsförståelse eller skulle de kunna användas för andra syften såsom litterär kompetens och läsupplevelser? Denna avhandling behandlar skönlitterära texters roll i engelskundervisningen på gymnasiet från lärares perspektiv i syfte att undersöka relationen mellan innehållet i ämnesplanen och lärares val och beslut gällande skönlitterära texter. Studien är baserad på en *mixed methods approach* där första fasen innefattar en kvantitativ enkätundersökning (404 respondenter) och andra fasen en kvalitativ intervjustudie med fokus på intervjuer med 16 deltagare från enkätundersökningen. För att analysera resultaten har ett teoretiskt ramverk använts bestående av Goodlad et al:s (1979) *curricular domains* (läroplansdomäner), nyskapade begrepp för studien i form av *lärares litterära repertoarer* (lärares övertygelser och antaganden om skönlitteratur och litteraturstudier som inte uteslutande kan kopplas till ämnesplanen i engelska) och *EFL-repertoarer* (lärares övertygelser och antaganden om skönlitteratur som kan kopplas till innehållet i ämnesplanen i engelska rörande exempelvis språkutveckling och kultur) med inspiration av McCormicks (1994) modell samt Applebees (1996) undervisnings- och lärandeteorier.

Nyckelresultat från fas I av studien (enkätundersökning) visar bland annat att lärare i engelska på gymnasiet föredrar att fokusera på narrativa texter såsom romaner och noveller samt att exempelvis poesi behandlas i större utsträckning i Engelska 6 och Engelska 7, vilket till viss del kan kopplas till ämnesplanen och eventuellt också till innehåll i olika lärarutbildningar (jfr. Dodou, 2020). När det gäller syftet med att använda skönlitterära texter visar resultaten att betoningen på samtliga nivåer ligger på läsförståelse men även på dessa texters förmåga att engagera eleverna till kritiska tankar och, bland annat, affektiv

respons. Det sker en stegring i inriktning av textinnehåll kopplat till litterära aspekter och kritisk tänkande från Engelska 5 till Engelska 7. Denna progression kan också ses i vikten av att fokusera på litterära epoker och författarskap. Strategier som rör arbete med skönlitterära texter handlar i hög grad om elevcentrerat lärande där gruppdiskussioner anses viktiga i alla stadier av läsningen: före läsning, under läsning, och efter läsning oavsett nivå. Lärarcentrerad undervisning beskrivs också i form av föreläsningar. Dessa är framför allt mer vanligt förekommande innan ett läsprojekt påbörjas, och då speciellt i de senare kurserna i engelska. Det är i synnerhet när ämnesplanen i engelska *inte* tydligt pekar på vad som ska ligga i fokus som *lärares litterära repertoarer* blir synliga, exempelvis gällande ökningen av ett litterärt fokus från Engelska 6 till Engelska 7 och därmed fokus på *litterär kompetens* (jfr. Culler, 1975; Torell, 2002).

De viktigaste resultaten från fas II av studien (intervjuundersökning) visar på variationer beträffande de tankar lärarna har kring textval. Vissa lärare fokuserar, till exempel, mer på äldre litteratur som kan kopplas till idéen om kulturarv (jfr. Alexander, 2000) eller till en föreställning om äldre verk som källor till kunskap om, bland annat, roten till sociala problem (jfr. Persson & Sundmark, 2022), medan andra i större utsträckning behandlar samtida litteratur med fokus på ungdomslitteratur, på grund av språknivå och tonårsrelevans (jfr. Bland, 2023; Matz & Stieger, 2015). En del lärare använder också multimodala texter, speciellt som en form av visuell eller auditiv stöttning i undervisningen och för att engagera eleverna (jfr. Sert & Amri, 2021; Thyberg, 2022), medan andra inte kopplar samman dessa typer av texter med litteraturbegreppet. Det verkar dock finnas en någorlunda utbredd samsyn kring vikten av kollaborativa undervisningsformer med fokus på textengagemang (jfr. Delanoy, 2015; Volkmann, 2015) där elevinteraktion med ett gemensamt fokus på respons, reflektion och analys är i centrum snarare än endast språkrelaterade lärandemål. För flertalet intervjudeltagare tycks läsförståelse vara i fokus i högre grad i Engelska 5 medan betoningen på kollaborativa former av läsarrespons, kritiskt tänkande och analys ökar i takt med att eleverna går igenom gymnasiets tre nivåer. Därför tycks de skönlitterära texternas upplevda funktioner vara förankrade i *EFL-repertoarer* i början av gymnasieutbildningen och därefter blir *lärares litterära repertoarer* mer framträdande. Resultaten visar dock på skillnader i lärares litterära repertoarer rörande skönlitteraturens funktion i engelskundervisningen där några lärare pekar på, till exempel, språkinlärning som det mest centrala.

Sammantaget visar studien att trots betydande fokus på instrumentella mål i ämnesplanen i engelska (jfr. Dodou, 2021b; Persson & Sundmark, 2022; Sigvardson, 2021) och mätbarhet i kunskapskraven (se Borsgård, 2020) inriktar sig majoriteten av engelsklärare på gymnasiet också på litterära aspekter och läsarrespons (fas I och fas II) med inslag av kulturellt lärande där förståelse och empati för andra människor och kulturer behandlas med hjälp av skönlitterära texter (fas II). Det finns dock skillnader som tyder på att olika mål förekommer när litterära texter är i fokus, exempelvis när litterär kompetens inte behandlas alls. Dessa resultat pekar på vikten av en fortsatt nationell diskussion kring skönlitterära texters roll, relevans och unika möjligheter i engelskundervisningen.

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When I set out on this journey I could not have foreseen how challenging it would be to complete a dissertation. I do not think anything or anyone can really prepare you for such an endeavor and the mind-boggling work it involves. It has been a rollercoaster ride, from feelings of utter despair to sheer joy. Has it been worth it? Absolutely! I am so grateful to the University of Gothenburg and to the department of Languages and Literatures for this opportunity. I have learnt a great deal along the way and I feel truly privileged. There have been so many people involved in this process. I would like to begin by expressing by heartfelt gratitude to all of the upper secondary EFL teachers who have given me their time and who have shared their thoughts and experiences with me so willingly and openly. Thank you! I hope that this dissertation can help to highlight a very important topic and thereby give you something in return.

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Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Making of Curricula

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

Henry B. Adams (1838-1918)[1]

The influence of teachers on their students and their students' education cannot be underestimated. Their teaching methods and their enthusiasm are likely to make a lasting impression, but what, in turn, influences the teachers and their decisions and choices in the classroom? Society at large? Politics? Formal steering documents? What are the consequences of such forces on teachers' decisions and teaching practices? Teachers are often faced with the dilemma of what to include in the course contents, what they have time for, what is allowed, and what they find useful or interesting. This decision-making process translates to *the making of curricula*, which Goodlad et al. (1979) explain as follows:

> The making of curricula is the making of decisions. Normative decisions involving choices among values and interests, empirical decisions calling for data, personal ambitions, group loyalties, characteristics and entrenched ways of behaving, choices between what is preferred and what can be afforded, all of these and more are inextricably interwoven. (p. 33)

Goodlad et al.'s thoughts on the intricacies involved in the construction and implementation of curricula are central to any discussion on teachers' views, decisions, and underlying rationales. Regardless of whether official steering documents contain explicit guidelines and course objectives or not, teachers and educators will have to make certain decisions about, for example, methods, content, not to mention teaching materials for a particular class or subject. These decisions are likely to be influenced by the teachers' own interests and values to some extent, but may also be based on societal, cultural, and financial concerns, all of which can be linked to the concept of *teachers' beliefs* (see Fives & Buehl, 2012).

In Sweden, teachers have had relatively high pedagogical autonomy since the 1990s. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 1994c), with "the local free space", teachers

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[1] Henry B. Adams was an influential American historian and educator. The quote is derived from the Gutenberg Project's online version of Adam's autobiography (Adams, 2000, p. 162).

are afforded greater freedom and a significantly increased influence over their work. Decisions regarding the concrete content of instruction, form, and organization are to be made at each specific school.[2] (my translation)

This *free space* may be viewed as positive in many respects. The positive effects can be linked to the idea of choosing, for example, suitable methods tailored to the needs of the students in each classroom, which in turn is connected to stipulations in the publication *En skola för alla: Om det svenska skolsystemet* by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2000).[3] In this document it is made clear that equity in education is a priority, and hence that every student, irrespective of background, has a right to attain specified educational goals. This means that students have a right to receive the help and support they need. In addition, it is stipulated that each school has a special responsibility for ensuring that all students reach the educational goals (p. 25). The educational goals may thus be reached in different ways and at varying speeds while still remaining somewhat constant. Such stipulations place considerable responsibility on the schools, and by extension also on each individual teacher, to provide quality education for everyone. This highlights the importance of teacher professionalism (see Englund, 2015, p. 52; Johansson, 2003, p. 580; Lundström, 2007, p. 295). Free space is thus regarded as professional space. A pivotal question is what possible effects might come from this professional space in terms of decisions regarding concrete content of instruction at each individual school (Skolverket, 1994c). The free space exists at both the primary level and the secondary level of Swedish education as well as in different subjects, but it could arguably become more of an issue at the upper secondary level in terms of equivalence if educational content differs greatly, since the students are then about to embark on their university studies or their future professions. To prepare for such endeavors, students have to study three core subjects, among them the subject of English. Within this subject, there is, among other things, a stipulated focus on literary texts (Skolverket, 2011b) where the free space is clearly visible. As a consequence, upper secondary EFL teachers have to rely on their professional competence to approach literary texts in this context. Hence, the present study will explore a specific area of the process involved in the making of curricula, namely the role of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education from the teacher perspective.

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[2] Original quotation: "Det lokala frirummet: Med den nya läroplanen (Lpf-94) får de som är verksamma i skolan en större frihet och ett betydligt ökat inflytande över sitt arbete. Besluten om undervisningens konkreta innehåll, form och organisation ska fattas på den enskilda skolan." This definition is a clarification of the concept of free space (introduced in SOU 1992:94) provided by the Swedish National Agency for Education.
[3] *A School for Everyone: About the Swedish School System* (my translation)

1.2 What is a Literary Text?

Before moving on to the background of the study, it is of relevance to discuss how literature or *literary texts* have been defined.[4] Miller (2002) discusses what makes up the central core of this phenomenon, which he connects to a creative and powerful use of language which in turn creates imaginary worlds (pp. 16, 20). This definition would thus include, for example, fiction, poetry and drama. Miller argues that if there are omissions and gaps in other types of texts, they can often be filled in. When it comes to a literary text, however, "we can only know of that world what the words tell us. No other place exists where we might go to get further information", which means that it holds secrets that the reader must unravel (p. 39). Eagleton (1997), on the other hand, suggests that there may not be a clear definition for what a literary text *is*, but that this phenomenon may be better explained in terms of what it *does* to readers (p. 8). From this angle, the word *literary* may be viewed as a *functional* term rather than an *ontological* term that tells the readers "about the role of a text", what it does to them emotionally and how highly they value it (p. 8). Eagleton adds that any value judgements connected to the idea of literary texts may change over time and "have a close relation to social ideologies" (p. 14). In this context, a literary text could be said to come into being in a sociocultural context.

Establishing exactly what constitutes a literary text thus seems to be a challenging task. No matter how they are defined at any given point in history, it is fair to suggest that literary texts are central to a society's culture, as is recognized by Iser (1978). He accentuates the significance of literary texts while also posing questions about their functions: "If it is true that something happens to us by way of the literary text and that we cannot do without our fictions – regardless of what we consider them to be – the question arises as to the actual function of literature in the overall make-up of man" (p. xi). Such reflections are also warranted in this high-tech, digital age, and they are arguably of particular interest as concerns the role of literary texts in an educational context. What are the justifications behind using literary texts in a school setting?

In the Swedish school context, the concept of a literary text came to be extended, from the 1990s onwards, from simply involving the typographic text (e.g., novels, short stories, poems, plays etc.) to including non-typographic texts such as films, songs, audial texts, and pictures to provide students with the tools to evaluate and criticize not only what they read but also what they see and hear (Lindmark, 2004, p. 10).[5] This widened text

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[4] The term *literary texts* (also used by Iser, 1978) will be employed in the present study instead of the word *literature* in order to avoid confusion, since the latter could include non-fictional texts as well as fictional texts. However, the Swedish National Agency for Education uses the word "literature" in its translations of the Swedish term "Skönlitteratur". The term "literature" is also used by Bloemert et al. (2016), whose model will be used in the present study.

[5] A typographic text is a typeset text containing letters and numbers etc., such as a novel, in both printed and digital versions, while a non-typographic text is not typeset. Examples of the latter are films, songs, and audiobooks.

concept was established by the Swedish National Agency for Education and was incorporated into the steering documents for the upper secondary schools in 1994. It was then further entrenched in the 2000 curriculum across all applicable subjects to allow students, among other things, to acquire "media literacy" (Svensson, 2014, p. 339). Hence, the idea of the widened text concept also applies to the syllabi of the subject of English from 1994 onwards where an inclusion of literary texts and films are specified (Skolverket, 1994b, 2011c, 2021c). In the present study, primary focus is on typographic literary texts but the subject of non-typographic texts or multimodal texts in the form of films, pictures, audial texts, and songs is also broached.

1.3 The Role of Literary Texts in Swedish Upper Secondary EFL Education

What role should literary texts play in the upper secondary EFL context, according to the English syllabus of 2011 (Skolverket, 2011b)? In the English 5 and English 6 sections of the syllabus, literary texts are mentioned under the heading "Content of communication" and under "Reception", while in English 7 they appear only under "Reception". The primary objectives of literary texts in this EFL context appear to be to develop the students' ability to understand written English (reading comprehension) and to develop their ability to interpret content (Skolverket, 2011b), as is suggested by Dodou (2021b, pp. 135-136) in her study on the legitimization of literary texts in EFL education. Nevertheless, it is not clearly stated that it is only literary texts that should form the basis of these desired skills, but rather the reading of texts in general (p. 136). Besides the development of these skills, there are additional objectives that can or may be connected to literary texts although not exclusively so, such as communication skills and the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues, and cultural features in different contexts (Dodou, 2021b, pp. 136-137; Skolverket, 2011b). Dodou summarizes her findings by concluding that "the curricular documents implicitly authorised language approaches (primarily) and cultural approaches to literature in the English school classroom" (p. 138). It may be inferred from this that the role of literary texts seems ambiguous in relation to other texts, such as informational and fact-based texts. The effect could be one of vagueness and uncertainty as to the specific purpose of literary texts in Swedish upper secondary EFL education. The contention is therefore over what role literary texts *do* play or *should* play in this context. On the one hand, it is clear that literary texts should be used in the EFL context, but on the other hand, due to the free space that is discernible in this regard, teachers need to rely on their own perspectives and beliefs, as well as possibly those of their colleagues and school leaders, when it comes to text selection, focus, and approaches. The choices and decisions that are made are therefore likely to be based on teachers' beliefs, that is, on the teachers' own views and assumptions about the role and function of literary texts in EFL education.

In terms of previous research into the various roles of literary texts in EFL, international EFL researchers generally seem to agree that there is limited knowledge about

the use and purpose of literary texts in the EFL context, particularly as regards the upper secondary level. Paran (2008) pointed out 15 years ago that there was a considerable research gap concerning empirical studies in this field: "We still need more empirical studies into what happens in literature and language classrooms" (p. 490). A more recent claim by Hall (2015) suggests that the situation has not changed considerably since then: "We know little or nothing of actual teaching of literature in second language situations. Many more case studies are needed" (p. 96). Hence, it appears that knowledge regarding the use of and approaches to literary texts in EFL education is lacking, and additional studies in this field are therefore of vital importance to further this knowledge. In the Swedish context, an interest in research into the area of literature education and the subject of English has increased in recent decades (Dodou, 2021a, p. 1), but the focus has primarily been on the academic subject of English. For this reason, as well as a deep-rooted interest in the role of literary texts in the school subject of English, I have elected to explore this area of research, and more specifically the role of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education from the perspective of EFL teachers. The chosen method for the present study, which is divided into two phases, is a mixed methods approach involving a survey questionnaire aimed at upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden and interviews with a selection of the survey participants.

1.3.1 Aim and Research Questions

The overarching aim of the present study is to examine how EFL teachers envision the role of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education, in order to explore the relationship between curricular stipulations and the teachers' decisions, approaches, and their described teaching practices. To achieve this aim, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the attitudes of upper secondary EFL teachers towards the syllabus of English as regards literary texts?
2. What text materials do upper secondary EFL teachers describe using when they work with literary texts, and why?
3. For what purposes do upper secondary EFL teachers use literary texts?
4. What methods do upper secondary EFL teachers describe using when they work with literary texts?
5. What effects of interpretations of curricular stipulations can be discerned in the EFL teachers' described teaching practices?

1.3.2 Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is divided into eight chapters. After this introduction, chapter 2 provides a background on English as a school subject in Sweden, covering both its history from being a peripheral language next to German and French to its current high status and widespread use in Swedish society in general. A description of important trends in language education, particularly the tenets of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based instruction and the benefits of using literary texts in this context are subsequently explored since literature education in the EFL context is at a crossroads between disciplines such as language studies and literary studies. Thereafter, the meaning of the term literary studies is examined where examples from two central movements are highlighted, New Criticism (with a focus on the importance of the text) and Reader Response (with the reader/student at the center). This presentation is followed by a review of previous research of relevance to the present study, focusing on connections between culture and literary texts, the relevance and justifications of literary texts in education from both the L1 and the L2 perspectives (global and national), along with issues concerning text selection where different perspectives on contemporary texts, older texts, cultural heritage, multicultural texts, and age-appropriate texts are discussed. An examination of current methods and strategies, such as reader response approaches as well as creative and productive learning are then discussed. An account of current empirical studies within the field of literature education, both in the L1 and the L2 contexts, is then provided, focusing on the *why-what-whom-how* questions central to this discipline, with a primary focus on the Nordic context. This is followed by an overview of the field of curricular theory and its development abroad and in Sweden, with regard to both theory and practice. These aspects are then related to three Swedish English syllabi from 1994, 2011, and 2021 and the changing role of literary texts. A brief comparison is also made between the current Swedish syllabus of English and two other European English syllabi, the Danish one and the Dutch one, to explore differences that especially relate to the Swedish context. At the end of chapter 2, the overarching theoretical framework of the study, based on curricular domains (Goodlad et al.,1979), reading theory (McCormick, 1994), the concept of teachers' beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2012), and teaching and learning theories (Applebee, 1996), is introduced and explained.

Chapter 3 describes the essential elements of the mixed methods approach. The two phases of the study are presented separately in this regard, starting with the quantitative phase (phase I - survey) with a focus on how the design of the questionnaire was conceived and how the participants were contacted and informed of their rights and of the procedure based on ethical considerations. This is followed by a detailed description of the limitations of phase I of the study and a justification for the use of the analytical testing tool (SPSS). The method of the qualitative phase of the study (phase II - interviews) is then described, beginning with how the interview participants were randomly selected from the larger group of survey respondents and then outlining the content of the letter that was sent out informing participants of their rights and of ethical principles that the researcher had

adhered to. The process of designing the interview guide is thereafter presented along with a description of the interview process and the transcription process as well as the procedures for coding the data, conducting the thematic analysis, and storing the data. This chapter ends with a discussion on the limitations of phase II of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the quantitative part of the study, focusing on the participants' views of the syllabus of English, text selection, the functions of literary texts, and methods related to literary texts. The results are then analyzed using the theoretical framework, comprised of Goodlad et al.'s (1979) conceptualization of curricular domains and the new construct *protracted curriculum*; McCormick's (1994) terminology and the two new constructs *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires*; as well as Applebee's (1996) teaching and learning theories. The chapter ends with a discussion of the results in connection to previous research, both in terms of critical perspectives and empirical studies.

Chapter 5 includes a presentation of the interview results connected to the participants' views on the freedom of choice that the syllabus affords in regard to text selection, as well as the teachers' own rationales behind text selection, such as why they elect to focus on certain text types, how they view film adaptations as well as when and why they work on older texts. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the results based on curricular domains (Goodlad et al., 1979), the new constructs, and McCormick's (1994) terminology. The subsequent discussion incorporates critical perspectives on literary studies as well as empirical studies.

Chapter 6 focuses on the interview results connected to the participants' attitudes to how the English syllabus describes the functions and approaches to literary texts, the participants' views of the function of literary texts and their interpretations of the syllabus in this regard where several *perceived curricula* come to light. An analysis follows the presentation of the findings, based on McCormick's (1994) terminology and on the new constructs *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires*. The findings are then discussed and connected to relevant previous research.

Chapter 7 presents the participants' descriptions of their methods, which involve pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading tasks and assignments. Student-centered and teacher-centered tasks are specifically highlighted. An analysis and a discussion follow the presentation of the findings, based primarily on Applebee's (1996) teaching and learning theories but also on the new constructs. A discussion of the results in relation to previous research concludes this chapter.

Chapter 8 is devoted to a final discussion of the results. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the aims and focus of the study as well as its general contributions. The newly constructed concepts *EFL repertoires*, *teacher literary repertoires*, and *protracted curriculum* are then discussed in detail. A conceptual model (figure 16) is then introduced, consisting of five parameters: *EFL repertoires*, *teacher literary repertoires*, *the Swedish curriculum*, *the English syllabus*, and *protracted curriculum*. This is followed by a discussion of key findings of the study in relation to the five research questions. The conclusion summarizes and expands on central concerns and implications of the study. Future avenues

of research are also discussed, such as a need for studies on the use of non-fiction compared to the use of literary texts in the EFL context from the teacher perspective and, for example, studies focusing on the student perspective on literary texts and collaborative reading projects in relation to individual reading projects in this regard.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The History of English as a School Subject in Sweden and the Current Status of English

The position and status of English as a school subject in Sweden have changed considerably since it was gradually introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, classical education with a focus on the humanistic study of the classical languages Greek and Latin, as well as classical texts, was the norm (Hammar, 2019, p. 714). In essence, this meant that English, as well as other modern languages, had a marginal position. However, by means of a royal decree in 1849, it became possible for secondary school students (or non-compulsory education students) to receive dispensation from the requirement to study the so-called "dead languages in favor of the living, German, French and English" (Bratt, 1984, p. 13, my translation).[6] This possibility could thus be viewed as pivotal in the paradigm shift from a focus on classical education to a new form of education where the status of modern languages (German, French and English) subsequently began to change.

This change did not result in an immediate adoption of English as the primary foreign language, as it had to compete with German and French (Cabau-Lampa, 2005, p. 103-104). However, the period between 1850 and 1905 clearly delimits the years in which institutionalized English language education was established in Sweden (Bratt, 1984, p. 13). Towards the end of this period, a Swedish scholarly debate ensued with a focus on the need for a universal language, in which English became the preferred choice (p. 70). Bratt highlights the rationale behind this conclusion, pointing to the widespread use of English across the globe and its use in financial circles, as well as its connection to a rich cultural heritage of literary treasures (p. 70). As a result, the educational reform of 1905 stipulated that all students who attended lower secondary education (or non-compulsory education) had to study English, albeit three years after they started studying German (Cabau-Lampa, 2005, p. 105).

As a result of educational reforms, the position of English as a universal language began to take root. However, as noted by Cabau (2009), the modern languages German and French were still generally viewed as more important than English (pp. 135-136). Until the mid-20th century, German was indisputably the preferred first foreign language in Swedish schools, followed by French and then English in that order (p. 136). Attempts were made to bring about change, but the dominance of the German language remained unchallenged, despite the efforts of the 1922 School Commission who, in Cabau-Lampa's (1999) words, tried to replace German with "English as the first language taught, but the Germanophiles

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[6] Original quotation: "de döda språken till förmån för de levande, tyska, franska och engelska".

managed to preserve the prerogative of their preferred language" (p. 400). Nonetheless, experimental tests with English as the first language were carried out over several decades with positive results (Cabau, 2009, p. 136). These experiments appear to have been instrumental in the process of shifting the focus from German to English, along with arguments for the internationalization of Sweden and its citizens (Cabau, 2009, p. 137; Cabau-Lampa, 2005, p. 100), resulting in the School Commission of 1946 establishing English as the first foreign language to be taught (Cabau-Lampa, 2005, p. 105).

An even more significant influence in terms of the legitimization of English as a first foreign language seems to have been the democratization process of Swedish education that was initiated by means of the 1962 school reforms (Malmberg, 1985, p. 28). While German and French had become associated with elitist views because these languages had traditionally been studied by students from more affluent backgrounds, English had no such attachments (Cabau, 2009, p.136; Malmberg, 1985, p. 26). English was thus seen as a tool in a democratization process, which also contributed to the gradual establishment of English as a compulsory subject for the Swedish comprehensive school (Hult, 2012, p. 232). As a result, as of 1962, students in grades 4 through 7 were obliged to study English, as per the curriculum Lgr62, with an expansion into the final two grades of compulsory school (grades 8 and 9) in 1969 through the curriculum Lgr69 (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, p. 400). English had consequently become firmly established both as the first foreign language taught in Swedish schools and as a compulsory subject. The high status of English, at least in terms of compulsory education, rested on democratic values and a rejection of educational privileges for a select few, since its "implementation and development benefited from a social consensus and the principle of equal opportunities for all, the cornerstone of Swedish school policy" (Cabau, 2009, p. 106).

Upper secondary education (non-compulsory education), on the other hand, presented a very different picture. For example, after WWII only a minority of those who had completed compulsory education continued to study at the upper secondary level (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, p. 401). Furthermore, there were divisions at this level: a classical stream (focusing on classical languages), a modern stream (where foreign languages were taught), and by 1954 also a general stream (including vocational studies) (p. 401). The vocational students were exempt from English studies until the 1990s (p. 401). Hence, unlike at the comprehensive school level, English at the upper secondary level was not taught on a general scale.

Educational reforms during the 1990s, however, helped to strengthen the position of English at the upper secondary level (Cabau, 2009, p. 138). Among other things, the upper secondary curriculum of 1994 (Lpf94) emphasized the importance of learning English across all programs (Cabau-Lampa. 1999, p. 402), as well as the development of *communicative competence* in foreign languages overall (Hult, 2012, p. 232). English consequently became one of eight core subjects in 16 newly created national programs, which meant that all upper secondary students had to study English, regardless of whether they were enrolled in a theoretical program or in a vocational one (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, pp. 402, 404). Lpf94

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further stipulated that students should be able "to use English in a functional way in different contexts: private, professional and academic" (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, p. 405). This stipulation thus highlights a curricular transition from a previous emphasis on more traditional approaches to teaching and learning, with a focus on structure and form (e.g., the grammar-translation approach), to a more communicative emphasis with a focus on meaning (Hult, 2012, p. 232). While this transition was initiated in the curriculum of 1980, where communicative competence was referred to for the first time (Lundahl, 2019, p. 101), the focus on developing the students' communicative proficiency became more clearly visible in the curriculum of 1994 (Malmberg, 2001, p. 19).

European influences on the ideas and formulations in the Swedish curriculum and the syllabus for English in the 21st century can be linked to the Council of Europe's (1996) publication *Modern Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) (Hult, 2012, p. 233). CEFR contains descriptive levels for language proficiency (below A1, A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2) which make it possible to compare proficiency levels across countries, age groups, and educational levels (Council of Europe, 2001). The first level, A and its subdivisions, outlines the criteria for basic users, the second level, B (B1 and B2), entails criteria for independent users, and finally, the third level, C (C1 and C2), contains criteria for proficient users of English (Lundahl, 2019, p. 103). The subdivisions are themselves divided into levels, such as A2.1. There are also definitions for different types of proficiency: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing (p. 103). The proficiency levels and educational goals of the Common European Framework of Reference, as well as its focus on intercultural and communicative competence, are to a large extent mirrored in the Swedish 2000 syllabus for English (Hult, 2012, p. 233; Malmberg, 2001, p. 19), as well as in subsequent reforms. For example, the first year of English at upper secondary school in Sweden (English 5, studied by all students) corresponds to the CEFR proficiency level of B1.2, English 6 (second year of upper secondary school, studied by all university preparatory programs) to B2.1, and English 7 (third year of upper secondary school, an elective course) to B2.2/C1 (Lundahl, 2019, p. 103).

As outlined above, the current status of English in Sweden can be viewed as high, and its importance appears to be indisputable. Additionally, there are current discussions regarding whether English can truly be considered a foreign (EFL) language in the Swedish context or whether its status is such that calling it a second (ESL) language would be warranted (Hult, 2012, p. 230). The latter argument is based on the idea that English is available almost everywhere in Swedish society, on TV, in films, on the internet, in gaming culture, in large companies, and in academia (Hult, 2012, pp. 238-240). From this angle, English has moved from being solely a *lingua franca* (a language adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different) to being used in other areas, that is, as a *lingua emotiva* for use in popular culture such as in gaming (Phillipson, 2006, p. 80). This means that English can be used as a lingua emotiva between, for example, native speakers of Swedish when addressing aspects of a popular culture, such as in gaming, where English is commonly used. In this respect, the use of English can be viewed as local

rather than global. This way of perceiving lingua emotiva can be connected to the idea that English functions as a second language in Sweden (Hult, 2012, p. 244). In addition to English being used for these special purposes, it is also being used by the very same individuals on a global level, that is, in communication with both native speakers of English and as a lingua franca.

From an educational standpoint it is important to consider the fact that students are different, with different backgrounds and different access to or exposure to *extracurricular English* (i.e., English learning outside of the school setting) (see Sundqvist, 2009, p. 1). This conflict between the idea that all upper secondary students in Sweden use English both in a local and a global sense and the view that students are heterogeneous in this regard is highlighted by Hult (2012) when he examines the responses of pre-service training teachers concerning *English language teaching* (ELT) methods. First, Hult outlines three characteristics of the English syllabus of 2011: (1) English is a useful language for international purposes, (2) English is widely available in Sweden, and (3) students should develop English communicative competence. He proposes that "this characterization projects a discourse that suggests ELT in Sweden should take place with a focus on its transcultural aspects, the ways in which it is simultaneously global and local" (p. 247). This double use accounts for the concept of transculturation (p. 247).

The pre-service teachers referred to by Hult (2012) present opposing views in this respect. On the one hand, the idea of a lack of authenticity in giving students a task to complete in English as opposed to Swedish comes to the fore, through which a hierarchy between Swedish and English is made visible (pp. 247-248). From this perspective, English is viewed more in terms of a foreign language. On the other hand, an opposing view is also presented proposing that since students speak English to each other in the corridors, discussing TV programs and other topics, English discussions on similar topics in the classroom would most likely not seem unrealistic to them (p. 249). This inference translates to an idea that English has come to acquire an ESL status amongst Swedish upper secondary students. However, from the perspective of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Sweden, it is further intimated that it is not the norm for students to speak English to one another outside of class, but rather that a limited number of students do so (p. 250). These are but two sides of the debate, pointing to the complexity of the situation as regards the status of English in Sweden.

The idea of differences between the students' knowledge of English due to the extent of their exposure to extracurricular English is further treated by Svensson (2017). She highlights the importance of teachers familiarizing "themselves with their students' knowledge of English as well as of their use of English in a recreational context" (p. 62). Svensson suggests that students of today may actually be more heterogeneous as regards their English knowledge than before the arrival of the internet, since some spend a considerable amount of time online while others do not (p. 62). Sundqvist and Olin-Scheller (2013) have also explored the topic of extracurricular English, but from another angle. Their findings suggest that EFL teachers need additional in-service training to bridge the gap

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between their students' knowledge of *extramural English* (the authors' term for extracurricular English) and English used in school (school English), in order to prevent demotivation on the part of the students who through their extramural English have generally been exposed to informal and specialized English connected to their areas of interest (pp. 329, 335-336). A recent study (2019-2020) involving interviews with 20 lower secondary teachers (six from Austria, seven from France, and seven from Sweden) conducted by Schurz et al. (2022) points to a "growing awareness among teachers in all countries [Sweden, France and Austria] of the role played by EE [extramural English] in students' lives and on the potential positive benefits of EE on general English language proficiency" (p. 13). These benefits include "receptive skills, learners' vocabulary range, as well as self-confidence and motivation" (p. 13). Despite these positive views, the idea that there are differences between students as regards extracurricular English input and that students' knowledge of English may thus be more heterogeneous than before still stands. The conclusion is that while it may be tempting to view English as a transcultural language for all rather than as a foreign language used mainly in a global context, the differences between students point to a need for an EFL approach, and to the necessity of teachers being aware of each student's learning curve and their knowledge of extracurricular English while also focusing on meaningful communication.

 English as a school subject and related concerns can be linked to the academic study of English. In Sweden, this field has traditionally been divided into two distinct disciplinary research domains, English linguistics and English literary studies, which means that the field of English studies covers or connects to both areas (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2016, p. 386). The field of English linguistics is concerned with the study of the English language, but one branch of English linguistics, Applied Linguistics, focuses on second language acquisition (SLA). SLA concerns are central to language education and to the discussion of the syllabus of English for the upper secondary level in Sweden (Skolverket, 2011, 2021), and will therefore be introduced below. Another area of research that is closely linked to language studies is that of cultural studies, and this body of research is also of significance to the English syllabus, to educational practice, and to literary studies. For this reason, connections between culture and literary texts will be explored, followed by an in-depth examination of the field of literature education. This presentation is followed by an exploration of curricular theory which has had an impact on past and present Swedish curricula as a whole and thus also on English syllabi. Three English syllabi from 1994, 2011, and 2021 (Skolverket, 1994b, 2011b, 2021c) will then be examined through the lens of current research to trace changes to the role of literary texts in Swedish upper secondary EFL education over time.

2.2 Language Education

The prominent position and extensive use of the English language in Sweden today has resulted in a predominant focus on communicative teaching and learning practices in Swedish EFL education (Hult, 2012). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a movement and approach has a long history dating back to the late 1950s and early 1960s, with roots in both linguistics and SLA theory. Contributors to the concept of CLT include linguists such as Hymes (1972), who began to explore the concept of communicative competence and the idea of language as a social phenomenon. There is also Widdowson (1978), who, among other things, introduced a theoretical differentiation between the terms *language use* and *language usage* to make a distinction between the communicative meaning of language and the rules for making language. Important SLA researchers include Krashen (1985), who focuses on the importance of comprehensible input (reception and reading) in language acquisition, and Swain (2000), who emphasizes the importance of opportunities for output (language production) in the language learning process. According to Hall (2015),

> the communicative approach to language teaching, whatever else the often rather vague and elastic term may suggest, is generally taken to be centrally concerned with learners negotiating meaning for themselves, learning by doing things in authentic contexts. (p.116)

While Hall does pinpoint the centrality of learners negotiating meaning in authentic contexts, he also highlights the fact that there is some debate about a unified meaning of the term CLT. Wesche and Skehan (2002) also allude to this idea, but conclude that there are several central points that define a classroom with a focus on CLT, including:

- Activities that require frequent interaction among learners or with other interlocutors to exchange information and solve problems,
- Use of authentic (nonpedagogic) texts and communication activities linked to 'real-world' contexts, often emphasizing links across written and spoken modes and channels,
- Approaches that are learner centered in that they take into account learners' backgrounds, language needs, and goals, and generally allow learners some creativity and role in instructional decisions. (p. 208)

Wesche and Skehan further suggest that such CLT features may entail:

- Instruction that emphasizes cooperative learning such as group and pair work
- Opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process with the goal of improving their ability to learn language in context,
- Communicative tasks linked to curricular goals as the basic organizing unit for language instruction,

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- Substantive content, often school subject matter from nonlanguage disciplines, that is learned as a vehicle for language development, as well as for inherent value. (p. 208)

The conclusion is that not only should the focus be on communicative, functional situations, but also on authentic tasks and materials for enhanced motivation and optimal opportunities for language acquisition. The importance of student interaction, and thus socioculturally situated learning, is also brought to light. Such communicative ideals can be connected to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theories where, for example, language learning tasks should be "relevant to life", "meaningful", and "naturally taught" (p. 113). Jakobsson (2012) describes the sociocultural perspective as being concerned with individuals developing new knowledge and competences through collaboration and in close contact with the cultural products they use, proposing that the new knowledge and the ability to use it become mutually linked to these cultural products and visible in the use of them (p. 168).

In current teaching practices, CLT appears to be flourishing in the Swedish EFL classrooms of today. For example, the study by Schurz et al. (2022), mentioned previously in conjunction with extracurricular English, shows that the participating Swedish EFL teachers relied exclusively on CLT teaching methods to approach the teaching of grammar (implying the implicit teaching of grammar), while the Austrian and French participants were more likely to make use of PPP methods (the traditional presentation, practice, and production formula) to teach grammar (explicit teaching of grammar) (pp. 9-11). This is not to imply that CLT approaches to teaching grammar are the only recommended ways, or indeed the best ways – both Ellis (2012) and Long (2015) recommend a mixture of CLT and form-focused teaching in relation to grammar – but the results of Schurz et al.'s study point to a widespread use of CLT in the Swedish EFL context.

In a recent survey study by Forsberg et al. (2019), focusing on communicative competence and target varieties in TEFL practices (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in Germany and Sweden, the findings show that both Swedish and German teachers have begun to prioritize communicative competence in recent years, as per the directives of their respective curricula.[7] It is further suggested that both the Swedish and the German EFL teachers in the study rank communicative skills above other aspects such as vocabulary skills (which comes second), grammar skills (which comes third) and pronunciation skills (which comes fourth). Nonetheless, there is a difference in that the Swedish participants rate communicative skills and vocabulary skills slightly higher than the German participants do, while conversely, the German participants rate grammar skills slightly higher than the Swedish participants do. However, the conclusion is that communicative skills are predominant in TEFL practices and in terms of desired outcomes in both countries (pp. 46-47).

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[7] Germany (34 teachers) and Sweden (46 teachers).

A communicative language teaching approach that has evolved from CLT is task-based language teaching (TBLT). Van Gorp and Bogaert (2006) stress that

> task-based language learning is highly dependent on the basic premises of social-constructivism, stating that learners acquire complex skills by actively tackling holistic tasks, calling for an integrated use of the target skills, and by collaborating with peers and more knowledgeable partners while doing so. (pp. 101-102)

TBLT thus focuses on tasks; the general procedure that Van Gorp and Bogaert prescribe involves "introducing the task", "supporting task performance", and "the post-task phase" (p. 102). While the authors mainly refer to this method in relation to language acquisition, it could feasibly also be conducive to the development of literary skills and contextual knowledge.

The concept of task authenticity is central to CLT and TBLT. It is based on the idea that besides the concerns over the need for a development of

> effective skills and strategies for the real world, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of affective factors in learning, and the use of authentic texts is now considered to be one way of mainlining or increasing students' motivation for learning. They give the learner the feeling that he or she is learning the 'real' language; that they are in touch with that living entity, the target language as it is used by the community which speaks it. (Guariento & Morley, 2001, p. 347)

One such authentic text possibility is that of literary texts. Literary texts are by definition authentic, since they "are not fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching a language" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 3) and thus fulfil the criteria for learners to be provided with "real" language. Such texts will expose students to idiomatic language and linguistic situations they would otherwise not encounter (Hall, 2015, p. 3). The role of literary texts in a CLT-focused EFL classroom is explored in a study conducted by Shelton-Strong (2012). The method explored in this study combines the use of authentic material in the form of literary texts with CLT and TBLT approaches through literary circles.[8] The aim of the study was to examine the possible benefits that literary circles may have to offer in English language learning and "to identify direct links to SLA through learner engagement" (p. 214). The findings suggest that there are motivational and scaffolding advantages attached to the collaboration of students around authentic texts. The students in the study report on improved reading comprehension and language development by means of collaboration, increased vocabulary, improved reading speed, feeling more comfortable to discuss things in English, the subject of English becoming more interesting than before, and leadership development, as well as positive aspects of peer support (Shelton-Strong, 2012, pp. 219-220). Task authenticity, as per Guariento and Morley's (2001) definition, can thus be readily linked to

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[8] Vietnamese EFL students of B2/C1 proficiency levels.

collaborative work with the aim of acquiring language by means of literary texts in the EFL context. From this perspective, a literary text is an instrumental material that can engage students and aid them in their language development, but the texts themselves do not seem to be the object of study; that is, literary study is not described as being part of the main focus of the classroom activities.

2.3 Literary Studies

While SLA is central to understanding the EFL classroom so is the field of literary studies which together with linguistics form the backbone of academic studies in the subject of English. What does the term literary studies mean? Hewson (2018) clearly views literary studies as an ongoing debate about the role of literature:

> More than most of the disciplines, literary studies is a history in motion, not merely the practice of a knowledge that progressively increases and refines its findings, but a debate about why and how literature should be studied. (p. 24)

In this light, literary studies are what people make of them, changing and moving with the individuals that interact with the discipline. There are some central questions that remain constant, as Hewson recognizes; they concern why literary texts are relevant in the first place, which types of texts are included in the concept, and how they might be approached. The debate continues, but examples of past and present views, approaches and influences will help to highlight important concerns within this field. To better understand the underpinnings of current concerns within literary studies and literature education, two important literary movements will be explored below, New Criticism and Reader Response.

2.3.1 Literary Movements

During the past two centuries, the focus in literary studies has shifted from a predominant concern with the significance of authors to the literary texts they created, and on to an interest in the reader's position and input in meaning making (Eagleton, 1997, p. 64). These paradigm shifts are summarized by Eagleton in three stages: "a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the nineteenth century); an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism); and a marked shift of attention to the reader […] the most underprivileged of the trio – strangely, since without him or her there would be no literary texts at all" (p. 64). These concerns are of interest in the analyses of EFL teaching approaches and teachers' attitudes to literary texts since they may help to pinpoint perspectives on literary studies. As a consequence, two of the most influential paradigms, New Criticism and Reader Response Theory, will be briefly explored, since it has been suggested that they are still relevant to teaching practices today, one way or another (see Degerman, 2012; Matterson, 2006; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

2.3.1.1 New Criticism: The Importance of the Text

New Criticism arose in the 1930s and was the predominant literary paradigm in the United States (and elsewhere) from this time on into the 1950s (Matterson, 2006, p. 166). It grew out of concerns for close reading (e.g., the careful analysis of a passage of text to examine language use, etc.) and detailed textual analysis, as opposed to an emphasis on authors, biographical and historical information of previous times (Padley, 2006, pp. 170-171). Matterson (2006) concludes that New Criticism facilitated a major shift in literature education, as well as prompting the initial move towards critical theory in relation to literary studies (p. 166).

New Criticism was in part inspired by Richards' and Empson's theories, but its main instigator was Ransom (1888-1974), whose book *New Criticism* (1941) gave its name to the movement (Matterson, 2006, p. 166-167). However, the ideas behind the movement were introduced in an article a few years prior to the release of this book. In the article, Ransom (1937) describes how he had come to the conclusion that "the students of the future must be permitted to study literature, and not merely about literature" (p. 588). He goes on to condemn the overreliance on historical knowledge (and to some degree also on linguistic knowledge) to the detriment of criticism in literary studies. Ransom's main point of contention is that literary texts should not be studied in relation to other works or periods alone, but rather as separate entities, as works of art in their own right, with their separate intrinsic qualities (pp. 600-602).[9] As a result of this rationale, the focus was shifted from the author and contextual issues to the actual text and its form. Hence, the seeds of detailed literary analysis were planted.

Despite the illusion of a tidy and collected movement, there is, in Matterson's (2006) view, no "typical New Critic" (p.166). In fact, many of the critics mentioned in Ransom's book were not inclined to view themselves as part of the movement, while those who are currently viewed as belonging to New Criticism were omitted. For this reason, Matterson suggests that rather than viewing New Criticism as a critical movement, it might be more apt to define it as "an empirical methodology" and "a reading practice" (p. 166).

An additional aspect of New Criticism is that texts began to be viewed as entities that not only required careful study but also a specific approach. Brooks (1979), one of Ransom's disciples, highlights this idea in an article where he explains that he and his colleague Penn Warren discovered that "[their] students, many of whom had good minds, some imagination, and a good deal of lived experience, had very little knowledge of how to read a story or a play, and even less knowledge of how to read poetry" (Brooks, 1979, p. 593). Matterson (2006) elucidates this statement by explaining that what Brooks and Penn were really concerned with was the need for students to learn to differentiate between functional and non-functional language and thus between non-literary and literary language

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[9] While the main focus of Ransom's article is poetry, he also includes other forms of fiction and even non-fiction in his line of reasoning.

(p. 170). It is thus suggested that Brooks' and Penn's students were prone to read and try to understand the literary texts by means of a functional approach, and thus did not grasp the underlying symbolism and messages of a literary text. As a result of the conclusions drawn by scholars such as Brooks and Penn, the "genesis and longevity of New Criticism as a reading practice" may be explained, according to Matterson (p. 170).

Besides matters regarding approaches to literary texts and the construal of literary language, New Critics also defended the autonomy of a literary text. In "The Intentional Fallacy", for example, Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) argue "that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" (p. 468). The author, who was previously viewed as having an unchallenged position of authority, was thus dethroned by the New Critics (cf. Barthes, 1977). Wimsatt and Beardsley's (1946) article further discusses the possible pros and cons of receiving an answer as to the author's intentions. It is finally concluded that if such an answer was elicited with regard to, for example, T. S. Eliot's intentions concerning one of his poems, "such an answer to such an inquiry would have nothing to do with the poem 'Prufrock' it would not be a critical inquiry. Critical inquiries, unlike bets, are not settled in this way. Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle" (p. 487). Hence, from a New Critic's perspective, in listening to or paying heed to the author's rationale, readers would resign themselves to purely passive roles. Instead, it was deemed necessary to question any authorial intentions in order to interpret the message of the text with a critical eye.

As Matterson indicates, while an exclusive focus on the text is less common today, significant factors related to New Criticism are still emphasized in literary studies, such as close reading, attention to detail, and the specific literariness of the text. These matters are to a large extent still prevalent elements in current teaching practices in general (Matterson, 2006, p. 174), and so also in Sweden. As the influence of New Criticism began to dissipate at the end of the 1950s, however, other concerns came to the fore. The paradigm shift that began to take place in the second half of the 20th century concerns the position of the reader, who was afforded a more prominent role in subsequent movements, especially in Reader Response Theory.

2.3.1.2 Response Theory: The Position of the Reader

Reader Response Theory, with its roots in both Germany and the United States, was firmly established by the late 1960s. According to the proponents of Reader Response Theory, there should be a focus on the subjective reading experience as well as on the text (Bertens, 2014, pp. 95-96). The first recognition of the importance of the reader's position was arguably expressed by the American critical theorist Rosenblatt (1904-2005), whose first edition of the book *Literature as Exploration* was published in the 1930s. Rosenblatt stresses that a reader brings their own interpretation to a text and thereby posits a critical interpretation of it while in the process of exploring it (1995, p. 33). However, at the time when Rosenblatt first introduced these ideas to the world, literature education was

primarily concerned with historical and biographical contexts surrounding the literary works, and later also primarily with the text itself and "correct" ways of approaching it (Brooks, 1979, p. 593). Rosenblatt expressed her concern over this predicament: "Teachers frequently approach a book or a poem as though it were a neatly labeled bundle of literary values to be pointed out to the student" (1995, p. 56). This is an issue since the literary text can subsequently hold no value for the student in terms of a new discovery or as a source of enjoyment. It is not the historical data or the detailed textual analysis per se that are the main issues, but the fact that students are prevented from first approaching the text on a personal level (p. 57). This results in insecure and confused students who, even if given the opportunity, are unable to supply their responses to literary works (p. 61).

In order to combat the lack of opportunities to react on an individual level, Rosenblatt (1995) underscores the importance of removing any preconceived ideas of a "correct" way of approaching literary works: "The student must be free to grapple with his [sic] own reaction" (p. 63). Brook's (1979) comment on his students' inability to read a literary text in the correct way stands in stark contrast to Rosenblatt's perspective, from which the teacher's "function is to help the students realize that the most important thing is what literature means to them and does for them" (1995, p. 64). Brooks and Rosenblatt thus have opposing points of view as to the significance of the reader in relation to the text.

Rosenblatt (1995) further insists that the experience of literature is by no means a passive consumption on the part of the reader. On the contrary, it is an intense individual undertaking where the reader's own contribution to the interpretation and creation of the text is as important as the literary text itself. This contribution is in part based on the student's own background, cultural heritage, and personality (p. 91). From a pedagogical standpoint, step one involves allowing the student to respond freely, while step two concerns encouraging the student to learn to recognize what it is that makes them view matters in the way they do and to handle this "with intelligence and discrimination", which will allow them to reach a fuller and sounder response to literature (p. 102). Rosenblatt further asserts that it is essential to guide a student towards a habit of contemplating their own response to literary texts as well as other conceivable interpretations. This also "requires that the student critically reevaluate his [sic] own assumptions and preoccupations" (p. 74), partly by realizing that there may be more than one possible interpretation. Such a process may be instigated by means of discussions with other students, after exploring the text alone (p. 104). This in turn is likely to lead to a second reading where the student will be forced to question and possibly reevaluate their position. Have they taken all that the text has to offer into consideration? By means of this course of action, the student becomes more conscious of "the various verbal 'clues' – the diction, the rhythmic pattern, structure, and symbol – and develops or deepens his [sic] understanding of concepts such as voice, persona, point of view, genre" (p. 214). This realization could arguably be transferable to other important considerations and situations in life in general.

The way that a reader reads can be divided into two categories, *nonaesthetic* and *aesthetic* reading (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 23). Nonaesthetic reading involves trawling for

information or finding a solution to a problem (such as when reading a scientific text or a newspaper article). It is thus mainly about finding information for use after reading. Rosenblatt has elected to label this form of nonaesthetic reading as *efferent reading,* which she deems to be more neutral than a previously used term, *instrumental reading* (p. 24). When reading a literary text, the reader must indeed make use of efferent reading to decode assertions, for example, but they may also make associations and experience feelings that the words evoke in them. The latter thus involves *aesthetic reading:* "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he [sic] is living through during this relationship with that particular text" (p. 25). By contrast then, if a reader approaches a literary work by means of efferent reading alone, the only outcome will be that they become familiar with the rough plot of the story and can chronologically outline central events. When aesthetic reading is performed, however, a *transaction* between the text and the reader takes place, resulting in a new literary text (or conception) which is thus unique to each individual reader. Moreover, Rosenblatt suggests that if an individual reads the same literary text twice, two versions of the text may be created (p. 26-27). Relying on the transactional terminology presented by Dewey and Bentley, Rosenblatt developed the concept of *transactional reading theory*, which proposes that the reader and the text are of equal importance and that there is an interplay between the words on the page and the reader; that is, "the relation between the reader and the text is not linear" (p. 16). This statement highlights an interactive process that is constant and that changes the reader's perception of events as they transpire before them.

While Rosenblatt (1978) has identified a transactional relationship between the text and the reader, Langer (2011) focuses on the cognitive mechanisms involved in the reading process, a process she has named "envisionment building" (pp. 16-22). She explains that she consistently treats "literature as a way of thinking, rather than as a type of text – as one aspect of intelligent and literate thought that brings with it particular reasoning and problem-solving strategies" and ways "to explore possibilities and consider options" (p. 2). She defines her envisionments as

> text-worlds in the mind that differ from individual to individual. They are a function of one's personal and cultural experiences, one's relationship to the current experience, what one knows, how one feels, and what one is after. Envisionments are dynamic sets of related ideas, images, questions, during every reading, writing, speaking or other experience in which one gains, expresses, and shares thoughts and understandings. (p.10)

Envisionments thus appear to involve both cognitive processes and who the readers are as individuals, but also what they bring to the reading of a text. The development of ideas and knowledge in a sociocultural setting is also highlighted. This is similar to Rosenblatt's view of the importance of the readers' cultural heritage and personal stances. From Langer's perspective, these envisionments are unique and essential in creating meaning and understanding while reading a literary text.

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Both Rosenblatt's ideas and Langer's more recent contributions can be discerned in current empirical research in literature education. For instance, in a study conducted by Clapp et al. (2021), social annotation in relation to responding to literary texts is analyzed by means of Rosenblatt's transactional theory to ascertain how such methods might be beneficial. In terms of connections to Langer's research, a study by Mattisson Ekstam (2018), focusing on reader response theory, explores the use of reading logs amongst middle school and lower secondary school pre-service teachers in the subject of English in Norway in an attempt to make the students aware of their reading habits as regards literary texts. The students' reading logs were analyzed by means of Langer's five reading stances to ascertain how deep these future teachers delve into the essence of the texts. The reading logs also served as a meta-cognitive tool for the students, allowing them to evaluate and develop their reader response. Hence, in many respects, Reader Response Theory underpins literature education in the 21st century, along with pedagogical learning theories. In addition to these influences, it is also important to highlight the link between literary texts and culture since literary texts often treat cultural concerns and also because language learning is linked to culture.

2.4 Culture and Literary Texts

Literary texts are often mentioned in conjunction with the development of different forms of cultural knowledge since such texts depict cultural and social examples of our world (Nussbaum, 2010). The reader's knowledge of culture and the world is also viewed as an essential part in interpreting a literary work (Felea, 2017). However, the term *culture* has multiple meanings. As a consequence, different perspectives on this phenomenon will be explored briefly as well as views on culture in relation to literary texts in both the L1 and the L2 contexts. A somewhat narrow view of culture is the anthropological definition, where focus is directed primarily towards "shared habits, rituals and artefacts of a people", making possible "a self-reflective understanding of one's own culture as one amongst others" (Fornäs, 2017, pp. 25-26). However, the term culture can have other connotations. It has come to encompass a plethora of sub-categories. Persson (2007) examines this topic from a Swedish L1 perspective, referring to the growth of cultural concerns as *the cultural turn*. He defines this concept as a manifold tendency to explain different phenomena (such as literature) in terms of culture (p. 11). He further suggests that the influence of the cultural turn in literary studies in the subject of Swedish in Sweden, and the subsequent legitimization of literary texts by means of culture, have occurred at the expense of other important focus areas (p. 13). This finding is based on Persson's analysis of Swedish curricula at all levels of education (primary, secondary, and tertiary levels),[10] individual syllabi for the

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[10] Persson has focused on steering documents for compulsory school and upper secondary school from the years 1962 to 2000, and on syllabi for higher education from the years 2005-2006.

subject of Swedish at the same levels, as well as corresponding teaching materials such as course books (pp. 13, 282-290). He justifies his choices by explaining that steering documents and course books are highly influential and thus have an authoritative role, even if teachers basically have the freedom to make their own decisions (pp. 14-15). One conclusion that Persson draws as regards literary texts in the subject of Swedish at the upper secondary level is that "the superordinate basis for the legitimization of literary studies has shifted from an emphasis on spiritual cultivation and aesthetic nurturing to an emphasis on different aspects of the cultural" (p. 85, my translation).[11] From this angle, different aspects of the cultural take precedence over aesthetic concerns in Swedish education.

In the EFL arena, literary texts have come to be an important bridge between language learning and knowledge of culture. For example, it has been suggested that since literature is "part of human experience", it "increases [EFL students'] knowledge of an important part of the culture of English-speaking countries" (Paran & Robinson, 2016, p. 14), which primarily appears to involve an anthropological notion of culture. However, the expansion of the term culture appears to be viewed in a favorable light from the point of view of language studies. The link between cultural studies and L2 language studies can be connected to the concerns of post-structuralism (Kramsch, 2014, pp. 39-41, 47). The past twenty years have witnessed a growth of fields related to Applied Linguistics, dealing with language and culture, such as Intercultural Communication and Linguistic Anthropology, to name a few. According to Kramsch, "'intercultural learning' has become an influential approach to language education, based on the idea of 'mediation between cultures', 'personal engagement with diversity', and 'interpersonal exchanges of meaning'" (p. 51).[12] Literary texts can provide opportunities for such learning in the L2 context, for instance, by encouraging students to explore different cultural backgrounds and to examine how these backgrounds influence an individual's thinking, behavior, and values, and to subsequently question these mindsets while focusing on self-image and identity as well as language development and intercultural communicative competence all at once (cf. Elmgren, 2021, pp. 131-132; Myklevold, 2018, p. 152).

The relevance of literary texts in the development of different forms of cultural competence which in turn may foster *democratic citizenship* is touched upon within different disciplines, such as philosophy (Nussbaum, 2010), L1 literature education research (Martinsson, 2018; Nordenstam & Widhe, 2021; Persson, 2007), and English language and

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[11] Original quotation: "Litteraturstudiets överordnade legitimeringsgrund har förskjutits från en betoning av andlig odling och estetisk fostran till en betoning av olika aspekter av det kulturella".

[12] The term "transcultural learning" is used by some researchers such as Reichl (2013) instead of the term "intercultural learning". Reichl explains that this is due to viewing "cultures not as stable categories but as a network of relations" in an attempt to "avoid binarism and territorial connotations" (p. 107).

literature research (Bland, 2013; 2018).[13] Nussbaum (2010) stresses the value of literary texts, and art overall for that matter, in the development of *narrative imagination* which is linked to cultural competence while also incorporating elements of literary competence.[14] In Nussbaum's view, narrative imagination involves "the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have" (pp. 95-95). Acquiring such a skill is essential in the development of democratic values, and the key is to choose texts wisely to expose a society's blind spots and cultural bias. Nussbaum stresses that "works of art (whether literary or musical or theatrical) can be chosen to promote criticism of this obtuseness, and a more adequate vision of the unseen" (pp. 106-107), and she further alludes to the idea that a focus on the arts in education provides opportunities for democratic understanding. Narrative imagination as a core element in building democratic values is also highlighted in relation to the L1 literature education context in Sweden by Martinsson (2018) and Persson (2007). From Nordenstam and Widhe's (2021) perspective, allowing children to read children's literature in school may encourage them to become engaged in their social surroundings. The authors propose that children's literature often "promotes visions of future societies and encourages readers to engage in societal transformation" (p. 4), but perhaps more importantly this genre "creates subversive, liberating, and ideological visions for the child as child—focusing on psychological needs, well-being, ethics, politics, actions, and rights" (p. 6). This conclusion further highlights the potential of literary texts when it comes to the development of democratic citizenship.

In the L2 setting, cultural competence and democratic values are also at the fore in the discussion on the relevance of literary texts. Tegmark (2012), for example, stresses that "foreign language learning also involves learning about the cultural and historical contexts in which languages are used by native – as well as non-native – speakers" (p. 21). Such a focus will in turn allow students to engage in critical analysis of related topics. Tegmark stresses that such undertakings will "help our students to be aware of the dangers of an uncritical acceptance of dominating grand narratives" (p.34). The importance of teaching L2 students to be on their guard as to underlying messages and the power of influence in texts written in a foreign language is thus emphasized. This line of reasoning translates to *critical literacy,* "learning to read all texts critically and understanding their manipulative power"(Bland, 2018, p. 270). Bland (2013) also refers to the term *critical cultural literacy*, connecting it to the benefits of reading literary texts for the pre-adult EFL learner where opportunities for "citizenship development" through "creating positive attitudes to diversity and tolerance" are highlighted (p. 216). One reason for why such a focus is viewed as suitable in the EFL

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[13] The term "transcultural learning" is used by some researchers such as Reichl (2013) instead of the term "intercultural learning". Reichl explains that this is due to viewing "cultures not as stable categories but as a network of relations" in an attempt to "avoid binarism and territorial connotations" (p. 107).
[14] *Literary competence* will be discussed in sub-section 2.5.1

context is that "the pre-adult reader is likely to open up to an ethical discourse on race, gender, class, and the environment, especially when embedded in a convincing storyworld" may appeal to their sense of idealism (p. 214). Such topics are therefore likely to encourage them to discuss such matters and to develop their cultural competence and their communicative competence at the same time. Bland (2023) broaches this topic in a recent publication, proposing that "studying controversial topics through literary texts is a contribution to the requirements of global education" (pp. 41-42), which she argues is also central to teaching interculturality. The idea of literary texts as vehicles for intercultural competence is further discussed by Volkmann (2015). He presents arguments for a focus on what he calls "orientation" in connection to literary texts in the EFL context where students can have "vicarious experiences" of injustice and intolerance (while also developing their communicative competence), experiences which in turn are likely to develop feelings of empathy and guidelines for moral values (p. 53). Moreover, this exposure to *otherness* may enable students to uncover cross-cultural issues and to develop cultural awareness: "Such literary skills also develop students' critical thinking. Decoding literary texts and decoding cultural meaning should therefore be seen as closely related" (p. 64). Hence, literary texts are viewed as important sources of cultural learning, which in turn is considered a form of literary learning. What these examples of research boil down to is that there are convincing reasons for a focus on cultural elements through literary texts in the EFL context. Volkmann's general conclusion is that literary texts in the EFL context can be used for so much more than *linguistic competence* connected to standardized target language concerns.

2.5 Literature Education

According to Degerman (2012), the field of literature education concerns the area of research that examines literary texts in a pedagogical setting (pp. 18-19). While Degerman's research is concerned with literature education in the L1 context in Sweden, his broad definition is also applicable to literary texts in EFL education. Martinsson (2018), who is also primarily concerned with L1 research, refers to four central questions that should guide research within literature education: "What, how, why, and whom should I teach?" (p. 13).[15] These questions will first be addressed in regard to critical perspectives on literature education globally and nationally, both in terms of L1 and L2 research. This discussion will be followed by an overview of current topics within L1 and L2 empirical research in literature education.

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[15] Original quotation: "Vad, hur, varför och till vem ska jag lära ut?"

2.5.1 Critical Perspectives: Literature Education in L1 and L2

The question of the relevance of literary texts in education is the focus of an ongoing debate. Why should students read or study literary texts in school? What are the benefits? There is not one simple answer to these questions but rather many complex justifications that are also under debate, such as when it comes to the roles of such texts in L1 contra L2 education. The main arguments for the relevance of literary texts in general include their capacity for contributing to the development of critical thinking, literary competence, and linguistic competence, but also in terms of fostering cultural competence and critical literacy, as discussed above.

An area of competence that could be viewed as connected to *critical literacy* (exposing the bias and ideological perspective of a text) is the term *critical thinking* (a cognitive process involving analysis and interpretation) (cf. Giselsson, 2020). Critical thinking is often associated with the reason why literary texts have a central place in education. In the L1 context, for example, critical thinking is touched upon by Langer (2011) when she refers to literature as a way of thinking and a way of working on problem-solving abilities. It is also what Rosenblatt (1995) alludes to when she describes students as involved in the process of critically reevaluating their interpretations of literary texts "with intelligence and discrimination" (p.102). Öhman (2015) likewise connects literary texts (particularly novels) to opportunities for both in-depth critical thinking and critical reading, but he also exposes the dichotomy between approaching a text critically and becoming absorbed by it (p. 32). Yet, similarly to Rosenblatt, Öhman stresses the importance of both ways of approaching the text, with an initial focus on becoming absorbed by the text. He points out that the intense emotional engagement in the literary work does not mean that the analysis and the critical view of the literary work is threatened, but rather that engagement is a prerequisite for reaping the benefits of the value of literature (p. 37). From the L2 perspective, critical thinking is viewed as an integral part of the *interpretive competence* that the language learner can develop by means of literary texts, and which can facilitate a deeper response to the texts (Volkmann, 2015). Such competence involves being able to approach the text in an analytical manner as well as "to compare and evaluate different interpretations", and "it entails the competence to come to a broader or deeper, multi-faceted and less subjective interpretation of a literary text" (p. 51). These arguments indicate that working on critical thinking skills and analytical competence will allow the language student to move beyond reading comprehension to a more nuanced and critical view of the text.

Literary texts can also activate *literary competence*. This concept was first introduced by Culler (1975) who emphasized the difference between fictive narrative texts and non-fictive texts. Culler argued that using fictive literary texts in different ways is a competence that one has to acquire. Torell (2002) subsequently redefined the concept as he claims that *literary competence* is a combination of three main competences: *constitutional competence*, *performance competence*, and *literary transfer competence. Constitutional competence* is thought to be naturally occurring when children are playing and mimicking

real life events, which involves the creation of fiction. According to Torell, such story-making takes place even before children have acquired a language and before they are governed by social conventions (p. 82). *Performance competence*, on the other hand, involves the ability to analyze literary texts and express oneself about them, a skill that is learned and consequently also governed by conventions. Such competence entails being able to recognize the structure of the text as well as being able to talk about composition, narrative technique, characterization, theme, and plot (p. 84). This competence is usually what is in focus in literature education in the school setting, according to Torell, and it is an important skill. However, too much focus on this area of competence may result in the reader interpreting the text based on learned patterns and with limited personal input in the form of individual thinking. *Literary transfer competence* can curb a possible dominance of the influence of *performance competence*. *Literary transfer competence* encompasses the idea that the reader will automatically connect the contents of the text to their own experiences in life. This may be linked to Rosenblatt's (1995) view of the importance of the reader and the reader's experiences in the analysis of literary texts. However, Torell (2002) stresses that *literary transfer competence* can also become dominant to a point where the text itself becomes secondary and obscured, which could result in an exclusive focus on the reader's own experiences and thus in an inability to see "the other" in the text (p. 87). Torell's conclusion is that in order to ensure that *literary competence* functions optimally, there has to be a balance between the three competencies. The prerequisite for this is that literary reading is characterized by a strong sense of self and an active curiosity about *otherness* in the text (p. 88).[16] In view of Torell's arguments, Rosenblatt's (1995) focus on the importance of reader response and the transactional interplay between the text and the reader to foster student engagement and personal development may be construed as primarily concerned with *literary transfer competence*. However, she argues for the importance of learning about verbal clues, narrative structure, and how, for example, point of view may affect the perspective and reliability of a narrative (p. 214). Öhman (2015) recognizes the importance of Rosenblatt's contributions as regards reader response and as to the relevance of literary texts in the development of literary competence. Nonetheless, he, similarly to Torell (2002), criticizes Rosenblatt's stance on reader response as he deems it to be too centered on individualism and personal response and thereby not sufficiently focused on critical response (p. 70).

While literary competence may have a more secure role in the L1 setting, the question of whether such competence should also be in focus in the L2 context is under debate. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) propose that narratological concepts do have an important role to play in the analysis of literary texts in the EFL context "as they can encourage both language development and valuable intertextual referencing as the stories

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[16] This aspect of *otherness* can be connected to the concept of narrative imagination, which means that narrative imagination involves both cultural competence and literary competence.

are successively related to one another" (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000, p. 105). Such an approach could contribute to developing a deeper knowledge of literature in general, of how to use literary devices as well as providing insights in terms of what distinguishes a literary text from other types of texts. Besides the reference to language development, what are the specific benefits of such a focus for the L2 learner? Freese (2015) broaches this topic, but he refers to another term which is related to literary competence, that of *narrative competence*. From Freese's perspective, narrative competence entails sense-making through story-telling techniques which he argues are central to the development of social communication and the construal of one's identity (p. 159).[17] He proposes that this skill is particularly important to EFL learners since they are dealing with a foreign language and hence it is crucial to learn to tell the difference between, for example, a narrator and an author as well as between a plot and a story in order to facilitate the understanding of the text. It is also vital for the EFL learner to discover how point of view affects perspectives on different issues and to thereby make sense of the text. However, he stresses that such work does not have to cover all of the elements of structural narratology, only the most basic structures, as he remarks that the aim in EFL teaching is "not to prepare students for careers as literary scholars, but rather to turn them into informed lay readers" (pp. 161-162). Freese's arguments for a focus on narrative competence in the EFL setting thus help to elucidate the ideas presented by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000). Similar arguments are put forth by Volkmann (2015) when he proposes that narrative competence and the ability to create stories have a central place in EFL as students are learning about multifaceted and complex aspects of communicating in English (p. 52). These examples suggest that proponents of a literary focus in relation to literary texts in the EFL context feel obligated to argue for and defend aesthetic learning in this regard. Delanoy (2015) approaches this subject when he discusses the marginalized role of literary texts in the EFL context which he traces to the narrow European standardized *language competencies* that can be quantitatively tested (p. 24). He finds that such competencies leave little room for "demanding content and personal learner involvement" (p.25). In the Swedish context, Persson and Sundmark (2022) suggest that the status of English and the high level of linguistic competence of the students at the upper secondary level of education warrant greater collaboration between the subject of Swedish and the subject of English as regards the teaching of literary competence. They point to the meager focus on literary concerns in the English syllabus when they argue that much would be gained if there were consensus about the teaching of literature in these two subjects, such as a joint focus on teaching literary terms and the development of critical and aesthetic abilities (p. 221). Since the

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[17] The significance of acquiring narrative competence has been discussed by other researchers, for example, Lundström and Olin-Scheller (2010) who have widened the concept to include multimodal texts. They discuss the importance of narrative competence which involves social interplay, a collective intelligence and the process of unveiling plots, making creative imitations and developing a meta reflective ability in an attempt to comprehend one's own reactions in regard to fan fiction and role playing, among other multimodal text types.

authors have grouped critical and literary abilities together, it suggests that they may be construed as being partly dependent on one another.

The final and perhaps most obvious reason why literary texts are deemed to be important in the EFL context is that they can be used as sources for the development of linguistic competence (cf. Volkmann, 2015) and *functional literacy* (learning how to read and write, in this case in a foreign language) (cf. Bland, 2018, p. 270). Other types of texts could be used for this purpose too, but a particular trait of literary texts is their authentic quality due to the fact that they have not been created for the specific purpose of teaching a language (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 3). From a holistic language teaching perspective, it means that literary texts may be viewed as meaningful reading material that can be used to enhance language development and acquisition based on communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles (cf. Guariento & Morley, 2001; Hall, 2015; Van Gorp & Bogaert, 2006; Wesche & Skehan, 2002) as well as in connection to extensive reading practices (Hall, 2015; Krashen, 2013). Some examples of these benefits have already been discussed in section 2.2 and some will be explored further in conjunction with the question of how to approach literary texts.

As far as the *what*-question is concerned, which also involves the question of *whom*, the importance of text selection ought not to be underestimated as it is more complex than it may appear. The value of learning about a *cultural heritage* through a selection of literary texts from different time periods is one perspective on this issue, but it involves certain controversial issues. In the L1 context, Alexander (2000) draws an analogy between the study of literary history (in this case English literary history) and the construction of a map:

> The map is also a journey, affording changing perspectives on the relations of writing to its time, of one literary work to another, and of the present to the past. Apart from the pleasures of discovery and comparison, literary history fosters a sense of proportion which puts the present in perspective. (p. 2)

This justification for the relevance of literary history, and thereby a selection of older and more recent texts, alludes to opportunities for teaching and learning about intertextuality, differences in ideologies and social norms, as well as for tracing the trajectory of how a society has evolved. The question is what should represent a cultural heritage or literary history? Which works should be included? Alexander's own survey of English Literature may serve as an illustration of a somewhat hegemonic stance on literary history. It covers 13 centuries, and the names of the selected authors are familiar, for example, Shakespeare, Dickens, Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Pinter, and Golding, to name a few. While these authors may be viewed as important and relevant, there seems to be a narrow focus in terms of cultural backgrounds and focus areas. This may be understandable as regards some of the earlier periods covered by the anthology. However, under the heading "New beginnings: 1955-1980", there are, for example, no authors with a multicultural background (cf. Alexander, 2000, pp. 358-374). Alexander defends his choices by stating that "this book, being a history

of the thirteen centuries of English literature, concerns itself with what has living literary merit, whether contemporary or medieval" (p. 3), implying that "living merit" is based on his conclusions regarding what is worthy of being included. Alexander's statement highlights an inherent problem in text selection since a selection of representative works ultimately has to be made both when literary history is on the agenda and otherwise.

Another perspective on older literary texts is that they can contribute to fueling a discussion on global issues and multicultural themes. Persson and Sundmark (2022) argue that in today's globalized world, reading older literary texts in the school setting may be more important than ever. Their rationale is that older texts can provide students with insights into lives, cultures, and ideologies of the past in a way that history books cannot do. The authors stress that older literary texts can convey knowledge and understanding about why the world is the way it is today due to events in the past, such as uncovering the deep roots of racism, the history of social and economic injustice, long-lasting national and ethnic conflicts, wars, the background of migration and why people have needed to flee from their homelands (p. 222). Nevertheless, there are compelling arguments for a focus on both older literary texts and contemporary texts in today's complex reality, which is also pointed out by Persson and Sundmark (p. 222). Tovar-Hilbert (2017) explores the importance of text selection in the American school context. She points to the limited representation of authors with a multicultural background (e.g., Hispanic and African American backgrounds) in current anthologies, textbooks, and in the literary canon being taught in some American school districts. She discusses the importance of diversity in terms of the works that are to be selected since "when students are engaged with culturally relevant texts, they experience the books as mirrors", which means that both positive and negative examples of multicultural identification should be in focus (p. 21). Given the multicultural diversity of the classrooms in the U. S., Tovar-Hilbert proposes that "multicultural literature can be used as an impetus for classroom discussion and writing that requires critical, meaningful examination of topics that impact the lives of students" (p. 22). She adds that an inclusion of contemporary multicultural texts does not have to exclude the classics or older literature but should instead expand the boundaries of what is included (p. 20). Ervin (2022), on the other hand, alludes to the idea that works on required reading lists (older and contemporary canonical texts in the American school context) which favor a certain culture or group of individuals can be used to expose discrimination and bias as long as teachers introduce the students to critical theories, such as *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (CSP), prior to reading (p. 322). She indicates that this will enable the students to unveil dominant and marginalized identities and thereby focus on concerns that are central to multiculturalism (p. 327). Persson and Sundmark's (2022) point out that one of the many inherent qualities of literary texts is their capacity to highlight social inequalities and discrimination. Ervin (2022) stresses that a focus on multicultural literature is no guarantee for the development of a multicultural understanding, however, especially if students are not afforded the opportunity to ask difficult questions about race and gender while reading (p. 326). If multicultural authors are excluded from the reading lists it may result in an exclusive focus

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on negative examples of multiculturalism and a lack of positive images (or mirrors) as alluded to by Tovar-Hilbert (2017). These two studies deal with the American context, but the arguments also apply to the Swedish EFL context since considerations concerning text selection and the importance of highlighting and problematizing multicultural concerns are key in this respect as well. The conclusion is that literary texts written by authors of different cultural backgrounds from different time periods will provide a more nuanced picture of the world which will enhance the learning experience for students of different backgrounds, regardless of whether the texts are read in an L1 or an L2 context.

What is the relevance of a focus on older literature or on a cultural heritage in the EFL school setting, apart from in relation to curricular requirements based on *authorization* (cf. Leeuwen, 2008)? Ahrens (2015) lists five reasons for why a play by Shakespeare is justifiable in the German EFL school context, ranging from Shakespeare's importance as a representative of world literature to the universality of the topics he treats which can encourage students to consider their own social conditions (pp. 181-182). Upon review, it is difficult to ascertain why a cultural heritage rationale such as this should be particularly compelling in the EFL context. Furthermore, social conditions can be found in contemporary works too. Why could Shakespeare and social conditions not be covered in the L1 classroom instead? Ahrens does not broach this subject, nor does he refer to the possible justification of reading works in their original language, other than discussing how the obstacle of Shakespeare's English may be overcome by teaching the students about 16th to 17th century *modern English* (ME). A similar rationale to that of Ahrens' is visible when it comes to other proponents of Shakespeare in the L2 school setting, that is, rather than addressing the question of *why* such a text choice is relevant in L2 classrooms, besides for the purpose of learning about a cultural heritage, the question of *how* to motivate students to read the text are addressed instead (see Heyden, 2003; Lima, 2014). Khan (2020), on the other hand, discusses some reasons for selecting Shakespeare's sonnets for the EFL classroom. He mentions opportunities for working with the EFL students on pronunciation, intonation, and phonemic awareness while also teaching figurative language (literary competence) as well as cultural awareness (cultural competence) (pp. 805-807). In conclusion, selecting older literary texts for the EFL classroom could be considered important for some of the reasons Alexander (2000) mentions for the L1 context, that is, to trace social, cultural and ideological changes, which may involve an anthropological focus on culture (cf. Fornäs, 2017). However, this discussion highlights the relevance of selecting older texts for the purpose of teaching cultural competence and literary competence in the L2 context (Khan, 2020; see also Persson & Sundmark, 2022). This foregrounds the question of which works are suitable for this purpose in the EFL context. Does it have to be linguistically challenging texts by Shakespeare? What about age and cultural suitability factors? Freese (2015) is an advocate of the short story in EFL since the narrative structure and the length of such texts may be more manageable for the foreign language learner (p. 159). Short stories have been written

by authors since the 19th century and can thus be selected to represent, for example, ideological change and multiculturalism.[18]

      A genre that affords many possibilities for the EFL context is *Young Adult* (YA) literature or fiction. However, while there are advantages connected to focusing on both in the L1 and the L2 contexts, considerable criticism has been directed towards this genre. Crow (2001) provides examples of this criticism, which range from negative views of the quality of YA fiction where *Harry Potter* is cited as an example of *pedestrian writing* (lifeless and colorless) (p. 146). This view is not shared by Bland (2013) who instead argues that *Harry Potter* has "the power to motivate and delight" while simultaneously reflecting "the flaws within contemporary Western society from which it originates" (p. 255). Crow (2001) concedes that some examples of YA fiction lack "the depth and artistic development of the great works of the literary canon" but that the "lure" of such works make up for this as it attracts young people and makes them want to read (p. 146). In the L2 school context, it may be argued that the main aim is not to teach the classics, at least not at an early stage of EFL education, but to introduce literary texts that are relevant and accessible. According to Matz and Stieger (2015), for example, "the aspect of personal development and teen relevance" is what the genre can offer adolescent EFL students in the form of "YA novels with captivating stories and adolescent characters, with their high potential for identification and engagement" (p. 124), stories that are then also age-appropriate (p. 130). While the inception of YA literature is usually associated with the 1970s, Cart (2011) points out that literary texts from the 1930s by, for example, Boylston (1895-1984) fit the description of YA literature, which would allow teachers to choose at least some suitable texts from different time periods. The authentic and often captivating settings, themes, and characters in YA literature also afford opportunities for the teachers to create meaningful communicative tasks for language development and intercultural learning (Matz & Stieger, 2015, p. 122; Myklevold, 2018, pp. 153-157), or for transcultural learning as suggested by Reichl (2013). From Matz and Stieger's (2015) perspective, the genre of YA fiction provides these opportunities and motivational incitement without being too difficult to comprehend, which is beneficial for the language learner (p. 123). To choose compelling stories for the sake of engaging children and young adults are thus of the essence but also in terms of what such texts can contribute with, for example, empathy building and activating language and response, as pointed out by Bland (2023, pp. 29, 51-52). Thyberg (2022) argues that it is crucial to ask which texts might challenge EFL students' preconceived notions and make them want to engage in conversation to hear other sides of an issue (p. 19). She stresses the importance of taking the students' interests, worries and concerns into account, as well as issues of social justice since recent history has shown that "young people are interested in issues of fairness" (e.g., Black Lives Matter) (p. 28). Such texts and topics will serve as motivational factors for reading and to enhance language development.

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[18] An example of a short story from the 19th century is "The Mortal Immortal" by Mary Shelley (1833).

Another text type that is often associated with motivational factors is that of the autobiographical text. Bland (2023) describes these texts as non-fiction which has a narrative form and which has the capacity to "engage readers emotionally and intellectually" (p. 306). The idea that such texts represent non-fiction may depend on where in the spectrum between fact-based and fictional the texts can be placed and could also be contingent on the intention of the author. From Maftei's (2013) perspective, there is a difference between presenting facts (informational texts) and attempting to tell a truthful story (autobiographies) (p. 22). It is also pointed out that autobiographies are created from memory which makes them "new stories" and thereby fictional (p. 25). This is also how Döring (2006) views what he calls the "memory trouble" (p. 72) since it necessitates a reliance on storytelling or the imagination. This line of reasoning translates to a view of autobiographies as a form of fiction (p. 74). Whichever perspective one has on such texts, they can be used for similar ends to those of literary texts or *other* literary texts while exposing students to, for example, real life events or historical figures that young people may find interesting or inspiring.

Text selection involving non-typographic literary texts is a topic that is likewise explored in research in relation to motivational aspects but also in connection to the students' level of language proficiency. Thyberg (2022) argues that multimodal texts, such as song lyrics and films, are what she calls "high-interest vehicles", partly because they incorporate some students' extracurricular activities (pp. 30-31). Thyberg suggests that "for not-yet readers we can build on extra-mural competences from gaming and fan fiction to somewhat mitigate immediate negative reactions to reading" (p.39). This is a way to slowly introduce students to literary analysis as well as to critical literacy by means of something they are already familiar with and which they find fascinating (p. 31). Multimodal texts may also facilitate the learning process for students who are not as proficient in English. Bland (2023) advocates a use of graphic novels and pictures. Her rationale is that "very often it is the cultural content as much as the language that confuses the culturally and linguistically diverse students and pictures can be a wonderful introduction to cultural content" (p. 12). This role of multimodal texts is also touched upon by Thyberg (2022). She argues that by first introducing EFL students to multimodal texts, the transition to, for example, reading novels about social issues that are relevant to the students may not be as challenging (p. 34). Selecting multimodal texts, such as picturebooks, can be beneficial for advanced language learners for several different reasons, according to Sundmark and Olsson Jers (2022), because they can form the basis of more elaborate tasks and assignments where three aspects of significance for the EFL (or ESL) contexts intersect – the aesthetic, the ideological, and the educational (p. 229).

The question of *how* to approach literary texts in education is of course connected to *why, what* and *whom* factors. In L1 research, there is a method for inviting and engaging the literature student through *envisionments*, as described by Langer (2011). These envisionments consist of a process of five stances a reader/student should be guided through as they progress in their reading:

1. Being outside and stepping into an envisionment (initial understanding)
2. Being inside and moving through an envisionment (developing ideas and multiple perspectives)
3. Stepping out and rethinking what you know (learning from the text)
4. Stepping out and objectifying the experience (taking a critical stance)
5. Leaving an envisionment and going beyond (pp. 43-44)

Langer stresses the importance of the concept of envisionment as pertains to instruction as it helps to conceptualize how teachers can aid their students in becoming more thoughtful, critical readers (p. 22). This method seems to be connected to the idea of dialogic teaching, which Martinsson (2018) suggests is central in teaching literature. He argues that in using such an approach, the teacher needs to perform a balancing act between, on the one hand, inviting the students, capturing them, getting them interested based on their own insights, experiences and conceptions, and, on the other hand, developing their understanding and sense of reflection within a concept and experience area where the students have limited experience (p. 154). Hence, the idea is to scaffold the students' learning experience as regards literary studies through interaction with teachers and peers while maintaining the internal reading experience, which ties into Rosenblatt's (1995) ideas on the topic of reader response and literary method. These examples all highlight a focus on the reader and student-centered teaching practices.

In regard to the L2 context, the reasoning about, for example, productive and creative learning methods suggests a focus on collaborative reading projects where all of the students focus on the same text, with an aim to encourage students to react, discuss, and respond to literature together. On a general level, this also suggests a student-centered teaching approach focusing on socio-cultural learning. A student-centered, socio-cultural learning perspective is mirrored in communicative language teaching principles (CLT), as presented by Wesche and Skehan (2002) and in task-based language learning (TBLT) as described by Van Gorp and Bogaert (2006), where a holistic perspective on learning is also of the essence (see Vygotsky, 1978).

A holistic approach to literary texts in the EFL context should focus on both the cognitive mind and affective response, according to Delanoy (2015). His argument is that "any ideas or feelings triggered by the text are welcome as readers live through the secondary world mapped out by a piece of literature" (p. 28). Delanoy proposes that a transactional reader response approach to literary text in EFL would enhance the reading experience, improve interpretive competence, while also serving CLT goals (pp. 22-26). Matz and Stieger (2015) also stress the importance of reader response in EFL, arguing that as educators "we should have long moved away from exclusively text-based approaches such as the New Criticism in order to involve students far more in the reading process and in making it their own" (p. 134). Taking such a stance would also mean that it might be possible to "shift the focus of [the students'] attention beyond the more mechanical aspects

of the foreign language system" and allow them to think "imaginatively" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5).

Personal and imaginative involvement with literary texts can mean many things, but research points to creative and productive learning as pivotal in this regard, as outlined by Grimm and Hammer (2015). They suggest that creative interaction, such as role-playing, improvised dialogues between characters, and interactive weblogs, as a means to explore and understand literary texts is a way to motivate EFL students to engage with a text in a foreign language (pp. 324-326). Creative and productive tasks could further involve students, for example, defining and evaluating "critical incidents" in a literary text in an initial phase, followed by a creative/productive phase where they act out critical scenes, find alternative solutions, or present scenes where characters negotiate their culturally informed norms and values (Volkmann, 2015, p. 61). Such a strategy could contribute not only to personal development but also to an understanding of the nature of a narrative text (performance competence) and to the development of the students' sense of empathy through involvement and engagement (cultural competence).

Another way to foster engagement with literary texts in EFL is to encourage the students to become involved in the storytelling process. Sauro et al. (2020) present a variety of methods and teaching materials, which focus on creative interaction and online digital storytelling for language learners at the B1 level, such as fanfiction prompts, storytelling prompts, and interactive fiction (IF) prompts. Such activities can include a combined focus on language development, literary texts, and the students' active involvement in the creation of fiction. Examples of IF include working with prompts for tonal choice: "Tonal choices require the reader to read really closely and consider the consequences of the character's word choice or behavior for the story that is to come" (p. 333). The students can then be asked to "rewrite a key dialogue from the original story in which one of the main characters has had a bad day" (p. 333). Besides the potential for language development, such exercises will make the students acutely aware of the deeper meaning of the text while being actively involved in working on literary devices such as mood and tone.

When approaching for example a longer text, such as a novel, in the EFL classroom, *scaffolding* (teacher and peer support) can facilitate the learning process. Matz and Stieger (2015) highlight the importance of providing scaffolding in the form of pre-, while- and post-reading activities, which resemble Van Gorp and Bogaert's (2006) definition of task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles where three stages are also made visible (p. 102). A pre-reading activity might involve asking the students to predict the plot from the title or helping them to "activate previous knowledge and raise reader expectations" which will prepare them emotionally as well as language-wise (Matz & Stieger, 2015, pp. 132-133). While-reading activities can also be used for scaffolding purposes in the form of, for example, discussions after every chapter where the students can support each other and receive help from the teacher, such activities may also involve acting like one of the characters or other forms of student-centered tasks "with an action or product orientation".

The activities during the three stages of reading can consequently serve both scaffolding and inspiration/motivation purposes.

Methods of working with literary texts with an aim of language development can be connected to the aspects of CLT that are inherent in the strategies and approaches outlined above, that is, activities that involve the students' active participation through reader response by means of collaborative learning tasks of a co-creative and productive nature (see, for example, Delanoy, 2015; Volkmann, 2015). Concrete examples include performative activities where students, for example, can be asked to write an alternative ending to a text and perform it in class or keep a journal from the viewpoint of a character, thereby working on their communicative abilities, their vocabulary and their narrative competence all at once (Grimm & Hammer, 2015, pp. 324-325). Another language learning strategy is presented by Sundmark and Olsson Jers (2022) where students are supplied with a number of pictures which can be presented in order or out of sequence. Their task is then to interpret the "story" and to create a written narrative based on this interpretation with the possibility of incorporating pictures designed by the students themselves to complete the creation. Sundmark and Olsson Jers (2022) underscore that such creative tasks require a great deal of work on the part of the students, but it should be rewarding, both in terms of engagement and as regards language development (pp. 230-231). There are other examples of creative writing assignments where students can work on their language skills and become empowered at the same time. Maley (2013), for instance, suggests using stem poems to encourage students to write their own poetry and thereby enrich their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse. He provides some examples, such as "I wish I could…", "Loneliness is…", "If I were…" (pp. 165-167). He argues that, in addition to the development of writing skills in English, such work will also encourage more reading which in turn also enhances language development.

Another approach that may be linked to language development is to provide the students with opportunities for extensive reading or free reading (self-selected reading) and also story-listening. Research by Krashen (2013) and Mason (2013) suggests that such methods promote language acquisition. One could argue that such an approach and outcome would work equally well with non-fiction, but Mason alludes to the idea that the vocabulary in many literary texts provides richer comprehensible input and that such input is also authentic and not contrived (p. 20). Extensive reading is also discussed by Eisenmann (2013), who argues that due to the make-up of the student groups, that is, heterogenous, mixed-ability students who are a natural part of every EFL classroom, it is crucial to differentiate in terms of text selection or at least in terms of tasks. It is suggested that if students can choose whichever book they want and then be allowed to engage in silent reading during class, they are more likely to enjoy the reading and to succeed in developing their reading strategies and their language use. Such aims can be achieved by "compiling reading lists, setting up a class library, making up a fixed time for silent reading" (p. 175). To make these reading sessions sacred, Eisenmann suggests using an approach called DEAR (drop everything and read). While the idea of individual choice might be inspiring for the

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students, it would seem that it is less conducive to collaborative learning. Eisenmann argues that EFL students could also read a set text, such as a YA novel, where the differentiation would instead involve providing the students with different tasks and activities based on their abilities (p. 176). However, there are tasks that can be used for everyone. One example is the benefits of using reading logs in this regard, which would allow students to write down their personal responses as they read, regardless of proficiency level. This would afford opportunities for the teacher to follow the progress of the students and to scaffold their learning (p. 177).

As this review has revealed, literary texts are deemed important in the educational context for a range of reasons. From the L2 perspective there are clear justifications for using literary texts in the development of empathy, cultural competence, critical literacy, critical thinking, literary competence, visual literacy, and not least for language development, based on the idea that language development and language use overall are grounded in cultural interchange. Text selection is a complex issue where many aspects must be considered, such as the significance of teaching a cultural heritage and of using older literary texts and/or contemporary literary texts in the L1 setting contra the L2 context. There is also the matter of literary texts as mirrors of the students' own lives and backgrounds to take into account and the importance of highlighting and discussing multicultural topics. The age group and interests of the students are also of crucial importance which suggests that YA literature might be a feasible choice. Another question is whether autobiographies are good options for captivating and inspiring language learners. The benefits of using multimodal texts as high-interest vehicles and for students of different proficiency levels should also be considered. Finally, when it comes to approaches to literary texts, it is clear that several researchers have arrived at the conclusion that creative, productive and performative methods based on CLT principles grounded in reader response theory are likely to yield the best results. However, the benefits of extensive reading and free reading are also highlighted. Many of these activities provide opportunities for scaffolding the learning process, both on the part of the teacher and in the form of peer support.

2.5.2 Empirical Studies: Literature Education in L1 and L2

Empirical studies within the field of literature education can also be divided in accordance with the *why-what-whom-how* principle. Some studies focusing on the L1 perspective will be highlighted in this section, but primary focus will be on relevant L2 studies. A heavy focus is also on Nordic research, but global studies will also be discussed when it is deemed relevant.

The relevance of literary texts in education (i.e., the answer to the *why*-question) can be viewed from a number of perspectives, such as the educational policy perspective, the teacher perspective and the student perspective. The place and relevance of literary texts in educational policy documents is explored in relation to the Swedish school setting. In the

compulsory school context, a study by Widhe (2016) points to the gradual exclusion of aesthetic concerns and the concept of reader engagement (*läslust*) from the syllabi across subjects (p. 10). The study concludes that such concerns were originally included in the 1962 curriculum but have been successively relegated to a peripheral role in the curriculum for the comprehensive school of 2011; they have been replaced with an emphasis on measurability and language-related matters (pp. 99-100). Fatheddine (2018) draws similar conclusions regarding the curriculum for compulsory education (Lgr11), suggesting that formal aspects of reading have come to be prioritized while "reader engagement and aesthetic aspects have a modest role" (p. 103, my translation).[19] There is also a focus on measurability factors in the Swedish upper secondary curriculum, according to Borsgård (2020). The results of his study, focusing on eight upper secondary teachers in the subject of Swedish, suggest that while several of the interview participants clearly found literary texts to be invaluable in terms of *bildung* and personal development, they also seemed to be trying to justify their focus due to a lack of justifications in the steering documents (pp. 75-76, 81). An earlier study by Lundström (2007) focusing on four upper secondary Swedish teachers and their decisions and rationales regarding literary texts also highlights the issue of the absence of justifications in the curriculum. One central finding of Lundström's study suggests that the degree of abstraction in the steering documents contribute to three out of four of the teachers feeling uncertain about the functions of literary texts and as a consequence of this they are heavily influenced by local traditions (school culture) (p. 287), their own attitudes to literature (p. 295), and/or their pre-service training (p. 298) when making their decisions about focus, approaches and text selection.

In the L2 context, the role of literary texts in English teacher education in Sweden is reviewed in a study by Dodou (2020). The results of the study indicate that there is a predominant focus on worldly knowledge in university curricula when it comes to literary texts; that is, the social functions of reading literary texts (social, ethical, and political concerns) are highlighted (pp. 135-136). It is suggested that this emphasis may be connected to upper secondary curricular concerns, despite the relative freedom on the part of higher institutions "to define the position and repertoires of literary studies" (p. 119). However, Dodou also notes that there are differences in what is included in the different programs on a nationwide scale (p. 117). When it comes to the L2 curricular school context in Sweden, the role of literary texts is examined in a later study by Dodou (2021b). Central findings concerned with the lower secondary and the upper secondary levels show that literary texts are mainly justified in terms of instrumental goals, such as language learning, cultural learning, and intercultural competence. The study relies on Van Leeuwen's (2008) *linguistic discourse of legitimation*. Both Dodou's study (2021b) and Van Leeuwen's (2008) concepts of *authorization, instrumental rationalization,* and *moral evaluation* will be further

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[19] Original quotation: "läslust och estetiska aspekter har en blygsam roll"

explained and subsequently employed in the analysis of three Swedish upper secondary English syllabi.

EFL teachers' views of the functions of literary texts in upper secondary education are explored in three European studies of relevance to the present study. Bloemert et al. (2016) focus on the Dutch EFL school context. The results indicate that the Dutch upper secondary EFL teachers in the study primarily approach literary texts from a text perspective, closely followed by a reader perspective, while the context and language perspectives on literary texts are the least common (Bloemert et al., 2016, p.178).[20] This translates to a primary view of literary texts linked to literary competence. Finnish upper secondary EFL teachers' views of literary texts in the EFL classroom is investigated in a qualitative study by Luukka (2019). The functions of literary texts that the participants of Luukka's study mention include "literature as a vehicle of learning" (e.g., language acquisition and reading comprehension) and "literature as content" (to teach cultural knowledge, transcultural knowledge, and to broaden the students' horizons, etc.) (pp. 207-208). In the Norwegian upper secondary EFL setting, a quantitative study by Lyngstad (2019) examines the role of literary texts from the teachers' perspective. The results show that literary texts are associated with *bildung* and thus indirectly to democratic values but also that the core curriculum stipulations concerning the role of culture play a major role in how such texts are regarded. There are thus differences in terms of the role of literary texts from these three perspectives where literary competence is the number one priority for the participants in the Dutch study, language and culture for the participants in the Finnish study, and bildung and culture for the participants in the Norwegian study.

The student perspective on the functions of literary texts is highlighted in another study by Bloemert et al. (2017) where students were given the same four options to choose from as the EFL teachers in the study from 2016, dealing with a language approach, a context approach, a text approach, and a reader approach. A majority of the 635 students in the study (more precisely 51%) answered that they believe that language education is the main role of literary texts in the English language classroom while the second most common answer was that their primary purpose is to teach about contexts (29%). The remaining two options, a reader approach (15%) and a text approach (5%) were not common among the answers (p. 7). When the students were asked what they perceive to be the benefits of literary texts in EFL, 74% answered language-related benefits. Upon comparing the Dutch upper secondary EFL teachers' views and the Dutch EFL students' views it is clear that there is a major difference in perspective, that is, while the EFL teachers prioritize literary

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[20] *The reader approach* (focusing on the reader's perception of the text, but also on critical thinking), *the text approach* (focusing on formal elements of literature such as close reading, literary devices and literary discourse, the aesthetic value of literature, interpretation skills, knowledge of genre, etc.), *the context approach* (focusing on social, cultural, and historical contexts such as the history and demographics of literary movements, as well as historical and biographical elements of a literary text that add to the reader's understanding of a text, cross-cultural comparisons, etc.), and *the language approach* (focusing on areas such as extensive reading, reading comprehension, and language acquisition) (Bloemert et al., 2016, pp. 174-176)

competence when focusing on literary texts (Bloemert et al, 2016) the EFL students believe that linguistic competence is the main goal in this regard (Bloemert et al., 2017). In terms of implications, Bloemert et al. (2017) allude to the idea that EFL teachers need to discuss the benefits and relevance of literary texts in EFL with their students and to highlight the significance of functions other than language-related concerns since the students' perception of the learning objective is believed to have an impact on how they learn (p. 12).

The central *what*-question concerning literary texts relates to text selection and includes, for example, which texts are selected and for what reasons, how different text types are viewed by teachers and by students, and also what the students themselves would generally prefer to read. These are all topics that are treated in literature education research in the L1 context and/or the L2 context. Text selection in the educational context is ultimately influenced by curricular stipulations, whether these are explicitly expressed in the form of required reading lists, such as in some school districts in the United States (cf. Ervin, 2022; Tovar-Hilbert, 2017), or whether they are more abstract, as suggested by Lundström (2007) in regard to Swedish steering documents. Another possible influence factor is the text types, genres, and time periods in focus in teacher education. The study by Dodou (2020) focusing on English teacher education in Sweden shows that there is no apparent literary canon being taught nationally in pre-service training courses in the subject of English (p. 129). Nonetheless, the names of the authors in focus suggest "that students were taught a mixture of canonised high-brow writers and popular and genre fiction writers" (p. 133). As regards text types, the main focus is on prose fiction (particularly novels, at 85%) but also plays, poems or collections of poems, a handful of graphic novels, and/or comic books. Out of these, 73% were published after 1900 and 19% after 2000, indicating that literary history does not seem to be prioritized in English teacher education in Sweden (Dodou, 2020, pp. 131-133). One implication of these findings is that English teacher programs may have an effect on future EFL teachers' selection of texts, where narrative texts may be prioritized over, for example, poetry, and where contemporary texts may be used more frequently than older texts. This is of course speculation, but it could be one possible outcome of such a focus in teacher education, especially if curricular stipulations do not specify which texts should be in focus. Such an outcome may be viewed in both positive and negative terms.

The question of which text types, genres, and time periods upper secondary EFL teachers tend to opt for when it comes to text selection is in focus in Luukka's (2019) small-scale Finnish study and in Lyngstad's (2019) large-scale study. Upon comparing the results of these two studies, certain trends are discernible. The 21 upper secondary EFL teachers in Luukka's (2019) study indicate a preference for poetry and novels over other text types (p. 204). When comparing these results to the findings of Lyngstad's (2019) study where novels and short stories are the preferred literary text types (p. 152) and the use of poetry is uncommon, it may be inferred that narrative texts could be a popular choice in general in the Nordic EFL context. A Norwegian study conducted by Munden and Skjærstad (2018) helps to shed some light on the apparent lack of enthusiasm over poetry on the part

Norwegian upper secondary EFL teachers.[21] The findings of the study show that there are five main reasons for not focusing on poetry in this context: lack of time, lack of confidence, lack of competence in teaching poetry, the belief that poetry is too hard, and that students do not like poetry (p. 13). This finding seems to point to a need for additional focus in pre-service training on engagement with poetry and how to teach it. The reason why poetry seems more popular in the Finnish context, on the other hand, is not explored, at least not in Luukka's (2019) study.

Among the authors that Luukka's (2019) participants refer to, the majority were active in the 20th and 21st centuries and most of the works are YA literature (p. 204). Only two authors, Donne and Shakespeare, were active during other centuries (i.e., 16th-17th centuries). Luukka also notes the lack of 18th and 19th century authors but does not explore this topic further (p. 204). In the Norwegian context, some classics are included, but the predominant selection as regards novels and short stories represents contemporary writers, and the use of YA literature is prevalent in the Norwegian EFL classrooms too (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 164). In terms of older literary texts, the participants in Lyngstad's study reportedly have a predilection for Shakespeare when it comes to plays, and the poetry in focus represent older literature (p. 154). The rationale behind some of the participants' decision to include classic literature, especially Shakespeare, is that it is a central component in teaching a cultural heritage (p. 166), which Lyngstad associates with older syllabi since such a focus is not visible in the current Norwegian syllabus of English. Lyngstad concludes that "it takes time before the de facto syllabus changes" (p. 202). The conclusion drawn upon comparing these elements is that the use of contemporary literature in the form of YA literature, which both Luukka and Lyngstad associate with student-driven criteria such as age and relevant themes, is common in both the Finnish and the Norwegian contexts. Nonetheless, the idea of teaching a cultural heritage by focusing on Shakespeare and other classics exists among some of the participants in both countries as well, but it is not a predominant feature.

In the Swedish upper secondary EFL context there are two relevant studies which briefly touch upon the subject of text selection and how it relates to method. In a study by Thyberg (2016), results point to positive benefits of selecting the novel as a text type for the Swedish upper secondary EFL setting since the longer process of novel reading contributes to revealing the progression of the EFL students, as their responses change and mature during the course of the project (pp. 149-150). A study by Sert and Amri (2021), on the other hand, highlights the advantages of selecting a multimodal text in the form of films to address current themes such as equality and human rights as the use of films has been shown to contribute to student engagement (p. 138).

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[21] Munden and Skjærstad's (2018) study also focus on 101 primary teachers who are more positively inclined towards using poetry in their classrooms.

The student perspective on text selection has been in focus in several studies. Both in the L1 context and in the L2 context. What do students consider to be important in this regard? A study by Tegmark et al. (2022) focuses on 259 students in 6th and 9th grade in Sweden concerning what motivates them to read during different kinds of reading practices across the curriculum (such as in the subjects of Swedish, English, and History). The results show that the most frequent answer by both boys and girls was "more interesting texts" (p. 111). This answer was considerably more common than "more suitable text/level" (p. 111). While the study does not differentiate between answers related to the L1 context contra the L2 context, it does suggest that selecting age-appropriate texts with relevant themes or characters that can entice young people to read and to become engaged with the texts is key, which ties into a similar argument by Bland (2023). One conclusion that may be drawn from this finding is that, for example, older texts and poems are suitable in the L2 setting as long as the texts are compelling in terms of content and as long as they are not too difficult. What are the views of EFL students when it comes to text types (e.g., poems, songs, and short stories) in the school setting? A study by Tsang and Paran (2021) amongst 1 190 EFL students at the secondary school level in Hong Kong presents some noteworthy but conflicting results. When presented with two curricular additions, one including a module on short stories and another focusing on poems and songs, the findings show that the students hold primarily positive views when it comes to short stories and mainly neutral or negative views as regards poems and songs. One reason given for this is that the poems and songs in focus are not to the students' liking, which suggests that students need to be involved in the selection process. Other reasons given were "uselessness, difficulty, boredom and dislike" (p. 13). The inherent problem of the study is that it would seem that songs and poems could be viewed as rather far apart. The authors do not discuss whether the students view songs and poems differently. Nevertheless, the results do suggest that the use of typographic narrative texts in the form of short stories in the EFL school setting is perceived as positive by the students. While this study focuses on the perception of certain text types in the school setting from a pedagogical standpoint, it would also be of value to discover what students choose to engage with in their leisure time. This topic is treated in a study conducted by Svensson (2014), which focuses on Swedish L1 and L2 upper secondary students in Sweden and their media habits. The results of the study demonstrate that the 314 participants come into contact with fictional texts to a greater degree in their leisure time than in school and then primarily by means of audio-visual input, particularly music, but also by playing computer games, watching films and tv-series (p. 348). Svensson remarks that these findings present new opportunities for qualitative research into the pedagogical context of multimodal consumption and production (p. 350). This ties into Thyberg's (2022) argument of viewing multimodal texts as high-interest vehicles that can both engage students and which can bridge the gap to reading typographic literary texts.

Studies focusing on the *how*-question, that is, viable methods and strategies for approaching literary texts, are prevalent within empirical research. The areas that are touched upon include strategies for reader response, critical literacy, critical thinking,

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cultural competence, literary competence, linguistic competence, and creative learning. The majority of the studies that are discussed below also approach these methods with motivational and inspirational concerns in mind and from a holistic language learning perspective.

Reader response strategies from a pedagogical perspective, are presented from three different viewpoints by Clapp et al. (2021), Andersson Hval and Aijmer Rydsjö (2021) and Thyberg (2016). Clapp et al.'s (2021) study investigates how L1 undergraduate students in Hong Kong use social annotation (in this case, commenting on literary texts in an online collaborative environment) to respond to literary texts. The findings show that "social annotation can help students engage with literary texts more effectively by showing them how to move toward an aesthetic mode of reading" (p. 295). This suggests that this type of online collaborative work with a focus on literary texts can aid students in developing literary competence. Another form of reader response is in focus in Andersson Hval and Aijmer Rydsjö's (2021) research where student teachers of English in Sweden are working with climate fiction. The student teachers' discussions highlight the importance of problem-focused tasks and assignments for the EFL classroom connected to climate fiction as well as meaning-making activities which can afford opportunities for the upper secondary EFL student to deal with feelings of fear, worry, and hopelessness, demonstrating that such concerns have a central place in literature education (p. 42). This reader response strategy centers on allowing the students to explore and express their feelings which is a form of affective response connected to personal development but also to developing cultural competence through a focus on worldly issues. The student perspective on reader response is in part explored in a study by Thyberg (2016) involving upper secondary EFL students in Sweden. The findings indicate that a majority of the students viewed the lessons as meaningful and educational, and that the dynamics of the group were more positive when affective discussions were allowed to take place (pp. 140, 143). Thyberg further draws the conclusion that successful readers ambulate between forms of affective reading and critical reading (p. 145). The three studies have in common that they highlight different strategies for working with reader response and literary competence.

A pertinent question regarding methods and literary texts is in what ways reading strategies concerned with critical reading and critical thinking are taught. A study by Tengberg et al. (2022) examines the prevalence of text-based instruction in lower secondary Swedish and Norwegian language arts classes (237 students) by means of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results show that explicit strategy instructions and cognitively challenging tasks were rarely included in the lesson content even when deep comprehension of texts was part of the agenda. Among other things, the study highlights a need for "targeted professional development efforts for teachers" (p. 10), that is, in-service training which can help teachers in their efforts to aid students in how to approach the texts in challenging ways which support high order thinking skills.

Potential strategies for the development of critical reading and critical thinking are in focus in two Swedish observation studies, one by Economou (2015) and another by

Fjällström and Kokkola (2015). Economou's (2015) study involves 16 upper secondary students with multicultural backgrounds in the subject of Swedish as a Second Language. It highlights critical reading methods centered on the treatment of multicultural themes in novels. Among other things, the students were encouraged to discuss cultural differences between Swedish society and their own backgrounds both in their own lives and in the novels. The texts portrayed situations and problems that the students could identify with while also exposing cultural aspects that they found to be challenging and sometimes shocking. The discussions that ensued touched upon culture clashes connected to, for example, respect for authority figures, democratic principles, and religious issues (p. 108-109). The findings show that the students developed their critical reading, critical thinking, and sense of cultural identification throughout the reading project (p. 109). An additional conclusion is that the strategy of focusing on multicultural themes in literary texts by means of collaborative learning can contribute to cognitive development, language development, literary competence, and improved reading skills all at once (pp. 114-115). While Economou's study focuses on Swedish as a second language, it highlights concerns that are also central to the EFL context. In Fjällström and Kokkola's (2015) study the focus is on critical reading in the Swedish upper secondary EFL context. The study explores how 35 EFL students approach and discuss Irish fiction. The aim is to examine whether the students "are capable of recognising bias in a text by asking them to reformulate the content" (p. 396). This exercise was designed to make the students aware of the existence of bias based on point-of-view, focalization, and narrative voice. The results of the study show that while the sixteen-year-old students in focus found it easy to empathize with the characters, unveiling bias proved to be slightly more difficult (p. 408). Nonetheless, a majority of the students produced texts that demonstrated this ability, despite reading, speaking, and writing in a language that was not their own. One area that these EFL students found particularly challenging, however, was the detection of irony (p. 407). This study reveals both the benefits and challenges of using literary texts and literary devices to develop critical reading skills and language awareness in the EFL school setting. Economou's (2015) and Fjällström and Kokkola's (2015) research projects demonstrate the potential of actively working on critical reading strategies.

One body of research which seems to animate the field of literature education in the 21st century is that of creative learning strategies. Such strategies are often concerned with personal experience, enjoyment, and motivation, but they also seem to be emphasizing the aesthetic experience. One example is a study by Sauro and Sundmark (2016) which explores a task-based fan fiction project where undergraduate English students who are also training to become secondary school English teachers create their own versions of missing parts of a story by means of role playing and creative writing tasks. This project was designed "to bridge the language and literature divide in language teaching" which could then be used as a strategy for these future EFL teachers (p. 414). Additionally, a creative learning strategy involving the use of multimodal text universes in the classroom is examined by Svensson

(2021).[22] The focus of the study is on the experiences of 14 student teachers of English as regards working with multimodal text universes, literary productions, and creative learning where aesthetic literary concerns are at the forefront. Key findings suggest that student teachers "found it fruitful, fun, and engaging to create stories, re-presentations, which most of them were unfamiliar with" (p. 176). The conclusion is that such activities may also be motivating for the upper secondary EFL student and likewise that such a focus is warranted in the EFL school setting "to guide teenagers in developing complex thoughts as well as making sense of the world and their place in it through literary studies" (p. 177). Creative learning as a strategy is likewise in focus in research into the lower secondary context. For instance, a study by Käck (2019) explores how poetry is approached and presented in course books (the series Wings) for grades 7 through 9 (lower secondary school). The study highlights both the possibilities and problems involved in using poetry with children in EFL. Among other things, the study shows that multimodal means are frequently used when approaching poetry in the course books. For example, the students might be asked to proceed "by reading the poem in the textbook, going online, choosing a search engine, doing a search, choosing a recording, listening to an audio file, and comparing it with their own readings" (p. 227). Käck suggests that this approach may have a transformative effect on the original text; that is, the text ends up being the starting point for different creative tasks where other versions are created, both by the students and by publishers of the course book, while serving as discussion material and as a source for language learning. This seems to suggest that the transformative effects Käck describes are viewed in both negative and positive terms. These three studies thus highlight the use of different types of creative learning strategies for language development and literary competence, partly based on multimodal texts.

The idea of student production of fiction, which is also a form of creative learning, is touched upon in a study by Ahlquist (2013) which explores the use of storytelling in language education. In her study, Ahlquist followed a group of lower secondary EFL students in Sweden for five weeks as they were given the task of role-playing families who had just moved into a fictive town (p. 42). In follow-up journals and interviews, it became evident that the students found this approach to be highly motivating when compared with their regular language classes which they construed to be mainly about, for example, textbooks, vocabulary tests and translation (p. 48). While this approach does not focus on reading, watching or listening to fiction per se, it does involve activities with an action or product orientation in regard to the creation of new fiction. Such work seems to be in line with the types of productive tasks that Matz and Stieger (2015) suggest can promote greater understanding of literary texts and their content (p. 134). At the same time, the students are privy to a holistic CLT approach with a focus on speaking, writing, reading, listening, and

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[22] A text universe can be construed as being comprised of different kinds of media formats which deal with one single story (e.g., Harry Potter), such as a film, a novel, a computer game, a film soundtrack, and a TV series, but it can also be understood as moving within one single media format (Svensson, 2021, p. 163).

lexis (Ahlquist, 2013, pp. 45-47). In a later study, Ahlquist (2023) revisits the use of "storyline" in lower secondary EFL education. In this case, the focus is on Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*. The students are asked to create a fictive world in the classroom based on events in the book, which appears to motivate the students in general, thereby creating inspiring opportunities to learn about fiction and storytelling and facilitating the acquisition of incidental vocabulary (p. 105). The students' vocabulary was tested prior to the project as well as directly after the project was completed, and these tests show that the students have made strides in their acquisition (p. 119). The study also highlights important points which are not as easily tested, such as the idea that individual teachers are able to see, for example, "when a previously reluctant speaker dares to say more because they are engaged by the story, supported by working in a group" (p. 121). The power of motivation, creative learning and collaborative learning are highlighted in these examples of strategies. In the study by Sert and Amri (2021) focus is on another form of productive/creative learning, collaborative learning and *collaborative attention work* with a focus on using films (p. 126). The study shows that a form of co-productive learning takes place as the students discuss and analyze the content of a film about racism, both in terms of correcting one another when it comes to language use and as regards "co-narrations [...] in which they talked the film into being" (p. 138). The importance of peer support is evident in this study, whereby students with more advanced proficiency skills supply phrases for their peers which are then in turn reused by them, which also translates to active repetition of the student groups' understanding of the film (p. 138). These three studies highlight learning strategies with a focus on collaborative learning through storytelling and co-narration which contribute to both language learning and literary competence.

In conclusion, the literature education research presented above covers a range of subjects, such as if and why literary texts are viewed as relevant from curricular, teacher, and student perspectives; the topic of text selection and underlying rationales; and different student-centered strategies for approaching literary texts with a view to foster different types of competencies, such as cultural competence, literary competence, and linguistic competence. While these areas of research are highly relevant and tap into what society deems to be important at the present time (cf. Martinsson, 2018), there appears to be limited research on the Swedish upper secondary EFL teacher perspective of many of these topics and how teachers' beliefs affect the decisions and choices that are made about literary texts in the EFL context, which is why the focus of the present study is also highly germane. To address this issue, it is important to first examine two additional fields of research that are central to the focus of the present study: curricular theory (including the Swedish curriculum and English syllabi) and teachers' beliefs. The latter will be discussed in connection to the theoretical framework.

2.6 Curriculum Theory, the Swedish Curriculum and Three English Syllabi

As illustrated above, current research in the field of literature education includes a focus on curriculum research. This is not surprising since the *why-what-whom-how* questions or even *if* teachers use literary texts in the EFL context in Sweden are largely dependent on educational policy and national steering documents (curricula and syllabi). Research within the field of curricular theory is thus of crucial importance in the discussion of the role of literary texts. Before exploring pertinent Swedish steering documents, a brief history of pedagogical science and curricular theory will be presented.

The history of curriculum theory as a research field and its subsequent establishment in Sweden has a long history dating back to the 17th century. In part, it emanates from the concept of *didaktik* as expressed by Comenius (1592-1670), for whom this term entailed the art of teaching, which includes education in its entirety (Bengtsson, 1997, p. 241).[23] Comenius' basic premise involved the creation of an educational system in the form of objectives, methods, and the legitimization of content that would have the potential to solve all educational issues (p. 242). Moreover, German philosophy and the concept of *bildung,* that is, the idea that there is an inherent resource and a driving force in every human being, also contributed to the foundation of curricular theory (Wahlström. 2016, p. 14), which is central to the idea of building a democratic citizenship. The combination of these ideas resulted in a subsequent paradigm shift away from a previous ideal with a focus on enlightenment (passive students who receive knowledge) to the idea of education (active students who contribute to their own learning) (p. 15). Such views laid the groundwork for the introduction of the concept of *pedagogy*.

According to Lundgren (2015, p. 5), Herbart (1776-1841) was instrumental in the creation of pedagogy as a science, which consists of two parts, *curriculum* and *didactics* (p. 5). "These two parts are interrelated in a mutually supporting way, and each part is distinguished by structural questions: What are the aims of and content of education? What are the methods of teaching?" (p. 6). From the Herbartian perspective, the answer to the last question must be grounded in psychology (p. 6).

Psychology, pragmatism, and the importance of the individual are pedagogical concerns which were in focus in American curricular theory during the 20th century (Lundgren et al., 2017, p. 317). An American pragmatist of note is Dewey (1859-1952), whose *pedagogic creed* advocates methods which concentrate on the development of a child's knowledge and skills by means of stimuli in social situations (Dewey et al., 2004, p. 46) where the child is allowed to work and participate in expressive and constructive ways (p. 51). The progressive views of American pedagogical research became highly influential in Swedish educational reforms. An example of this influence is the concept of "learning by

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[23]The German term *didaktik* is used here instead of the English term *didactics* since the latter has a different connotation.

doing", based on Dewey's ideas, which came to dominate the Swedish curriculum from 1919 onwards, constituting a radical change from the previous authoritarian teaching methods (Sundberg, 2021, p. 102).

Research within American curricular theory continued to be of significance on an international level, including in Sweden, during the middle and latter part of the 20th century (Lundgren et al., 2017, p. 334). Ideas and concepts that are significant include *Tyler's Rationale* (p.334), in which clear educational objectives are delineated (Tyler, 1949, p. 1), as well as the conceptualization of curriculum construction carried out by Goodlad et al. (1979, pp. 59-64). Both Tyler's Rationale and the conceptualization of curricular domains will be explored further in relation to the theoretical framework of this study (sub-section 2.7).

Within the field of curriculum research in Sweden, empirical research came first and theoretical developments occurred as a consequence of this research (Lundgren, 2015, p. 8). Significant empirical studies were carried out, for example, by Dahllöf (1960, 1963) in the 1960s (Sundberg, 2021, p. 36). Dahllöf's 1963 study focuses on the new curriculum of the upper secondary school and the inherent demands of these new steering documents. This study "laid the groundwork for curriculum research which was of considerable importance for the later development of curriculum theory in Sweden" (Lundgren, 2015, p. 8). Lundgren's (1979; 1989) own contributions were even more influential in terms of the establishment of curricular theory in Sweden, opening the way to critical socially-oriented research with a focus on the management and organization of Swedish education (Sundberg, 2021, p. 36).

21st century research in the field focuses on an array of topics. Besides Persson's (2007) research into the *cultural turn* and Dodou's analysis of the legitimization of literary texts in the EFL context, there are studies focusing, for example, on a discourse analysis of curricula, carried out by Adolfsson (2012), education and citizen formation, examined by Dahlstedt and Olson (2014), and conceptions of knowledge regarding literature in the syllabus of Swedish, as explored by Fatheddine (2018), to name a few.

A topic that is related to Fatheddine's research is the identification of *curriculum codes*. A curriculum code "is constituted by the spoken and unspoken principles that guide how goals are formed and content selected and organized for learning" (Lundgren, 2015, p. 10). Curriculum codes thus contribute to "what counts as legitimate knowledge" and are based on frame factors of educational policy (p. 10). Such codes can be discerned at three levels: the societal level, where values, knowledge, and experiences are selected and organized into a curriculum in relation to societal perceptions and conditions, the second level, where questions regarding the actual governance of the school system are addressed and where the concrete curriculum (the steering document) takes shape, and finally the third level, where the implementation of curriculum stipulations takes shape in the classroom (Wahlström, 2016, p. 28). Englund (2015) suggests that "curricular content is always socially constructed [...] resting on different political and ideological visions" (p. 52). In essence, political decisions about school policy based on the current ideology and the

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needs of society form the basis of a curriculum. The implementation of curricular stipulations is in turn subject to the interpretations of teachers, and the less explicit a curriculum is the more it will be open to interpretation.

This frame of reference provides a backdrop to the discussion of three relevant English syllabi and connected curricula. The current courses of English 5, English 6 and English 7 (formerly English A, English B and English C) have undergone certain changes over the years, for example in 1994, 2011, and 2021. It is particularly the syllabi of 2011 and 2021 (abbreviated as S11 and S21 respectively) that are central to the present study since these syllabi were in effect at the time of phase I (S11) and phase II (21) of the study. Nonetheless, it is also essential to highlight certain changes that have transpired in recent history by means of educational reforms, both in terms of general educational policy and as regards literary texts, in order to examine possible connections to teacher choices. Additionally, it is pertinent to explore what role literary texts play in the Danish syllabus of English, where the stipulations appear to be somewhat more explicit than they are in Sweden.[24] The Dutch English syllabus is also relevant, since current and pertinent research has been carried out in this context (Bloemert et al., 2016; Bloemert et al., 2019). Comparisons can thus be made to the Swedish context.

2.6.1 The 1994 Curriculum (Lpf94) and the English Syllabus

In the 1990s, two educational reforms were carried out in Sweden which resulted in the decentralization of the Swedish school system, leading to the transfer of considerable responsibility from the central government to the municipal level (Johansson, 2003, pp. 576-577). Among other things, the shift meant that the previously centrally rules-regulated school system became governed by goals and results that were to be more clearly formulated at the local municipal levels by means of local school plans. In turn, each school within a municipality should produce a working plan outlining how the goals could be reached. The rationale behind these reforms is that "[e]veryone involved in the making of the curriculum, is expected to reflect on the meanings of the goals and find out how to reach the goal" (p. 580). Englund (2015) discusses this idea, and points to the importance of a *deliberative curriculum*, which entails teachers taking stock of and reflecting on what is important to teach and to communicate to students. Englund suggests that

> curriculum content is always socially constructed and may be a result of struggling social forces that pave the way for different interpretations, resting on different political and ideological visions; but also that curriculum and school subjects are in practice interpreted, designed, and performed by unique teachers. (p. 52)

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[24] There may be other European EFL syllabi with more explicit or less explicit contents than the Swedish one, but the Dutch one and the Danish one will serve as representative points of reference in this regard.

Englund thus alludes to the idea that curricular content may be altered or reshaped by the teachers whose job it is to interpret the concrete steering document. He views this as something essentially positive. Englund further remarks that it is necessary "to leave it to the professional teacher to decide more about [the content of different school subjects] and about ways of working" (p. 51). In order to make educated decisions in this regard, it is suggested that it is crucial for teachers to become closely acquainted with their subjects "in terms of the consequences of different choices of content and ways of teaching for different groups of students – that they are able to deliberate (with each other) and make discerning and optimal choices regarding how and what to teach and communicate to their students" (p.52). Much focus is on the individual teachers and their professionalism. Prior to Englund's article, Johansson (2003) pointed to the precarity of diverting so much responsibility to the teachers, as they report on veritable wars between colleagues regarding goals and results, as well as feelings of frustration over the futility of collaborations that rarely lead to anything constructive (p. 582). While Johansson recognizes that teachers have been propelled towards developing their discursive competence in order to interpret the curriculum, thereby taking a more prominent role in the making of curricula (p. 581), she also suggests that "every teacher will hardly think and act correctly" (p. 589). The latter statement alludes to the idea that by transferring the majority of the decisions to each individual teacher there is a distinct possibility that the intended goals and results may not be realized. The significance of teacher professionalism and teachers' thinking as major frame factors in the implementation of curricula are thus brought to light.

As outlined above, the transfer of certain aspects of curricular construction from the central level to the local level resulted in less explicit goals and guidelines beginning with the curriculum of 1994 (Johansson, 2003, p. 580). In general, the 1994 curriculum differed from its successors in that it was governed by goals with a focus on building competencies while also being process-oriented (Sundberg, 2021, p. 179). The curriculum for upper secondary education (Lpf94) has several sub-divisions based on program specializations (Skolverket, 1994a). As a result, each program has its own descriptions and aims, but the eight core subjects (e.g., English) have common goals and all students, regardless of program specializations, must study two courses of English, English A and English B (Berggren 2012, p. 40). This is a radical change compared to previous curricula, where, for example, vocational students were exempt from studying English (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, p. 401). The aims and grading criteria in the 1994 English syllabus for English A and English B consequently apply to all students at the upper secondary level (Berggren 2012, p. 40).

With regard to a focus on literary texts, the general aims of the subject of English specify that teachers should guide the students towards acquiring "wide communicative competence and a good understanding of literature and other cultural expressions" (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 13, my translation).[25] The phrase itself may be understood as

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[25] Original quotation: "har bred kommunikativ kompetens samt god förståelse för litteratur och andra kulturyttringar".

evidence of the importance of literary texts, which helps to justify the inclusion of such texts in specific course content. Such means of legitimization is what Van Leeuwen (2008) refers to as a linguistic discourse of *authorization*, whereby a specific focus or phenomenon is justified through stipulations in official steering documents (pp.106-109).[26] This type of justification does not specify *why* a certain phenomenon, in this case literature, is of value. However, the stipulation could be construed in two ways, either that the primary function of literary texts is to provide source materials for various language purposes, that is, communicative competence, or that the conjunction "and" suggests two different aims. Another stipulation sheds some light on this issue. It specifies that students should be provided with the opportunity to "absorb non-fiction texts, literary texts and other forms of cultural expressions, so that they can use language in a versatile manner in their professional lives and in higher education" (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 14, my translation).[27] The curriculum code thus points to CLT concerns for future gains, rather than aesthetic concerns in relation to literary texts. The underlying legitimization of literary texts in this instance appears to be based on a discourse involving *instrumental rationalization*, which, according to Van Leeuwen (2008), entails a justification of a particular curricular focus by means of its usefulness as a tool in achieving a certain goal (pp. 113-117).

In the 1994 English syllabus, literary texts are mentioned in a number of places. From a general perspective, "[b]y means of literary texts and meetings with other forms of culture the students should acquire a deeper knowledge of how the English language varies in different contexts and in different countries" (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 21, my translation).[28] Hence, it seems that it is not culture or literary texts that are seen as central in this respect, but rather language varieties and thus a language-related curriculum code rooted in instrumental rationalization, according to Van Leeuwen's (2008) definition of the term.

Under the aims of the subject, there appear to be mainly comprehension-related goals in focus, that is, further evidence of instrumental rationalizations. For example, for English A (the first year of upper secondary education), it is stipulated that students should "be able to, with a good understanding, read simpler contemporary texts from different English-speaking countries" (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 22, my translation).[29] The same aim is applicable to English B (the second year of English), but with the added phrase "as well as to some extent also older British and American literary texts" (p. 24, my translation).[30] Furthermore, in English B there is also the aim of "having basic knowledge of British and

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[26] I am much indebted to Dodou (2021b), who introduced me to Van Leeuwen's *linguistic discourse of legitimation theory*.

[27] Original quotation: "tillgodogöra sig sakprosa, skönlitteratur och övriga kulturyttringar, så att de kan använda språket på ett allsidigt sätt i yrkesliv och högre studier".

[28] Original quotation: "Genom studier av skönlitteratur och möten med andra kulturformer skall eleverna få fördjupade kunskaper om hur det engelska språket varierar i olika sammanhang och i skilda länder".

[29] Original quotation: "kunna med god förståelse läsa enklare samtida skönlitteratur från olika engelskspråkiga länder".

[30] Original quotation: "samt i någon mån även äldre brittisk och amerikansk skönlitteratur".

American literature from different eras" (p. 24, my translation).[31] Given the clear emphasis on language-related matters, as well as reading comprehension issues outlined under the general objectives of the subject of English as a whole, it may be inferred that the older texts should not be read for their historical or cultural content, but primarily for the purpose of comparing different ways of expressing the English language. Instrumental rationalization is thus the means by which literary texts are primarily legitimized in this instance. Nonetheless, the focus on literary history also points to some non-language-related concerns in English B, and as such a curriculum code that suggests that a knowledge of cultural heritage is of value. This view may be connected to the justifications of English as a school subject, with references being made to the "rich cultural heritage of literary treasures" associated with the study of English (Bratt, 1984, p. 70). Such justifications can be linked to Van Leeuwen's (2018) term *moral evaluation,* a discourse of legitimization through evasive references or allusions to value systems (p. 147). This term can also be applied to the specified focus on British and American literature, since moral evaluation pinpoints not only those aspects that are legitimized, but also those that are *delegitimized*, in this case non-British and non-American literature in English (p. 147).

English C, an elective course, was designed as a pure specialization course with no compulsory literary text elements. Instead, it is stipulated in the syllabus that "the objective of the course is that the student deepens his/her insights within a specific field of knowledge or skillset" (Skolverket, 1994d, p. 69, my translation).[32] The curriculum code made visible here suggests concerns related to self-realization and individual aspirations.

Lastly, literary texts are mentioned under the heading *grading criteria* in the 1994 syllabus in relation to both English A and English B, but not in connection to English C. In English A, the criteria for a pass grade require that the student "understand the main content in simple non-fiction texts and in literary texts as well as absorb details in closer reading" (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 23, my translation).[33] In line with these aims, reading comprehension is thus the target focus in the grading process. The inherent curriculum code thus favors instrumental aims in connection to literary texts. In contrast, in English B a pass grade is based on the students showing that they have read "a number of contemporary novels from different English-speaking countries, as well as extracts from older British and American works" and that they "have an overview of literary history" (p. 25, my translation).[34] While reading comprehension appears to be one of the main concerns in English B, there is clearly also an element of historical and/or cultural emphasis as well, pointing to a curriculum code concerned with cultural heritage legitimized through moral

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[31] Original quotation: "ha grundläggande orientering om brittisk och amerikansk litteratur från olika epoker".
[32] Original quotation: "Målet för kursen är att eleven fördjupar sina insikter i ett kunskaps- eller färdighetsområde".
[33] Original quotation: "Eleven förstår huvudinnehållet i lätt sak- och skönlitteratur samt tillgodogör sig detaljer vid en noggrannare läsning".
[34] Original quotation: "Eleven tillgodogör sig några samtidsromaner från olika engelskspråkiga länder samt utdrag ur äldre brittiska och amerikanska verk. Eleven har en viss litteraturhistorisk överblick".

evaluation. The aims are consequently in line with the grading criteria for both levels of English, as is the corresponding discourse of legitimization, apart from in one case, which regards films. Films are mentioned only once in the criteria for a pass grade, together with literary texts under English B; they are associated with understanding culture and society, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States.

2.6.2 The 2011 curriculum (GY11) and the English Syllabus (S11)

The 2011 curriculum (GY11) for the upper secondary level of education in Sweden is still in effect (Skolverket, 2011a), and is thus connected to both the English syllabus of 2011 (S11) and the English syllabus of 2021 (S21). In contrast to the 1994 curriculum, GY11 focuses on measurability and knowledge requirements (Sundberg, 2021, p. 201). There is also a change in terms of the core subjects in that vocational students are now required to study one English course, English 5, while the university preparatory program students must study two courses, English 5 and English 6 (see Berggren, 2012, pp. 44-45; Nylund, 2010, p. 48). This shift from an idea of English for everyone, based on a democratic ideal (Cabau, 2009, p. 106), to English for specific students, also represents a shift in the definition of equal education, from equality in terms of equal access to general competence and social mobility, to equality in terms of the goals of each specific course and program (Berggren, 2012, p. 55). This shift seems to conflict with certain curriculum codes in the Swedish curriculum, such as those related to democratic values.

In GY11 the curriculum codes center on the idea of creating a democratic citizen who is tolerant towards others, stands up for human rights, and respects and values people of different backgrounds, regardless of gender, creed, or ethnicity (Skolverket, 2011a, p.1). Four main perspectives are brought into consideration: the ethical perspective, the environmental perspective, the international perspective, and the historical perspective (p. 4), which may be viewed as the central curriculum codes guiding the values, knowledge base, and experiences that the students should be exposed to and subsequently absorb. The development of digital competence (pp. 3-4, 6-8, 12) and skills related to international contacts (pp. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12) should also be prioritized. Such knowledge, skills, and values appear to be viewed as important both for the individual and for society at large. These areas are further defined under the headings "The Mission of the Upper Secondary School", "Knowledge and Learning", and "Overarching Goals and Guidelines". Connected to this is a prevailing focus on the importance of developing skills related to entrepreneurship and innovative thinking (Skolverket, 2011a, pp. 3-4). Such skills are described as providing the opportunity for future employment and business-related endeavors. Dahlstedt and Olson (2014) suggest that the inclusion of entrepreneurship in GY11, as well as the heavy focus on employment-related concerns, serve as normalization factors which promote marketing principles in the educational context (p. 18), and which further make professional goals a priority (pp. 16-17). The prevailing focus on work-related concerns, as well as related measurable knowledge requirements, has also been noted by Adolfsson (2012, pp. 35-36).

The associated curriculum code brought to light here emphasizes the importance of skills related to trade, commerce, and industry.

A focus on aesthetic elements is brought up under "Knowledge", but such factors do not have their own "perspective". It is explained that students should learn to seek out fact-based and fictional texts, as well as other cultural resources, as a source of knowledge, self-awareness, and enjoyment; to derive stimulation from cultural experiences and to develop a feeling for aesthetic values (p. 6). Such pursuits are not given much space in the curriculum (two lines), whereas future employment, international contacts, and business-related endeavors are described in detail, which is also visible in the Swedish L1 context (cf. Fatheddine, 2018; Widhe, 2016). The conclusion that may be drawn is that while aesthetic perspectives have a peripheral role in GY11, matters concerning entrepreneurship, employment factors, and measurability are prioritized (cf. Persson & Sundmark, 2022).

The term *culture* is further mentioned in GY11 in conjunction with the task of developing the students' cultural understanding, and is connected to the international perspective (Skolverket, 2011a, pp. 1-2, 4). It is also connected to knowledge about a Nordic and a Western cultural heritage (pp. 1, 6), which is not defined. Moreover, there is also the aspect of developing the students' understanding and appreciation for the value of cultural diversity (pp. 1, 4, 8, 10). While these topics are clearly important, there seem to be few links to aesthetic elements of culture, apart from a focus on the undefined term *cultural heritage* and a brief reference to the appreciation of aesthetic values. The reference to a cultural heritage seems to be more clearly linked to an anthropological notion of culture (cf. Fornäs, 2017). The reference to cultural diversity, on the other hand, indicates a more nuanced form of cultural competence (cf. Bland, 2013; Nordenstam & Widhe, 2021; Volkmann, 2015), but there is no mention of a connection between the development of such competence and literary texts, such as was the case in Lpf94 (Skolverket, 1994b).

With respect to methods, the curriculum code indicates that student-centered teaching and learning are of the essence. This is based on a socioculturally oriented discourse (Adolfsson, 2012, pp. 24-26), with a focus on, for example, problem-solving, self-reflection, working both individually and in collaboration with others, discussing and taking a stand, and critically evaluating norms, statements, and situations (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 6). Dahlstedt and Olson (2014) propose that it is primarily when deliberative dialogues are allowed to take place, where opinions and rationales are aired, that tolerant, active citizens are created (p. 14). According to Adolfsson (2012), these curricular aims emanate from a societal need for efficiency and performance and are directed towards fostering democratic citizens who are innovative and critically aware of themselves and their surroundings; that is, active citizens who can effect change and contribute to the preservation of the welfare system (p. 20). These curriculum codes will of course be of consequence to the syllabi of the various subjects that are studied at the upper secondary level, including English.

2.5.2.1 The English Syllabus: S11

In S11, considerable focus is placed on language acquisition, guided by a sociocultural curriculum code where CLT concerns, in the terms of Hall (2015, p. 116) and Wesche and Skehan (2002, p. 208), are at the fore. This is demonstrated by concepts such as interaction, collaboration, meaningful situations, teamwork, and intercommunication, which are either directly expressed or alluded to in the syllabus (Skolverket, 2011b). There are some general stipulations under both "The Aim of the Subject" and under "Content of Communication" connected to acquiring "knowledge about culture and society" where a focus on literary texts could be of relevance. These specifications seem primarily to point to an anthropological perspective on culture and society concerned with values and the human condition (see Fornäs, 2017) but could also be construed as including a broader view of cultural competence (cf. Bland, 2013; Nordenstam & Widhe, 2021; Volkmann, 2015).

In terms of a specific mention of literary texts, S11 outlines in brief terms what is required of the students (and expected of teachers) at the three levels of English (English 5, English 6, and English 7); the primary "Knowledge Requirement" appears to be reading comprehension. Sigvardson (2021) remarks that considerable focus is directed towards efferent reading and the instrumental functions of literary text, both in the syllabus of English and in the syllabus of Swedish at the upper secondary level; that is, such texts are to play a utilitarian role (p. 39) rather than to be enjoyed in their own right by means of aesthetic reading (p. 54). Below are presentations and discussions of the S11 stipulations where literary texts are specifically mentioned at the three levels of English (Skolverket, 2011b).[35]

2.5.2.2 English 5 in S11

First of all, it is important to note that English 5 is an obligatory course in all upper secondary programs. In the English 5 section of the syllabus, it is stipulated under "Content of Communication" that students should communicate about "content and form in different kinds of fiction"; under "Reception", the focus should be on "literature and other fiction". In the commentary material to the syllabi of English and Modern Languages, examples of what the term "other fiction" may involve are provided: lyrics, animations, myths, and narrative films (Skolverket, 2011d, p. 6). However, the purpose of a focus on literary texts and fictional texts in other media is not specified. In her analysis of the upper secondary English syllabus, Dodou (2021b) notes that literary texts constitute one genre amongst other textual genres that students should encounter (p. 136). She thereby alludes to the lack of specifications regarding the uniqueness of literary texts. Dodou concludes that the primary

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[35] Translation from Swedish to English by Skolverket (2011b). This translated version will be used throughout. The official Swedish version can be found in the reference list (Skolverket, 2011c).

rationale for focusing on literary texts can be connected to the concept of *authorization* (p. 136).[36] However, a less obvious form of legitimization may exist based on how useful a phenomenon is as a tool for learning about other curricular contents (as was suggested in relation to Lpf94). Such a rationale is thus based on *instrumental rationalization,* and in this light the discourse in S11 indicates that "literature in a non-native language serves to develop target language skills and what today is often called cultural learning and intercultural communication", according to Dodou (p. 138).

The non-explicit nature of the syllabus may be viewed in both positive and negative terms (see Englund, 2015; Johansson, 2003). The freedom that comes with this policy means that local stakeholders must decide whether literary texts should be used primarily for teaching language skills and social/cultural knowledge, areas that are outlined under "Knowledge Requirements" in the syllabus, or whether they should also, as Sigvardson (2021) suggests, be enjoyed for their aesthetic value and as such be *experienced* by the students (p. 54). Dodou's analysis of the syllabus shows that literary texts are not "explicitly part of the aim, goals and knowledge requirements for the English school subject at any level" (2021b, p. 136), which supports the idea that the aesthetic appreciation of literary texts, among other things, is not prioritized.

The focus in the "Knowledge Requirements" is on measurability, which is a bad fit for literary texts and their ability to awaken feelings in the reader (Borsgård, 2020, p. 75). Borsgård's study indicates that teachers are "calling for a pedagogical language that is not accommodated, or at least is not highly valued, within the boundaries of the current dominant policy discourse" (p. 81, my translation).[37] Sigvardson (2021) stresses that the Swedish curriculum and syllabi of today, both in the subject of Swedish and in the subject of English, do not support teachers in the task of approaching literary texts from an experience and aesthetics-related perspective (p. 56).

2.5.2.3 English 6 in S11

For English 6 (an obligatory course for all programs with the exception of the vocational programs), the stipulations in S11 become more specific in terms of "Content of communication" and "Reception", while other areas are as open to interpretation as those related to the English 5 section of S11. As Dodou notes, there is "a gradual broadening of pupils' literary repertoires from the compulsory level through the upper secondary level" (2021b, p. 136), and as such from English 5 through to English 7. Students in English 6 are expected to communicate about "themes" and "ideas" in addition to "form and content in film and literature, authors and literary periods" (Skolverket, 2011b). Under "Reception" it is

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[36] Dodou's analysis of S11 is based on Van Leeuwen's (2008) linguistic discourse of legitimation theory.

[37] Original quotation: "ropar på ett pedagogiskt språk som inte ryms, eller som åtminstone inte står högt i kurs, inom ramen för dagens tongivande policydiskurs".

further specified that in terms of literary texts and other fictional media, "contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs", as well as "film and other media", are to form the basis of the input (Skolverket, 2011b).[38] The focus on "theme" suggests an element of literary focus. Ingemansson (2016), for example, connects "theme" to the concept of narratology and thus what a story is about on a deeper level (p. 47). There are also references in the English 6 section of the syllabus to "understanding perspectives and implied meaning" in "larger amounts of texts" (Skolverket, 2011b) that can be linked to the concept of narratology. Hence, a certain focus on literary elements is discernable in the syllabus, but to what extent and how this is to be achieved and for what purpose is less clear. On the other hand, the reference to larger amounts of texts, that is, both literary and factual texts, could be connected to the idea of *extensive reading*, which, according to Hall (2015), "promotes language acquisition, in particular the acquisition of vocabulary, as well as the desirable greater automaticity in processing of the foreign language text and/or script" (p. 95). In view of this explanation of the focus on large amounts of texts, it may be suggested that the primary justification is language-related and thus based on *instrumental rationalization* rather than other gains.

Literary texts could be connected to another stipulation under the heading "Reception", which reads: "How structure and context are built up and how attitudes, perspectives and style are expressed in spoken and written language in various genres" (Skolverket, 2011b), but it is not entirely clear how this in turn could be connected to the "Aim of the Subject". It may be linked to the idea that students are expected to develop a sense of "language awareness" (Skolverket, 2011b). However, since it appears that the knowledge requirements focus on cultural/social and language-related knowledge only (Dodou, 2021b, p. 137), this equation does not quite add up.

Besides the specification of a focus on "literature", there are the stipulations regarding the inclusion of films, authors, and literary periods. The reference to films, as well as other media sources, points to an "entrenchment" of the widened text concept from Lpf94 to GY11, as suggested by Svensson (2014, pp. 338-339). The purpose of focusing on authors and literary periods is not defined in the syllabus, nor are these aspects mentioned under the "Aim of the Subject". Nevertheless, it may be inferred that the phrase "the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used" could be an explanation (Skolverket, 2011b). From this angle, it would seem that a focus on authors and literary periods is justified by means of moral evaluation, in Van Leeuwen's (2008, 2018) terms. It should be noted that the basis for this moral evaluation has changed from a reverence for British and American authors and literary periods in Lpf94 to an extended global English-speaking cultural heritage in GY11.

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[38] In the commentary material on the English Syllabus (S21), the Swedish National Agency for Education defines older literature as literary texts written before the mid-1900s (Skolverket, 2021b). Such a definition was not available in the commentary material (2011d) attached to S11.

The "Knowledge Requirements" overall resemble those in the English 5 section of S11. The only difference at the English 6 level is that students should understand texts "in written English in various genres, and in more formal contexts". The difficulty level of the texts has thus increased from "clearly expressed English" to "English" (presumably in general and of a non-simplified character). Furthermore, the "Knowledge Requirements" do not refer to aesthetic or literary values, and the aesthetic perspective is thus also relegated to the periphery in the upper secondary EFL context, just as in the case of the Swedish curriculum overall, as suggested by Widhe (2016) and Fatheddine (2018). The reference to aesthetic values and cultural experiences in the main curriculum (GY11) could of course apply to the subject of English, but the lack of a reference in the syllabus itself makes it less clear whether such aesthetic concerns are of value in connection to the subject of English or whether they are to be solely a matter for the subject of Swedish. Moreover, Sigvardson (2021) alludes to the idea that instrumental goals are the primary concern in the syllabi of both Swedish and English as subjects at the upper secondary level (pp. 41, 55). He suggests that the motives that are provided for the legitimization of literary texts in these subjects create a distance between what the students are reading and the reading itself, which in turn leads to an obscuring of what literature as literature ultimately is (p. 52). In essence, this means that aesthetic appreciation and reader engagement are not made visible in the syllabi themselves, and by extension may be viewed as *delegitimized*, as per Van Leeuwen's (2018) definition.

2.5.2.4 English 7 in S11

With regard to English 7, it is important to point out that this is an elective course, and as such is only studied by approximately 50% of the students who attend an upper secondary school program in Sweden, as per the statistics of the academic year of 2019/2020 (Skolverket, 2020a). In the English 7 section of S11, the stipulations seem to become less clear than for English 5 and English 6, as there is no mention of literary texts under "Content of Communication", apart from a possible focus on "literary periods". On the other hand, there are stipulations under "Reception" in the English 7 section of the syllabus which are clearer. There it is specified that "contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres such as drama" should form the basis of the input. However, since these specifications are not mirrored in the "Content of Communication", it is less clear how teachers and students should approach the materials after having read, watched, or listened to them. The conclusion is that the main linguistic discourse of legitimization at the English 7 level is *authorization* by means of an inclusion of literary texts in the syllabus; that is, there is no explanation included on how to use them or why they should be used.

As Dodou (2021b) notes, the "Knowledge Requirements" indicate that the "syllabus trace[s] a logic of progression" which considers the students' age, their language development, and the course content from one level to another (p. 135). For example, in

the English 7 section of the syllabus it is stated that students should understand texts and their implied meaning "in various genres of an advanced nature" (Skolverket, 2011b), which points to a progression from previous levels, since the phrase "of an advanced nature" is absent prior to English 7. On the other hand, it is not clear what types of texts should be used to demonstrate that such requirements have been met. Since literary texts are not included under "Content of Communication", it is possible for teachers to construe that such texts should not be prioritized in preparation for the "Knowledge Requirements", since literary texts, fictional texts in other media, or factual texts could be used for this purpose. Based on Englund's (2015) arguments, this is when the concept of a deliberative curriculum comes into play. Teachers should in such a situation reflect on possible ways forward and how to best achieve the goals, both individually and in collaboration with their colleagues. One question that arises is whether there is not a risk of differences in educational content when teachers and principals at each separate school arrive at different conclusions in this regard, something that is hinted at by Johansson (2003) with respect to the 1994 curriculum. Since the free space is still a reality today, it also applies to GY11.

In addition to the specifications for English 7 outlined above, links could be made to literary texts and fictional texts in other media under "Production and Interaction", such as that students should demonstrate that they are able to "instruct, narrate, summarise, explain, comment, assess, give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue". Any such connections would have to be made by the upper secondary EFL teachers on an individual basis and may thus be viewed as rather arbitrary, since factual texts may be chosen for this purpose instead. Hence, there is an apparent absence of curriculum codes at this level as far as literary texts are concerned, and the idea of legitimization by means of authorization is further reinforced.

2.6.3 The English Syllabus of 2021

In 2020, the Council of Europe published a companion to CEFR (replacing a provisional version published in 2018), which outlines certain new descriptors, such as three points connected to a focus on "creative texts (including literature)" in language teaching and learning (2020, p. 22). The three descriptors are as follows:

- Reading as a leisure activity (the purely receptive process; descriptors taken from other sets of CEFR-based descriptors)
- Expressing a personal response to creative texts (less intellectual, lower levels)
- Analysis and criticism of creative texts (more intellectual, higher levels). (p. 25)

These descriptors were added in response to criticism from educators and other stakeholders with regard to an absence of literary elements in CEFR. They seem to point to literary texts having values other than purely language-related, cultural, or other

instrumental aims in the EFL context (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021, p. 68). Each descriptor is also followed by detailed definitions of the goals applicable for each level, such as A2 and C1 (pp. 58-59, 106-108).

During the autumn of 2021, a revised syllabus for the subject of English came into effect in Sweden (named S21 for the purposes of the present study). This syllabus does not appear to have been influenced by the three new descriptors relating to literary texts in the CEFR companion. Conversely, as Sigvardson (2021) has noted, in the descriptions in S21 under "Aim of the Subject", literary texts "are not mentioned at all" (p. 56); there are few changes between S11 and S21 as far as a focus on literary texts is concerned (see Skolverket, 2021a).[39] As a result, the emphasis below will primarily be on aspects that appear to diverge.

As compared to S11, the phrase "songs and poems" has been added to the phrase "literature and other fiction" in S21 under "Reception" in the English 5 section (Skolverket, 2021c). As a consequence, there is slightly more guidance in terms of the selection of genres. Furthermore, the "Knowledge Requirements" have now also been extended as regards reading, from "understanding" texts to "understanding and interpreting" texts, which may encourage teachers to move beyond comprehension-related concerns. This extended phrase recurs in the English 6 and English 7 sections of S21, but the difficulty level of the texts should also increase progressively, just as in S11. Besides these additions and changes, there are a number of clarifications in the syllabus, particularly as regards language-related concerns (e.g., related to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar), but there are no additional amendments specifically associated with literary texts, which supports Sigvardson's (2021) analysis of S21.

In S21, the specifications for English 6 under "Content of Communication" remain the same as in S11, apart from an amendment to the S11 phrase "authors and literary periods" (Skolverket, 2011b). This phrase now reads "authors in relation to [their] literary periods" (Skolverket, 2021c), which implies that the focus should be shifted from literary periods as a separate learning objective to a focus on the authors and relevant historical information which has direct links to what the students are reading or watching. This shift suggests that the focus is being transferred to an approach by which the students gain access to *knowledge-in-context*, which in Applebee's (1996) terms involves students becoming active agents in their own learning processes. This concept is based on sociocultural teaching and learning theories where active participation is encouraged (pp. 108-109), which will be explored in greater detail in connection to "The Theoretical Framework". Such an approach stands in contrast to *knowledge-out-of-context*, where students are mainly taught *about* literature, that is, facts and figures (p. 123).

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[39] This document is entitled *Jämför ämnesplanerna: Ämnesplan i engelska på gymnasialnivå* and contains the stipulations of both S11 and S21. It was created to facilitate a comparison of the contents of the two syllabi.

Another result of the change in wording from S11 to S21 as concerns authors and literary periods is that the previous legitimization of teaching and learning about a cultural heritage in connection to literary studies by means of *moral evaluation* is no longer as clearly defined (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2018, pp. 147-148). As a consequence, the new wording may be interpreted in many different ways, and as such may give rise to greater differences in classroom focus.

An additional change in the English 6 section of the syllabus can be found under "Reception", where the phrase "contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs" has been amended to "literary texts, also poetry and drama, both contemporary works and extracts from older works" in S21 (Skolverket, 2021c).[40] In essence, this seems to indicate that a greater emphasis is from now on to be given to contemporary works, and that older texts should be deemphasized and not partaken of in their entirety. Prior to S21, it appears that an equal focus on contemporary and older works was a greater possibility, albeit not a requirement. In terms of a curriculum code, it could be said that the idea of learning about cultural heritage is not as highly valued as before, at least not in connection to literary texts. This does not mean that such knowledge is *delegitimized*, in accordance with Van Leeuwen's (2018) definition, in the current syllabus, but the trend suggests that it is gradually diminishing in importance.

As regards the English 7 section of S11, there was an allusion to literary texts as a possible focus area under "Content of Communication" in the phrase "cultural expressions in modern times and historically, such as literary periods". However, the phrase "such as literary periods" has been omitted from S21, leaving no reference to literary texts under "Content of Communication". This points to a similar change in the curriculum code to that which is visible at the English 6 level, that is, a move away from the idea of the significance of knowledge about cultural heritage, and hence a continued trend in this regard in terms of the subject of English overall.

Under "Reception" there is an amendment to the phrase "contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres such as drama" in S11. The words "and other fiction" have been omitted from S21. The question is whether this omission might affect which texts teachers choose to use, since "other fiction" is defined as, for example, myths, animations, and narrative films in the commentary material to the syllabus (Skolverket, 2021b, p. 16), thereby seemingly emphasizing the use of multimodal texts. On the other hand, the stipulation "other fiction" remains in the English 5 section of the syllabus, which could result in an additional focus on other text forms at this level.

Stipulations regarding the development of cultural knowledge are not directly linked to literary texts in S21. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the treatment of cultural elements has progressed from previous syllabi, that is, from a more narrow anthropological notion of learning about the culture of English-speaking countries (see Skolverket, 1994b;

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[40] Original quotation: "Skönlitteratur, även dikter och dramatik, såväl samtida som utdrag ur äldre verk"

2011b) to a broader and also deeper understanding of culture (Skolverket, 2021c). According to S21, students should develop an understanding of current events and social as well as cultural conditions and values in areas and contexts where English is used and compare them to their own situation and experiences. Such cultural competence could be developed in connection to working on literary texts but also by other means.

In the "Knowledge Requirements" of S21, while there is no mention of literary texts per se, there is a clearer specification of the interpretation of texts at all three levels of English. As a comparison, in S11 it is stipulated that students are to "understand" texts (Skolverket, 2011b), while S21 specifies that they should "understand and *interpret*" texts (Skolverket, 2021c, my emphasis). There is a brief mention of "the ability to interpret content" under the "Aim of the Subject" in S11, but this specification does not appear under "Core Content", nor under "Knowledge Requirements". In the commentary material appended to the S21 syllabus, it is further clarified that language comprehension is not simply about understanding the literal meaning of language, but also about interpreting the meaning of the content (Skolverket, 2021 b). This clarification, and of course the amendment itself, could feasibly affect both the content focus and teaching methods related to literary texts over time. It points to a curriculum code that perceives a value in using texts (albeit not only literary texts) in EFL to develop the students' critical reading and critical awareness, which ties into the general ideology of the curriculum (GY11).

Overall, there are certain visible amendments in S21 as regards literary texts; some help to clarify (e.g., poetry and songs in English 5), some equate to a change in focus (e.g., a move away from literary periods as a separate focus area in English 6), while some involve the omission of specifications (e.g., the lack of a reference to literary texts under "Content of Communication" in English 7). There is also the addition of the words "extracts of" before "older literary texts" in English 6, which constitutes a shift in focus. Furthermore, it should be noted that the aesthetic value of reading literary texts is not referred to in S21. In conjunction with certain omissions and a greater focus on extracts, it indicates that literary texts have a diminishing role in the EFL context. This is a trend that is visible in the curricula from 1980 to 2011, highlighted by Widhe (2016) and Fatheddine (2018) particularly with regard to aesthetic values, which appears to be continuing. In conclusion, while the revision of CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) has contributed to making the role of literary texts clearer, adding to the legitimization of literary texts in language teaching (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021, p. 68), the Swedish English syllabus of 2021 appears to have moved in the opposite direction.

2.6.4 The Danish and the Dutch English Syllabi

What differences may be discerned between the Swedish English syllabus in upper secondary education as regards literary texts and their treatment in the syllabi of other countries? What curriculum codes are inherent in other syllabi? Two examples will be explored in this regard, the Dutch context and the Danish context. The reason why the

Dutch syllabus of English has been chosen is that research on upper secondary EFL teachers' choices and foci for literary texts has been conducted in the Netherlands by Bloemert et al. (2016) and Bloemert et al. (2019), and this research has informed the present study. The Danish example has been selected to serve as a contrast due to the more detailed nature of the specifications and guidelines prevalent in this syllabus.

The Dutch EFL curriculum delineates a focus on literary texts (or "literature"), as well as more specific information regarding the learning objectives attached to them; there are also school exams (see table 1 below) in which a partial emphasis on literary texts is evident. There are three specific learning objectives connected to literary texts (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007, translated into English by Bloemert et al., 2016, p. 171):

1. The student can recognize and distinguish literary text types and can use literary terms when interpreting literary texts.

2. The student can give an overview of the main events of literary history and can place the studied works in this historic perspective.

3. The student can report about his/her reading experiences of at least three literary works with clear arguments.

Hence, there is a focus on literary knowledge, literary history, and the literary reading experience, and to some degree even on critical thinking. The curriculum codes are thus more clearly visible in this regard than the ones in the Swedish syllabus of English, particularly in terms of the value of literary knowledge.

Table 1

Organization of FL curricula in Dutch secondary education (Bloemert et al., 2016. p. 171).

National Exam: year 6 (50% of final mark)	School Exams: years 4, 5, and 6 (50% of final mark)
• Reading skills (expository texts)	• Reading skills • Writing skills • Listening skills • Speaking skills • Literature

The exact focus of the literature part of Dutch school exams is not clear, but it is fair to assume that the three objectives come into play there as well. There is no clear division between the different levels of English, so it appears that the objectives are to be reached by the end of upper secondary education. Nevertheless, the inclusion of literary texts in the school exams in conjunction with course objectives such as the requirement to use literary terms to interpret literary texts do provide clearer guidelines and goals than those available

to Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers. In addition, the clearer directives may also be viewed as a way of legitimizing literary studies in the EFL context.

In terms of the material in focus, it is stipulated in the Dutch EFL curriculum that students should read a minimum of three works of literature in the subject of English during their upper secondary education (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007). What lengths and difficulty levels to choose, as well as what works to select, are open to interpretation (Bloemert et al., 2016, p. 171). However, since it is stated in the course objectives that students must place the studied works in a historical perspective, it is implied that teachers should choose literary texts from different time periods. There are no significant differences here compared to the Swedish context.

In Denmark, the syllabus of English as a subject at the upper secondary level, approved by the Danish Ministry of Children and Education in 2017, also specifies that literary texts should be included in the lesson contents. There are two courses of English at the upper secondary level, English B (the first course, obligatory) and English A (the second course, specialization). In the syllabus for English B, it is stated under "Core Content" (*kernestof*) that a variety of genres of primarily contemporary literary texts and non-fiction texts should be in focus, and that students should learn about analytical concepts and methods of text analysis (Undervisningsministeriet, 2017a). This does not differ a great deal from the Swedish context. However, it is also stated in a separate document containing teaching guidelines that one of these texts must be a longer written work that cannot be exchanged for a non-written source (Undervisningsministeriet, 2017b). This text has to be a complete text with a beginning, a middle, and an end as the author had intended. The stated reasoning behind this stipulation is that students should be afforded a deeper and more nuanced reading experience while also working on their reading strategies, among other things. A reflection in this regard is that this would require teachers to choose works with care. Besides this stipulation, it is made clear that the previously defined *widened text concept* ("et udvidede tekstbegreb") may be applied to the rest of the texts to be selected in the course.

In the course objectives of the English B course, it is stated that Danish upper secondary students should be able to analyze and interpret texts and to compare texts with respect to cultural, societal, and historical issues. They should subsequently be tested on this knowledge in an oral examination at the end of the course. Each student should be presented with a shorter text (e.g., poetry, drama, non-fiction, or a 3-minute digital media source) on the day of the oral test and has 60 minutes to prepare a presentation of this text. The evaluation of this presentation focuses on several areas, including language use, but also the ability to use analytical concepts and methods. The similarities between the Swedish context and the Danish one are that both fiction and non-fiction should be read, and it is not specified how much focus is to be devoted to literary texts. However, since a literary text could be chosen as a final assignment in the course in Denmark (in the form of a national test), teachers must prepare their students for this possibility. The course goal or objective attached to literary texts thus further serves to legitimize a greater focus on

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literary texts in the Danish context than in the Swedish one, albeit primarily in terms of Van Leeuwen's (2008) concept of *authorization*. However, the curriculum code points to the value of acquiring literary knowledge and analytical skills.

On closer scrutiny, there are detailed written guidelines (*vejledninger*) outlining examples of both content focus and methods. These guidelines were updated in 2021 (Undervisningsministeriet, 2021a; 2021b). In terms of literary texts, there are examples of literary devices, such as setting, character, narrator, point of view, language style, and theme, that can be used in analyses of short stories, novels, and short films. Additionally, there are complements to the above that pertain to film analysis (cinematic technique), focusing on terms like framing, angles, camera movement, editing, sound, and lighting. Furthermore, there are examples of what to focus on concerning poetry, such as voice, figures of speech, imagery, symbols, rhyme, rhythm, and poetic forms. Drama is also mentioned, as well as suggested terms such as act, rising action, climax, and comic relief, that can be explored in this regard. In conjunction with these guidelines, it is stipulated that the students must be trained in this skill set over time and not simply left to their own devices (Undervisningsministeriet, 2021a). This focus on both detailed literary skills and progression in terms of the learning of such skills is absent in the Swedish syllabus of English. Moreover, some of the content descriptions in the Danish syllabus of English seem to resemble the new descriptors for creative texts (including literature) outlined in the 2020 companion to CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). Hence, both the Danish syllabus and CEFR portray a curriculum code that identifies literary skills and knowledge as important.

For English A (the specialization course) in Denmark, the course objectives are similar to those of English B. However, there is the added stipulation that older literature should be included, as well as a specific requirement for a focus on excerpts of Shakespeare's works and on significant movements connected to British and American literary history (Undervisningsministeriet, 2017b). While this does not indicate a canon per se, it does dictate a specific focus on a particular author, and it is further stated that an excerpt from one of Shakespeare's works may be assigned to the students as the basis for the oral examination at the end of the English A course (Undervisningsministeriet, 2017b). This effectively means that teachers must prepare the students for such eventualities. To reiterate, there is thus a clearer focus on literary skills in the Danish English syllabus overall than in the Swedish one. The focus on Shakespeare in particular, however, appears to rest on *moral evaluation*, as per Van Leeuwen's definition of the term (2018, p. 147).

The differences between the Swedish syllabus of English and the two examples above as regards focus, explicitness, inherent curriculum codes, and the legitimization of literary texts are many. However, one aspect that becomes particularly clear with regard to the Swedish English syllabus and its non-specific nature is that much responsibility falls on the shoulders of each individual teacher. It is therefore of particular interest to examine the factors that frame teacher thinking and beliefs, since these appear to have a central role in the process of making of curricula.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

As alluded to in the introduction and the background, the making of curricula is a complex undertaking influenced, for example, by societal and cultural values as well as by each individual teacher's own personal values (teachers' beliefs). The degree of explicitness of the formal steering documents, as well as the type of legitimization of the phenomena being taught (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2008), will also have an impact on which of these sets of values are afforded the greatest emphasis. Such matters are likely to have an effect on teaching practices in general, regardless of the subject that is being taught. However, the present study focuses on upper secondary EFL teachers in the Swedish context, their decisions, their attitudes, and their approaches when it comes to teaching literary texts, as well as underlying rationales. The main parameters affecting the teacher perspective can be traced to curricular domains, teachers' beliefs about the role of literary texts in the upper secondary EFL context, and theories of teaching and learning. A theoretical framework comprising curricular theory, expressed as curricular domain as conceptualized by Goodlad et al. (1979), McCormick's (1994) theory of reading practices in combination with elements of teachers' beliefs, and Applebee's (1996) theory of teaching and learning will consequently be applied to the data, as well as three new constructs that have been designed for the present study. This theoretical framework will be outlined in detail below.

2.7.1 Curricular Domains

The study of curriculum practice has attracted considerable attention over the past century, as described in section 2.5. According to Parks (2010), one influential contributor to the field is Tyler (1949), whose concepts of curriculum and instruction are central to curriculum research (p. 80). Parks explains that "Tyler has had lasting effects on what we teach, how we teach, and how we assess what we teach in our schools" (p. 81). Parks' use of the personal pronoun "we" may first and foremost apply to the American context. However, Tyler's theories are also in focus in the Nordic context, where researchers such as Karseth (2007) in Norway, as well as Morawski (2010), Lundgren (2015), and Englund (2015) in Sweden, refer to his work. Of particular relevance are Tyler's ideas on curriculum construction, which have subsequently come to be known as the *Tyler Rationale* (Parks, 2010, p. 83). The starting point of Tyler's rationale consists of four questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (1949, p. 1)

These questions thus cover the two major elements of the science of pedagogy, that is *curriculum* and *didactics* (see Lundgren, 2015, p. 5). Tyler stresses the importance of stating the objectives of a course or program in a useful way. He underscores that it has to be made clear what the learning objectives are, or, in Tyler's words, what the "behavioral objectives" are (p. 49). Moreover, Tyler states that it is necessary to ask questions about how learning experiences may be organized for "effective instruction" (p. 83). The present-day focus on goals, methods, and modes of assessment can be found in Tyler's descriptions.

The impact of Tyler's rationale on Goodlad et al.'s (1979) research is evident, as they began to "work together on conceptualizing the curriculum field in such a way as to combine the ends-means components described by Tyler with [the political, social, and transactional] processes" of praxis (Goodlad et al., 1979, p. 3).[41] In essence, what Goodlad et al. suggest here is that there are several discernible influences on the way a curriculum is put into practice. There are, for example, societal, institutional, transactional, and instructional influences on the making and subsequent implementation of curricula (pp. 33-35). Goodlad et al. explain that

> [t]he making of curricula is the making of decisions. Normative decisions involving choices among values and interests, empirical decisions calling for data, personal ambitions, group loyalties, characteristics and entrenched ways of behaving, choices between what is preferred and what can be afforded, all of these and more are inextricably interwoven. (p. 33)

These decisions are made at different levels, at the political-social level and at the technical-professional level (p. 33). Hence, once the political decision regarding a new curriculum has been made, based on societal norms and concerns, the process continues.

To identify the various domains at play in curriculum construction, Goodlad et al. (1979) have outlined a conceptualization of curricular domains wherein five curricula are identified: *ideological curricula, formal curricula, perceived curricula, operational curricula*, and *experiential curricula* (pp. 59-64).[42] *Ideological curricula* can be understood as the ideals that curricular constructors had in mind when designing the curricula; by extension, these ideals also represent views and norms of a society at the time of construction. However, Goodlad et al. stress that these ideals are seldom intact once the curriculum reaches the pedagogical setting, because "much of what was viewed as ideal by those who made [the curricula] is rubbed off, compromised, or corrupted as ideological curricula are moved into the sociopolitical and technical-professional processes of adoption and implementation" (p.

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[41] Ammons, Iwańska, Jordan, and Richter (all of whom contributed to the book *Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice*). Additional contributors to the book, such as Klein and Tye, are mentioned below. For the complete list of contributors see the reference list.

[42] In a footnote to *Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice,* it is explained that the segment on the conceptualization of curricular domains was written by Goodlad, but that the conceptualization itself was developed by M. Francis Klein and Kenneth A. Tye. The use of this conceptualization for research purposes is, however, described by Goodlad (1979, p. 43).

59). *Formal curricula* may be construed as the actual affirmed and ratified steering documents that schools and teachers have to relate to and abide by.

Depending on how explicit the *formal curricula* are, there is more or less room for interpretation on the part of the schools and teachers. This is when the concept of *perceived curricula* comes into play. It may be argued that the more freedom teachers are afforded, the greater the prevalence of *perceived curricula*. How teachers perceive the curricula and how this is eventually manifested in the classroom may differ. The materials, tasks, and methods used may be subject to a number of factors, such as a lack of funding and the influence of colleagues. The resulting curriculum in action can thus be termed an *operational curriculum*. There are also the students' encounters with the curricula, what they learn and what they experience. These are termed the *experiential curricula*. Since the present study is primarily concerned with the teachers' perspectives on curricula and since no lessons have been observed, it is primarily the concepts of *ideological, formal*, and *perceived curricula* that will be applied in the analysis of the data. However, there are other possibilities connected to curricular domains that appear to be unexplored, at least by Goodlad et al., such as when teachers or schools seem to extend or protract a former, expired curriculum. A new construct has thus been developed for the purposes of the present study, which incorporates the idea of teachers making use of an expired curriculum; this is termed a *protracted curriculum*.

2.7.2 Teachers' Beliefs

The attitudes and views of teachers have come to be regarded as highly influential in shaping both teaching practices and learning focus. An entire research field has developed around this idea, termed *teachers' beliefs.* According to Fives and Buehl (2012), research within the field dates back to the 1950s and "the goal of the research on teachers' beliefs was to establish a clear psychological construct, *beliefs*, that could serve as an explanatory and predictive mechanism for explaining differences in teachers' practices" (p. 471, my emphasis). However, it has proven to be difficult to achieve this aim, and Fives and Buehl have thus attempted to identify some of the main areas of focus within this field in their review study. By reviewing 300 articles, trawling for information that would help to identify the main themes of the research, they arrived at seven general topics that revolved around "beliefs about development, diversity, knowledge (including subject area, pedagogy, and pedagogical content knowledge), self, schools, vested parties, and teacher preparation" (p. 471). Fives and Buehl further divide research focusing on teachers' beliefs into three areas. Firstly, there are teachers' beliefs concerned with students in general, their ability to learn, their home culture and economic status, etc. (p. 478). The remaining two areas are connected to teaching: specific teaching practices (e.g., beliefs about cooperative learning) and beliefs about holistic teaching (e.g., constructivism or transmission) (p. 442).

Specific characteristics which are used to define teachers' beliefs focus, for example, on their implicit and explicit qualities (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 476). As the words imply, an implicit belief is a belief that the individual in question appears to be unconscious of, while an explicit belief is held at a conscious level. Hence, if a researcher asks the teacher what their beliefs are, the response should demonstrate their explicit beliefs. However, such research has been heavily criticized, among other things, because teachers may provide what they believe to be a "desired answer" rather than express what they truly believe (pp. 473-474). For this reason, it is suggested that a researcher should focus, for example, on a teacher's planned actions or talk, and infer teachers' beliefs from these (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 474; Pajares, 1992, p. 314). However, such an undertaking cannot be approached lightly. Pajares (1992) stresses that the "challenge is to assess each component so as to have confidence that the belief inferred is a reasonably accurate representation of that judgment" (p. 316). Hence, it is suggested that it is essential for a researcher to reflect on and be prepared to reevaluate every inference made so as to stay true to the material and meet ethical standards.

Teachers' beliefs about teaching, knowledge, and learners have been found to filter, frame, and guide teachers in their teaching practices in relation to contexts such as a new curriculum (Fives & Buehl, 2016, pp. 114-115). This is demonstrated by a recent small-scale study on teachers' beliefs in the EFL context in Chile focusing on EFL teachers' attitudes to using literary texts (Whitener, 2019). The findings show that none of the teachers in the study had received pedagogical training in their pre-service programs on how to approach literary texts in the EFL classroom. The results further indicate that only those participants who themselves had had positive experiences of literature learning in school found it useful to focus on literary texts in their own classrooms. Whitener found that "the two factors that empowered these teachers to use literature in their classrooms were having received explicit instruction regarding how to teach literature in the elementary/high school context, and/or modeling of such instruction" (p. 19). It is suggested that such experiences affected these teachers' beliefs about the importance of using literary texts, as well as how to approach them. This study helps to illustrate the potential impact of teachers' beliefs on the roles and use of literary texts in the EFL context, which raises questions about such influences and their possible consequences in areas other than the Chilean EFL example, such as in the Swedish EFL context.

In order to use teachers' beliefs as a theoretical base for one's research, Borg (2017) states that "clear arguments must be constructed to explain why a study of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is necessary" (p. 89). As concerns the present study, the argument is thus that the operational free space that the current Swedish curriculum and syllabus of English contain necessitates that upper secondary EFL teachers make many of the decisions about literary texts based on their own interpretations, experiences, education and beliefs, which warrants an inclusion of teachers' beliefs in the theoretical framework. The concept of teachers' beliefs will be combined with elements of McCormick's (1994) theory of reading practices, outlined below.

2.7.3 Literary Ideology, Literary Repertories, and EFL Repertoires

Curricular domains are complex, as Goodlad et al. (1979) have established. There is interaction between political, societal, cultural, professional, and personal forces at play. According to McCormick (1994), similar forces are evident with regard to both the reading process and the teaching of literary texts. McCormick clarifies this by explaining that readers are "socially constructed interdiscursive subjects, yet not without agency, balanced between determinism and autonomy" (p. 60). From this perspective, readers are affected by their surroundings, their time slot in history, their culture, and their society, but they also bring their personal interpretation to the reading, in part based on their belief systems. Hence, there are cognitive, collaborative, cultural/social, and individually-based factors involved in the reading process, but McCormick views learning, and particularly reading, as a socioculturally situated affair. She puts forth that "reading is never just an individual, subjective experience. While it may be usefully described as a cognitive activity, reading, like every act of cognition, always occurs in social contexts" (1994, p. 69). While McCormick is primarily concerned with the reader, her ideas could feasibly be applied to other consumers or users of literary texts in general. Consequently, as the descriptions below will show, the definitions could also be connected to teachers' beliefs about literary texts.

McCormick and Waller (1987) point to the interrelationship between a society's ideology and an individual's assumptions and beliefs. They begin by defining the term *ideology*, which

> points to those common values, practices, ideas, and assumptions of a particular society that, in fact, hold it together: the deeply ingrained, sometimes only partly conscious, habits, beliefs, lifestyles of a particular time and place. (p.196)

This *general ideology* will consequently also affect how a society views and responds to literary texts. The specific brand of ideology connected to literature is termed *literary ideology*, "which is closely related to a society's general ideology. The term refers to the particular assumptions, beliefs, habits, and practices that each society has in relation to literature" (McCormick & Waller, 1987, p. 197). *Literary ideology* should be discernable both in literary texts (and their authors) and in the readers, and by extension also in teachers' beliefs. McCormick explains that *literary ideology* may involve such matters as "whether the author is seen as a unique genius or a spokesperson for society, what literary genres and conventions are most highly valued, whether women's writing is valued as highly as men's, and so forth" (McCormick, 1994, p. 70). A *literary ideology* thus functions on a societal, institutional, and/or political level, but its effects will trickle down to the level of each individual citizen.

The appropriation or adoption of a *general* or a *literary ideology* on the part of an individual or a text is termed a *repertoire* by McCormick. There are *general repertoires* and

literary repertoires, both with respect to the readers and where the actual texts are concerned. The readers' *general repertoires* concern more general matters such as "their attitudes about gender and race, their religious beliefs, regional biases, etc." while the readers' *literary repertoires* involve "their assumptions and beliefs about literature, their previous literary experiences, their strategies of reading literary texts and so forth" (1994, p. 71). EFL teachers will also harbor views and beliefs about society in general and about literary studies and literary texts, contingent, among other things, on their cultural experiences, their upbringing, their general education, and their pre-service training, as well as curricular demands, which translates to their teachers' beliefs about literary texts in the EFL context. Since teachers' beliefs are believed to filter, frame, and guide teachers in their teaching practices (see Fives & Buehl, 2016), these influence factors may dictate their choices, habits, and practices in relation to literary texts. Based on this idea, two new constructs drawing on McCormick's concepts have been developed for the purposes of the present study. The first construct incorporates assumptions and beliefs that teachers hold about literary texts, literary studies, literary skills, and aesthetic reading in the EFL context, which cannot be firmly linked to the syllabus of English. It is termed a *teacher literary repertoire*. The second construct entails assumptions and beliefs about teaching practices and learning objectives involving literary texts that appear to be more firmly guided by stipulations in the syllabus of English and that emphasize, for example, language-related aspects or cultural knowledge. This new construct is termed an *EFL repertoire.* These two new constructs, as well as the term *general ideology*, will be employed in the analysis of the data to examine upper secondary EFL teachers' perceptions of literary texts and underlying rationales. The concept of *literary ideology* will also be explored in relation to the beliefs and assumptions that are propagated, among others, by universities, formal curricula, and teaching materials.

2.7.4 Theories of Teaching and Learning

How educators approach teaching and learning objectives are likewise conditioned by cultural and social forces, but also their own beliefs. Applebee (1996), a prominent researcher within the field of educational theory and practice in the United States, argues that "the power of education is intimately bound up in the social and cultural traditions within which education is set" (p. 1). With regard to literary studies, this might involve, for example, how literature is justified. Applebee, whose work also centers around how students become literate thinkers, recounts that in the late 19th century, literature "was justified largely as a reservoir of cultural values and a source of moral strength", but curricular focus at the time was on training mental faculties such as memorization (p. 23). Such a focus meant that students learnt *about* literature (e.g., facts, years, etc.), rather than *through* literature, which resulted in it being virtually unnecessary to read any works of literature at all (p. 24).

Despite goals that focus on participation, based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural traditions, old traditions have continued to influence education in general and also literary studies, according to Applebee (1996), who further states that

> educators have relied on classroom practices that focus almost exclusively on memory, allowing goals of active reasoning and participation to fall by the wayside. Instead of the knowledge-in-action that both allows and develops through participation in culturally significant traditions of discourse, we have emphasized the knowledge-out-of-context that comes from studying its characteristics. (1996, p. 26)

While memorization exercises may no longer be central to teaching methods in Sweden at the upper secondary level today, learning objectives with a focus on the characteristics of a discourse may occur. For example, the stipulations of the syllabus of English (S11) prescribe an inclusion of literary periods, which may result in the type of *knowledge-out-of-context* focus that Applebee describes, that is, a focus on the characteristics of literature rather than the piece of literature itself. In essence, this means that a lesson on, for example, literary periods, may have little to do with students learning actively, particularly if the focus is primarily on facts and figures. Instead, the result is "a disembodied set of information to be taught and learned" with no clear reasoning behind why such information might be relevant (p. 123). That is not to say that literary periods should not be taught, but rather that they should be taught in conjunction with the reading of literary texts from the periods in focus. According to Applebee, teacher-led lessons rather than lectures could focus on introducing contextual information to the students once they have read the text in question and have had a chance to form their own opinions, as well as to relate facts and figures to the contents. This form of introduction to new knowledge is based on the idea of *knowledge-in-action*, that is, "gradual immersion in new conversations rather than standing alongside and being told about them" (p. 123).

Regarding a seminar on a literary text, *knowledge-in-action* entails asking authentic questions which are more likely to generate interest, to enthuse, to challenge, or to give satisfaction (Applebee, 1996, pp. 107-108). However, when asking these questions, it is crucial to consider the different underlying expectations embedded in them. Are the questions really open, or are there predetermined "correct" answers? Applebee provides an example, which cuts to the core of *knowledge-in-action*:

> In some classes, "Why did Hamlet hesitate?" is a prompt for recitation of a previously presented interpretation. In others, the same question may be an authentic invitation to explore possibilities, debate interpretations, and arrive at a new point of view. (p. 108)

The latter approach would encourage participation in culturally significant traditions of discourse, which supports *knowledge-in-action*. Applebee further refers to a large-scale study by Nystrand and Gamoran's (1991), which showed that few authentic questions were

generally asked by the participating teachers. In those instances when such questions were asked, the students' learning was found to be enhanced (Applebee, 1996, p. 108).

Additionally, Applebee argues that it is essential to provide students with support in the process of *knowledge-in-action* by means of *instructional scaffolding* (1996, p. 114).[43] In short, this entails enabling "the students to accomplish in the context of the classroom what they could not accomplish alone", which may involve their peers and/or the teacher (p. 114); this is reminiscent of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.[44] Applebee adds that scaffolding can be implemented into all types of learning situations, including in small group, whole class, or individual activities, by introducing the necessary input to allow the students to complete the tasks. He further explains that "effective teachers help students to focus, clarify, and raise the levels of their contributions" (p. 115). Applebee suggests that *instructional scaffolding* as a concept is a useful tool that can be employed in the analysis of characteristics of both teaching and learning (p. 114). The concepts *knowledge-out-of-context, knowledge-in-action,* and *instructional scaffolding* will be applied to those parts of the data that treat, for example, approaches to literary texts. To conclude, Goodlad et al.'s (1979) conceptualizations of curricular domains along with the new constructs *protracted curriculum* as well as *teacher literary repertoires* and *EFL repertoires* based on a combination of the concept of teachers' beliefs and McCormick's (1994) reading theories, McCormick's own repertoires and descriptions of ideologies, as well as Applebee's (1996) teaching and learning theories consequently make up the core of this theoretical framework. This is rooted in the premise that these components will facilitate the analysis of vital aspects of the making of curricula where sociocultural, societal, political, and personal factors are central, and thereby highlight literary texts in the upper secondary EFL context from different angles in connection to the teacher perspective while also exploring the effects of interpretations of curricular stipulations.

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[43] The term *instructional scaffolding* was introduced by Applebee and Langer (1983, pp. 169-170).

[44] Vygotsky's zone of proximal development: "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through potential problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

3 METHODS

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in the introduction, the present study seeks to examine how upper secondary EFL teachers envision the role of literary texts in upper secondary education, in order to explore the relationship between curricular stipulations and the teachers' decisions, approaches, and the teaching practices they describe. To address this aim and the first four research questions, a mixed methods approach involving a quantitative study (phase I) and qualitative study (phase II) was selected for the purpose of both charting and exemplifying the teacher perspective in this regard. Additionally, the two phases of the study were deemed necessary in order to be able to highlight different aspects of the issue. Hence, a quantitative method in the form of a survey questionnaire was selected for the first phase of the study. A survey approach is advisable when the aim of the research is to chart a field or when the goal is to make generalizations about a significant number of participants (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 115). The first phase of the study was thus designed to address the aim of the study on a large scale by charting the methods that upper secondary school teachers employ when focusing on literary texts, what material they use, why, and for what purpose. The second (qualitative) phase of the study was included to expand on the first phase of the study and to provide insights into the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of a smaller sample of the participants. An overview of the number of participants, the research instruments, and the data for analysis in each phase of the study can be found in table 2 below.

Table 2

General description of phases I and II of the present study

	Phase I: Quantitative	Phase II: Qualitative
Participants	404 EFL teachers	16 EFL teachers
Research instrument	40-item questionnaire	12-item interview guide
Data for analysis	Questionnaire responses	Interview transcripts

3.2 Quantitative Method: Survey Questionnaire (Phase I)

There are several essential parts connected to a quantitative survey method. For example, there is the actual design of the questionnaire itself (inspiration, themes, questions and information about the participants, length/time factor, pilot runs, etc.). Moreover, a central element is how to phrase the survey questions so that they cover the themes and research questions in a satisfactory manner. How to contact potential participants and other procedural matters are also important. Further important ethical considerations to take into account include safeguarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Once the data has been collected and stored safely, there is also the question of which analytical methods to use. Lastly, it is also crucial to address possible limitations of the survey study.

3.2.1 The Survey Questionnaire

The first consideration involved which language to use for phase I of the study (Swedish or English). Since the targeted group of individuals consisted of upper secondary English teachers who had studied English at the university level for several years, it was deemed justifiable to use English as the primary language of the questionnaire. The most central concern in designing the survey questionnaire was to ensure that the research questions and other important topics would be covered satisfactorily (see appendix 1 for the complete survey questionnaire). As a consequence, a list of topic areas was constructed for phase I of the study, based on the first four research questions, with the aim of discovering patterns and trends in upper secondary EFL teachers' approaches to and use of literary texts (see table 3). The fifth research question will mainly be treated in the analysis section of each of the empirical chapters and in the final discussion.

Table 3

Contents of the questionnaire (phase I)

Sections – Questionnaire:	Topical Areas:
Biographical information	Gender, age, subjects of instruction, and teaching experience
Contact details (voluntary)	Email address (for voluntary participation in follow-up interviews)
General questions on curriculum	Interpretation and collaboration
Material selection (what?)	Types of texts, selection of novels, and focus areas
Methods (how?)	Tasks and activities (student-centered or teacher-centered)
Purpose (why?)	Functions of literary texts, goals, and desired effects

The biographical information in the questionnaire included the standard areas of gender (e.g., male, female, non-binary) and age but also teaching experience, as well as subject combinations taught, in order to provide opportunities to examine whether such factors might influence the responses. Since a follow-up interview was planned, a space had to be included where the participants could supply their contact details on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, since the survey would involve upper secondary teachers, it was deemed important to include some questions about the curriculum and the syllabus, local guidelines regarding literary texts, and whether steering documents are generally interpreted on an individual basis or in collaboration with colleagues.

The core areas related to text selection (*what*), purpose (*why*), and methods (*how*) are grounded in this thematic division. However, the main ideas and concepts were derived from stipulations in the English syllabus as well as inspired by the work of several researchers. The questions related to the selection of materials are mainly based on specifications in S11, but also on Öhman's (2015) discussion of the use of the novel in education. Questions concerning the four main focus areas of literary texts are influenced by Bloemert's EFL literature teaching model, depicted in figure 1 (Bloemert et al., 2016; Bloemert et al., 2019). Moreover, concepts of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities are based on Collie and Slater's ideas (1987) and on Van Gorp and Bogaert's (2006) definitions of TBLT. The section on desired effects is inspired by both Langer's (2011) and Rosenblatt's (1995) illustrations of the position of the reader and the concept of critical thinking. Language-related questions are influenced by Hall (2015) and Long (2015). Topics dealing with literary skills and knowledge are shaped by ideas presented by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000), and aspects of cultural knowledge by Myklevold (2018). Moreover, the questions pertaining to motivational factors involving individual reading projects and collaborative reading projects were inspired by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, pp. 27-28). All of the questions needed to be replicated for each level of English (EN5, EN6, and EN7) in order to provide opportunities for comparisons and to detect patterns related to progression. Finally, the stipulations in the syllabus of English (S11) have an overarching impact on the questionnaire contents. Examples of these sections of the questionnaire will be discussed in greater detail in order to justify the choices made.

The section on the selection of material was based on details specified under the headings of "Content of Communication" and "Reception" in the syllabus (S11) where genres and text types are mentioned (e.g., poetry and film). A question related to the most commonly occurring text types at all three levels of English was consequently added to cover these concerns. Additionally, while there is no specific mention of the novel in the syllabus, students should be exposed to "larger amounts of texts" in English 6 and English 7. Reading novels is one way of addressing this stipulation. Furthermore, researchers such as Öhman (2009) favor the novel over other text types due to the depth of the storyline, its potential role in opening up new worlds and helping to create new meaning for the reader (p. 168). Öhman further advocates the use of whole and complete texts, such as novels and short stories, in the classroom in order to motivate and encourage students to read and to

practice reading literary texts (2015, p. 167). For these reasons, it was deemed valuable to include questions related to novels, such as one pertaining to the number of novels read per level and another regarding the selection of these novels.

In Bloemert's model in figure 1 (Bloemert et al., 2019), four focal areas have been identified in relation to teaching literary texts in the EFL context.[45]

Figure 1

Comprehensive approach to FL literature learning (Bloemert et al., 2019, p. 372)
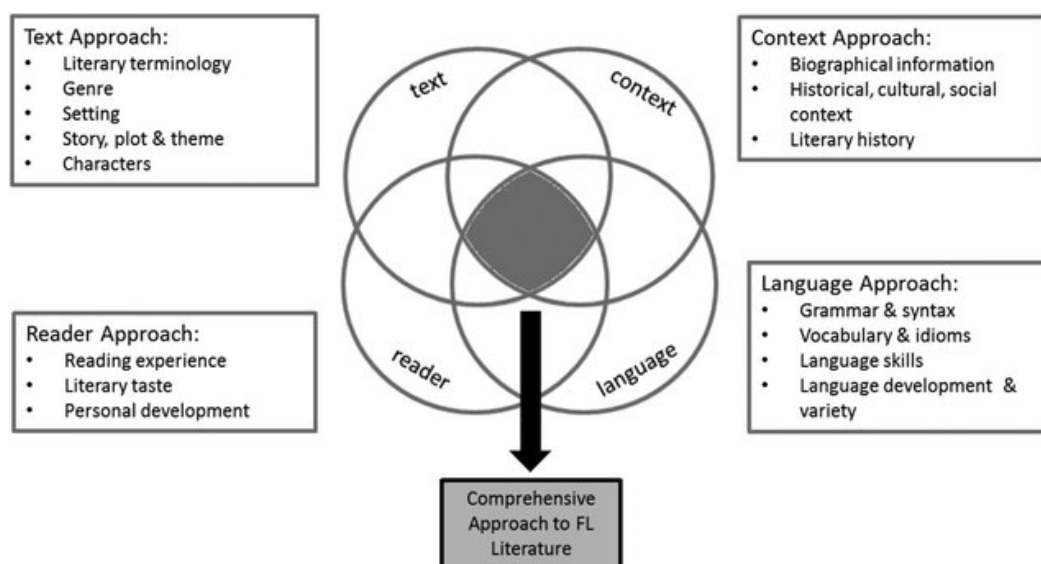
These focal areas include a reader approach, a text approach, a context approach, and a language approach. One of the questions in the survey questionnaire was constructed based on this model, with the aim of identifying which focus areas the participants find the most important and whether there is a difference concerning the levels (EN5, EN6, and EN7).

The importance of suitable activities during the three stages of reading in terms of creating interest, inspiring, and challenging students are outlined by Collie and Slater (1987, pp. 17-18, 36-37, 79-81). These ideas were incorporated into the survey questions pertaining to tasks and activities. The contents of these questions focus on the prevalence of teacher-led lectures, group discussions, close reading, writing activities, student oral presentations, and listening activities during the three stages of reading. All six of these tasks and activities were included in each of the three reading stages in an attempt to

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[45] The model in figure 1 was designed by Jasmijn Bloemert, and it was first introduced in an article by Bloemert et al. (2019). The contents of the model are based on constructs introduced in a previous study by Bloemert et al. (2016).

ascertain whether they occur more commonly at one reading stage than at another. An open-ended question was also added where the participants could provide additional examples of commonly used activities.

The section on desired effects and goals in the questionnaire consisted of 11 options. Five of the alternatives were related to language use and comprehension (grammar, vocabulary, oral fluency, reading comprehension, and reading speed). These focal points are linked to stipulations in the English syllabus, and in part also to research by Long (2015). Long discusses the importance of focusing on form in authentic situations. He asserts that this will allow the teacher to "draw the learners' attention to linguistic problems in context, as they arise during communication" (2015, p. 27). Long's research, as well as stipulations in the English syllabus, thus prompted the inclusion of several aspects of language use in the questionnaire in order to discover what choices are made in this regard and to reveal trends as regards communicative language teaching (CLT) and form-based language teaching.

Critical thinking is an area that both Rosenblatt (1995) and Langer (2011) connect to the reading process. More specifically, they both stress the importance of developing the students' critical thinking through reading literature (Rosenblatt, 1995, pp. 63, 74; Langer, 2011, p. 22). They further assert that the teacher plays a vital role in this process. Hence, since the reading of literary texts and critical thinking appear to be inextricably linked, one of the questions included in the questionnaire needed to focus on the participants' views of the importance of the development of the students' critical thinking in relation to working on literary texts.

Questions connected to literary skills and literary knowledge, as well as authors and literary periods, were in part derived from stipulations in the English syllabus. However, the question referring to the development of literary skills was also inspired by the narratological aspects of literary studies outlined by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000, pp. 82-90). These sets of questions were partly deemed important because they are related to the most explicit guidelines in the syllabus as regards how literary texts should be approached (i.e., stipulations about a focus, for example, on "form" and "themes").

Development of the students' knowledge of culture was also included as a question under desired effects. The rationale behind this decision was the prevalent focus on cultural concerns both in the English syllabus and in the curriculum (GY11) as a whole. Myklevold's (2018) emphasis on the natural connection between literary texts and cultural learning also had an impact on the inclusion of this desired effect in the questionnaire.[46]

The design of the survey questions themselves varied due to the differences in the information that was being requested. Some questions were of the type where a "yes" or "no" answer was deemed the most suitable (e.g., "Have the English teachers at your school compiled a local list of acceptable and/or suitable novels to choose from for each of the three levels?"). Others were constructed as multiple-choice questions where the

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[46]The background in chapter 2 and the questionnaire contents were compiled and developed simultaneously.

participants could check several options (such as "Where or in what form are the students commonly exposed to literature in your EFL classroom?"). The section on biographical information consisted of lists of items where the participants were asked to check one option only (such as age group and teaching experience). However, the majority of the questions concerning method, focus, and desired effects were posed according to a pattern of "how common…" or "how important…" a phenomenon, activity or goal was considered to be. The possible answers ranged from 1 ("not very common" or "not very important") to 6 ("very common" or "very important") on a Likert scale. Stukát (2011) maintains that by choosing, for example, yes/no type questions or questions that should be answered along a Likert scale with an even number of possibilities (e.g., four or six options) the researcher can force the respondents to give a positive or a negative answer. On the other hand, if a so-called middle option is included (such as a Likert scale with five or seven options) the respondents are likely to opt for the middle alternative, and it becomes more difficult to unveil the stances or attitudes of the participants concerning a particular issue (pp. 50-51). As a result, the middle option was omitted in the majority of cases in order to force the respondents to take a stand and answer positively or negatively.

In addition to the "closed-ended questions" described above (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 76), the survey questionnaire also contained a number of open-ended questions, which were designed to allow the respondents to elucidate on their answers or to provide an opportunity to cover areas that were not addressed in the response options available (Bell & Waters, 2014, p. 22). An example of this is the follow-up question within question number 13: "[p]lease list any other activities that are common in connection with novel-reading at the three levels in your EFL classrooms".

Furthermore, in designing a questionnaire, it is crucial to avoid survey questions that might be construed as ambiguous or deemed too time-consuming for the participants to answer, thereby possibly losing valuable answers. For this reason, a pilot run was conducted where two volunteers answered the preliminary survey questions. Based on comments from these test respondents, some questions were rephrased slightly. However, there did not appear to be an issue with the time factor, since the test respondents reported that it had taken less than 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. This did not exceed the maximum time recommended by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) who have concluded that the length of time that it takes a participant to complete a questionnaire should preferably not exceed 30 minutes (p. 78). Another sentence was subsequently added to the questionnaire, stating that it would take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey, allowing for a buffer of at least five minutes.

3.2.2 Procedure and Participants

The goal was to send the questionnaire to all of the active upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden. In the academic year of 2018/2019 there were 3763 individuals employed as upper secondary school teachers of English in Sweden, and 87.6% of them had teaching

credentials (Skolverket, 2019a). 2716 of these teachers were women (72%) and 1047 were men (28%). In order to attempt to reach all these individuals, an email with a link to the questionnaire was sent out to all 1754 upper secondary school "units" all over Sweden, based on information retrieved from the school unit register (Skolverket, 2019b). This figure includes 1354 upper secondary schools for adolescents, where the students are between the ages of 15 and 20 when they enroll in the first year, and 400 upper secondary school providers for adults, where the students are over the age of 20 upon enrolling (Skolverket, 2020b). A school unit is usually a section of an upper secondary school or adult education provider comprised of a number of programs or specializations, such as, for example, the Social Science Program or the Industrial Program; a larger upper secondary school may encompass several units. A unit may also refer to a smaller school.

In the questionnaire, it was made clear that participation was voluntary, that the participants could refuse to answer some or all of the questions, and that the information and answers supplied in the questionnaire would be confidential. The initial email request was sent out in early September of 2019, a reminder two weeks later, and a final reminder at the beginning of October. The questionnaire remained open until mid-October of 2019. In total, 404 individuals filled out the questionnaire, which is equivalent to 10.74% of the total number of English teachers at the upper secondary school level in Sweden, based on the reported 3763 EFL teachers in 2018/2019.

The participants were asked to supply biographical data (i.e., gender, age, and years of teaching experience), as well as information on whether they teach or have taught literature in the subject of Swedish, and which levels of English they have taught. This information was considered important as it would be of use in drawing parallels and correlating distinct variables to specific research questions.

The categories related to gender were based on specifications by Medeiros et al. (2020), who point to the importance of including "non-binary gender categories" so as to include "the increasing number of individuals who identify as neither rigidly male nor rigidly female" (p. 128). These considerations resulted in the creation of five categories, as shown in table 4.

Table 4

Participants and gender

Gender:	No. of Participants:	Percentage of Total:
Male	90	22.3%
Female	294	72.8%
Non-binary	5	1.2%
Prefer not to say	10	2.5%
Prefer to self-describe	3	0.7%
No response	2	0.5%
TOTAL	404	100%

The gender distribution among the respondents is similar to that of the upper secondary EFL teacher population as a whole, with 22.3% male participants (28% nationwide) and 72.8% female participants (72% nationwide). The statistical information available for upper secondary EFL teachers nationwide does not include categories for individuals who identify as non-binary (1.2% of the survey participants), who prefer to self-describe (0.7% of the survey participants), or who prefer not to divulge this information (2.5% of the survey participants).

The participants were subsequently asked to select one out of five age categories. The span of the age groups covered 10 years in each case, apart from the last age group, which begins at 61 years of age. The decision to make these particular divisions was based on the idea that it would be easy for the participants to locate their own age groups. The results are available in table 5.

Table 5

Age of the participants

Age:	No. of Participants:	Percentage of Total:
20-30	46	11%
31-40	124	31%
41-50	120	30%
51-60	85	21%
61+	24	6%
No response	5	1%
TOTAL	404	100%

The reported age of the participants indicates that there is a considerable spread in the data set. This is positive since age may have an effect on the answers and it is crucial to have sufficient representation in order to make comparisons. However, on further consideration, age is deemed less important than teaching experience as concerns the present study, since the latter may be more clearly connected to the effects, for example, of syllabus changes and the influence of colleagues.

Four categories were created for the number of years of teaching experience that the participants had. The distribution is presented in table 6.

Table 6

Number of years of teaching experience of the participants

Teaching Experience:	No. of Participants:	Percentage of Total:
3 years or less	47	12%
4-9 years	105	26%
10-15 years	99	24%
More than 15 years	149	37%
No response	4	1%
TOTAL	404	100%

The first category under teaching experience, three years or less, was created on the premise that it takes a few years to become accustomed to a new profession. A new teacher may rely on colleagues, for example, to a greater extent during a period of adjustment. This category was consequently designed to represent the inexperienced teacher. The other three categories were added to differentiate between groups as regards syllabus changes. As would be expected due to the spread of participants across the five age groups, the participants are also somewhat evenly distributed across the four categories of teaching experience. The group of inexperienced teachers is the smallest (12%), which appears to correspond to the age group 20-30 (11%). The largest group is the one containing participants with more than 15 years of teaching experience (37%). A feasible explanation is that these participants could have anywhere between 15 and 45 years of teaching experience.

Two categories were also created which divided the participants into the groups: TS (TS = Teaching literature within the subject of Swedish) and NTS (NTS = Not teaching literature within the subject of Swedish). This was to enable comparisons as regards attitudes and choices made in connection to literary skills and literary knowledge, as well as pre-service training. The distribution between these two sub-groups is reported in table 7 below.

Table 7

The distribution of TS and NTS teachers

Distribution of TS and NTS	No. of Participants:	Percentage of Total:
TS	202	50%
NTS	195	48%
No response	7	2%
TOTAL	404	100%

The two categories are represented by an evenly distributed number of participants, with 50% TS and 48% NTS. These categories also formed the basis for the creation of the 16 interview groups in focus during phase II of the study (i.e., 8 teachers with TS backgrounds and 8 teachers with NTS backgrounds).

To ensure that all three of the levels of English had adequate representation, the participants were also asked to report on the levels at which they had taught English.

Table 8

Participants' teaching experience in EN5, EN6, and/or EN7[47]

Levels of English Taught:	No. of Participants:	Percentage of Total:
EN5	392	97%
EN6	379	94%
EN7	282	70%
No response	4	1%

While most of the participants answered that they had experience of teaching English 5 (97%) and English 6 (94%), there were fewer representatives for English 7 (70%). Nevertheless, the percentage for the latter translates to 282 participants, which is a substantial number of representatives.

3.2.3 Ethical Considerations

In constructing and designing the survey questionnaire, ethical protocol was adhered to, as per the general stipulations of the Swedish Research Council's *Good Research Practice* (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017) as well as the guidelines of researchers within the field of education (Bell & Waters, 2014; Stukát, 2011).[48] For instance, it was clearly stated at the beginning of the questionnaire that participation was voluntary and that respondents could refuse to complete the questionnaire or elect not to answer any of the questions for any reason. The participants were also informed that their responses would be kept confidential. The collected data is stored permanently in a secure database at the University of Gothenburg, with no connections to the internet. It is also stored in accordance with the rules and regulations of the University of Gothenburg and is accessible to the present researcher only. The integrity of the participants is protected, and the data have been anonymized as per GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) rules stipulated in the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation (EU) 2016/679. This means that email addresses and other personal information have been deleted and that no personal data remain online or elsewhere.

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[47] Out of 404 participants
[48] The Swedish Research Council = Vetenskapsrådet

3.2.4 Limitations

Every study has its limitations. This is also the case as regards the present study. Among other things, it appears that some participants did not answer all of the questions due to time constraints. For instance, one participant mentioned that it would have been too time-consuming to answer all of the questions while another stated that the time calculated for responding to the survey questions had been underestimated and they had therefore elected not to respond. This indicates that asking only two test respondents to fill out a questionnaire is insufficient for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of time needed to complete a survey. In retrospect, it would have been pertinent to have asked at least three to four individuals, something that Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) also recommend (p. 78). Nevertheless, since the two participants did not specify how much time it actually took to complete the survey or what they considered to be too much time, it is still a challenge to ascertain whether the completion would take more than the maximum of 30 minutes suggested by Dörnyei and Csizér. In retrospect, the estimated time of 20 minutes included in the instructions for the questionnaire was not sufficient. The buffer of 5 minutes should thus have been extended to a buffer in the region of 15-20 minutes and the estimated total time should have been set to approximately 40 minutes.

Another limitation is that it was a mistake not to have added an option for additional answers in the case of "Who chooses the novel"? Such an option may have elicited answers concerning the involvement, for example, of librarians and other staff members at the schools in question. However, the three options that the participants could choose from (the teacher, the students, a team of teachers) still provide an indication of the trends connected to the process of selecting literary texts, and the question has thus been deemed viable.

Furthermore, the survey question relating to where or in what form the participants' students come into contact with literary texts has one problematic option, "in the course book". While the other alternatives clearly define different text types, such as "novels" and "poetry", the option "in the course book" does not. When selecting the option "poetry" it is also possible that the poems in question have been found in the coursebook. However, the answers involving this option will still be included in the presentation of results since they do provide an indication of the extent to which the participants opt for the course book rather than, for example, complete novels.

Additionally, the absence of options such as "drama" and "songs" under the survey question on text types may also be viewed as a limitation. While such options were possible during phase II the study, this does not rectify this issue. However, the survey participants had an additional opportunity of adding such options under the heading "If you have any additional comments please type them here".

There are also some survey questions that will not be included in the results, such as those relating to the participants' responses to whether and how their colleagues use and interpret the curriculum, as well as their colleagues' use of possible local guidelines. Upon

review, it was decided that such answers may be viewed as skewed or unreliable and that they might provide an unfair picture. Additionally, a question on whether the survey participants' students generally work with literary texts mainly individually, mainly interactively, or both individually and interactively, was also omitted. While the participants clearly let their students work both interactively and individually with literary texts, it is impossible to discern to what extent each working procedure is used. This question should have been expressed in a different way to yield more explicit answers. It was therefore deemed appropriate to omit this question altogether. Stukát (2011) explains that a researcher may omit questions or results as long as such decisions are accounted for and not based on bias or attempts to omit findings that the researcher does not wish to disclose (p. 147).

Moreover, only survey participants who expressed a willingness to take part in the follow-up interviews were asked to supply their contact details. This in turn means that it is not possible to ascertain how many schools or indeed which schools are represented in the results since the respondents who declined to be contacted did not provide their contact details, the only means of identifying the schools. Hence, it is possible that some parts of the country are not represented in the data while others are overrepresented. However, the negative effects of not asking all of the participants to supply their contact details had to be weighed against the risk of having a lower number of participants overall, something that may have occurred if more detailed information had been asked for. Furthermore, there is also the general concern of ensuring that the participants remain anonymous. Some potential participants may not feel comfortable with the idea of divulging this type of information about themselves or their schools (Stukát, 2011, p. 73). The decision was thus made to ask only those who had agreed to participate in phase II of the study to provide their contact details.

Another drawback of the present study is that those teachers who agreed to participate in the survey are likely to be more interested in the subject of literary texts than those who elected not to participate. Additionally, those survey participants who are the most interested in the questions or in working with literary texts are likely to be the ones who ultimately agreed to follow-up interviews (Stukát, 2011, pp. 72-73). This issue is unavoidable when surveys are targeted at a whole population of individuals, such as upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden, and where it is volunteers who end up participating in the survey. It should therefore be kept in mind that the results may be skewed and hence may not represent the cohort as a whole (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 160). This is important to bear in mind when analyzing the material or drawing conclusions based on the results, and particularly when attempts at generalizations are to be made.

3.2.5 Analytical Testing Tool - SPSS

Due to the scope and magnitude of the data, the statistical tool SPSS was used in the analysis of the survey responses. SPSS Statistics is a software package used for interactive or batched, statistical analysis. However, before any tests could be performed, the data had to be coded (categories, titles, Likert scales, etc.) or re-coded (into different variables or combined variables) for comprehensibility, entered into an Excel document, exported into SPSS, and double-checked. Once this process was complete, the next step involved the calculation of descriptive statistics. The three main types of descriptive statistics are frequencies, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability. Frequency statistics count the number of times that each variable occurs, such as how many of the participants have more than 15 years of teaching experience. Measures of central tendency provide one number that represents the entire set of scores, such as the *mean*. Measures of variability indicate the degree to which scores differ around the average. Furthermore, some independent *t-tests* (used to compare the mean scores of two groups of people or conditions) and *one-way Anova tests* (used for two or more independent groups) were also completed to test for significant differences and correlations between variables.

3.3 Qualitative Method: Interviews (Phase II)

Phase I of the study was constructed to address the research questions on a more general level, that is, by charting general trends connected to curricular interpretation, text selection, perceived functions of literary texts, and related methods. Phase II of the study was designed to explore the choices, approaches, goals, attitudes, and factors that may influence the decisions of a sample of the survey participants as regards literary texts. The same research questions were in focus, but this research method was likely to yield greater depth in the answers and would clarify specific points related to the aims of the study.

3.3.1. Participants

The quantitative phase of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the responses based on teaching experience and whether the participants teach Swedish and English or only English (or English and another subject). There were also slight differences between the responses based on gender. These criteria consequently formed the basis of the subsequent categorization of groups for the follow-up interviews. To have as wide a range as possible of participants from the quantitative study, a list was constructed containing all of the survey participants who had indicated in the questionnaire that they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview (146 out of 404 participants). These individuals were subsequently placed into different groups based on

three criteria: teaching experience, subjects of instruction, and gender. Criterion 1, teaching experience, has four parameters (3 years or less, 4-9 years, 10-15 years, or more than 15 years). This means that if a teacher has 9.5 years of experience, they could potentially select either the category "4-9 years" or the category "10-15 years". Criterion 2, subject of instruction, has two parameters: teaching Swedish and English or teaching English only (or English and another subject). Criterion 3, gender, also has two: male or female.[49] The result is 16 categories. Each of the 16 categories was also given a unique code, such as 1SM (three years of teaching experience or less, teaching Swedish and English, male); these are depicted in table 9.

Table 9

The 16 interview categories with corresponding unique codes

Codes:	Teaching experience:	Subject combination:	Gender:
1SM:	3 years or less	Swedish and English	Male
1SF:	3 years or less	Swedish and English	Female
1EM:	3 years or less	English	Male
1EF:	3 years or less	English	Female
2SM:	4-9 years	Swedish and English	Male
2SF:	4-9 years	Swedish and English	Female
2EM:	4-9 years	English	Male
2EF:	4-9 years	English	Female
3SM:	10-15 years	Swedish and English	Male
3SF:	10-15 years	Swedish and English	Female
3EM:	10-15 years	English	Male
3EF:	10-15 years	English	Female
4SM:	More than 15 years	Swedish and English	Male
4SF:	More than 15 years	Swedish and English	Female
4EM:	More than 15 years	English	Male
4EF:	More than 15 years	English	Female

The number of individuals in each of the resulting groups ranged from 4 to 26. Once this categorization had been completed, one participant from each of the categories was randomly selected. Simple random sampling was deemed suitable for the sake of validity, and because it is described as a reliable and unbiased means of selection, resulting in a fair representation of the population (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 81; Stukát, 2011, pp. 66-67). An

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[49] The definitions "non-binary", "prefer to self-describe", and "prefer not to say" cannot form the basis of separate categories since these groups are too small and as a consequence statistical differences cannot be ascertained.

online selection generator was used to perform the random selection.[50] Seventeen of the potential interview subjects who were approached either declined to participate or did not respond to the email inquiry. In these cases, new random selections were performed. In the end, positive responses from respondents representing each of the 16 categories were successfully obtained.

3.3.2 Ethical Considerations

The email that the participants received included brief information about the study, but it also focused on ethical considerations stipulated in the ethical rules and guidelines of the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). One of the Swedish Research Council's ethical principles involves informing potential participants about the research being conducted, the participants' role in the research, and the terms and conditions of the research. As a result, the email described these matters, making it clear that participation was voluntary, that the interview would be conducted via Zoom, and that it would also be recorded. The participants were also told that they could turn off their cameras if they so wished. In addition, there was information about the approximate length of the interview (1 hour), and that the respondents could opt for Swedish or English. Allowing the participants to choose whether they preferred to be interviewed in Swedish or in English was deemed vital in order to ensure that everyone felt that they could express themselves freely. In the questionnaire, there was only written English (reception) to be dealt with, whereas in the interview the participants needed articulate their own responses (production) and might consider their native language to be more conducive to conveying the nuances of their opinions.

Another ethical principle focuses on informed consent. While it was expressed in the letter that the interviews would be recorded, it was also deemed prudent to ask the participants for verbal consent. The question of consent was posed at the very beginning of the recordings and repeated for each participant. Both the question and the positive answers were consequently recorded. The participants were also informed that they could terminate the interview at any time.

A third principle concerns confidentiality, both pertaining to the anonymization of the participants and in terms of how the data is stored. In the email, it was therefore communicated that all the data would be handled by the researcher of the present study only and that unauthorized individuals would not have access to the material. It was also stipulated that the data would be handled in accordance with GDPR (EU) 2016/679 (anonymization of the data prior to storing it).[51] The interviews were originally recorded with both picture and sound. However, after the transcription process had been completed, the videos were deleted and only the voice recordings remained. These are stored

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[50]Macorr Research Solutions Online (n.d.).
[51] Chapter 2, article 5.

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permanently in a database without internet connections at the University of Gothenburg, accessible only to the researcher of the present study and with GDPR in mind.

A fourth principle deals with the future use of the material and stipulates that information gathered from private individuals may only be used for research purposes. The data collected from both phases I and II of the study will be used for research purposes only and will not be released for commercial use, non-scientific use, or any other purposes. However, the data may be used for follow-up research articles, but in that event the ethical requirements outlined by the Swedish Research Council will again be strictly adhered to.

3.3.3 The Interview Guide

During phase II of the study, in line with the overarching aim and sub-aims, the role of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education was explored, including differences in approaches as well as determining factors concerning choice of methods, focus, and goals. Based on the research questions, as well as on the findings of phase I of the study, six main topical areas began to crystalize. They were initially phrased as questions: How do the interview participants view the English syllabus and the associated *free space* when it comes to the use of literary texts? What are the participants' attitudes and views on their pre-service training as regards the literature component of their teaching programs ? What decisions are made as regards the selection of materials? How do the participants work with literary texts in the EFL classroom, more specifically? Are authors and literary periods taught, and if so, how? Do the participants connect literary texts to the learning objective of the development of cultural knowledge and cultural awareness, and if so, how? It was decided that the interview questions would be of this open-ended character, in order to provide the respondents with the opportunity to speak freely about the topics at hand (Stukát, 2011, pp. 43-44).

A draft of an interview guide based on these six main topics was created, consisting of six main categories and 26 questions (two to eight per main category). The number of questions seemed rather excessive, but it turned out to be a challenge to decide how best to decrease this number. As a consequence, it was deemed appropriate to test the questions in their current state. A volunteer was thus located, and a pilot interview was conducted. This pilot interview was recorded in order to facilitate the revision of the interview questions. The subsequent examination of the pilot interview showed that some questions could be removed and added to a checklist (see appendix 3) to be addressed if the interview participants happened not to touch upon an important issue, such as whether their students are taught to use literary devices or whether free or controlled questions are in focus during group discussions. However, the most substantial change consisted of removing all six of the questions related to methods and replacing them with one main question related to the process of working with literary texts. The removal of certain redundant questions was also believed to contribute to keeping the length of the interview to under 60 minutes, which was viewed as advantageous in that it was more likely to

encourage people to participate. The final list of topics and examples of questions are presented in table 10.

Table 10

Main categories and sample questions of the interviews (phase II)

Main Categories:	Example Questions
The syllabus of English	What are your views on the guidelines and requirements in the syllabi as regards literary texts?
Selection of materials	What text formats do you focus on in relation to teaching literary texts (e.g., course books, short stories, novels or poetry)?
Functions and methods	Could you talk me through the process of working with a literary text, from beginning to end?
Authors and literary periods	Do you focus on authors and literary periods in your EFL classroom? How? Why?
Pre-service training	Do you feel that your pre-service training has prepared you for the task of teaching literary texts? Why or why not?
Culture and cultural awareness	How do you approach cultural issues and social features in the subject of English?

The changes made to the initial draft resulted in the six main categories, 12 questions, and a checklist containing 10 items (e.g., *Do you focus on literary devices, and if so, how?*). This version of the interview questions was subsequently tested again with another volunteer from the same upper secondary school. The result was a clear improvement on the initial attempt. There appeared to be no issues with the questions (no clarifications were needed) and the pilot volunteer answered the questions in under 50 minutes. Hence, the decision was made to turn this final draft of interview questions into the official interview guide (see appendix 2).

3.3.4 Procedure

The interviews were conducted during the autumn of 2021, with an additional interview in January 2022 due to a mistake in the categorization. This mistake had occurred when a female participant was placed in category 2SM (male teacher of Swedish and English with 4-9 years of teaching experience) instead of in category 2SF (female teacher of Swedish and English with 4-9 years of teaching experience), which resulted in a missing representative for category 2SM. Hence, a new random selection was carried out and a replacement was located.

At the beginning of the interviews, the question regarding language choice was reiterated, and four out of the sixteen teachers elected to be interviewed in Swedish. The interviews varied in length due to the open-ended nature of the questions. The shortest

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interview took 29 minutes and the longest one lasted for 81 minutes (see table 11). The average length of the interviews was approximately 45 minutes. There were technical issues with the recording in one case, and that concerned the interview with the respondent from category 1SM. Due to these issues, only those parts of the interview that are intelligible and that thus clearly convey the respondent's views and attitudes have been used, so as to ensure that they are not construed out of context. The question about pre-service training was not recorded at all in the case of 1SM, and there are consequently only 15 answers to that particular question. Parts of the question pertaining to the description of a process of working with literary texts are also missing, but sufficient information could still be saved without distorting the respondent's answer. An extra interview could not be conducted with a replacement from category 1SM as the remaining members of this category had either declined or had not responded to the invitation to participate in an interview.

Table 11

The length of the interviews per participant in minutes

Participants:	Length of the Interviews
1SM	47 minutes
1SF	31 minutes
1EM	36 minutes
1EF	54 minutes
2SM	45 minutes
2SF	50 minutes
2EM	31 minutes
2EF	32 minutes
3SM	45 minutes
3SF	36 minutes
3EM	81 minutes
3EF	34 minutes
4SM	62 minutes
4SF	57 minutes
4EM	29 minutes
4EF	54 minutes

Upon completion of the interview period, the process of transcribing the data was initiated. There were instances where a word or phrase could not be clearly discerned, and in those cases the word "inaudible" has been used in the transcript and in the dissertation. When the respondents have used fillers, such as "you know" or "sort of thing", these words or phrases have been kept intact in the transcript and in the quotations used in the dissertation. However, half-words (e.g., "know… knowledge") repetitions (e.g., "when… when…"), and pauses have been included in the actual transcription documents but have been omitted in the dissertation for smoother reading. Whenever the respondents have used colloquial language, such as the Swedish word "e" instead of "är" (am/is/are), the official written word has been used both in the transcription and in the dissertation. In those cases where the respondents chose to be interviewed in Swedish, great care has been taken to avoid misinterpretation, mistranslation, or quoting out of context, and the original Swedish statements have also been included in footnotes. The phrase "my translation" has also been added at the end of all of the translated quotes to show that the researcher has translated the phrases in question.

3.3.5 Data Analysis

After the transcription procedure was completed, the qualitative data needed to be reviewed and analyzed. It was concluded that a thematic analysis would be useful in sorting the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe some of the benefits of thematic analysis as "theoretical freedom" which affords flexibility that has the potential "to provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (p.78). This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, and the model has been revised to include the following steps:

1. Familiarizing oneself with the data (transcriptions, reading, re-reading, initial ideas)
2. Generating codes for the data in order to describe the content
3. Constructing themes (searching for patterns in the codes)
4. Reviewing themes (e.g., organizing and checking for conceptual overlap)
5. Defining and naming themes (to signal the core and scope of each theme)
6. Producing the report (e.g., reporting on themes in relation to research questions)

(Braun et al., 2019, pp. 852-857)

Based on Braun et al.'s recommendations for thematic analysis, the transcripts were re-read several times while simultaneously listening to the recorded interviews to scan for errors and misconceptions. This is also in line with good research practice as per the stipulations of the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, p. 10). After this process was completed, the analysis of the data began, which ultimately resulted in the definition of seven major themes. The process of arriving at the seven themes consisted of coding the data, categorizing the data, and finally naming the themes. According to Saldaña (2013), "to codify is to arrange something in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or

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classification, to classify" (p. 9). Such a process was thus initiated in regard to the qualitative data of the present study by first attempting to read through the transcripts for content without preconceived ideas, trawling for broader patterns. Saldaña explains that there are several important steps involved in arriving at the final themes. The first step concerns locating and coding the broader patterns, referred to by Saldaña as the "essence-capturing" of the data (p. 8). The patterns found should in the following steps be clustered into categories and ultimately expressed as themes (p.8), which is an inductive form of coding. Upon review of the transcripts, these essence-capturing elements were color-coded in the present data and subsequently re-examined for connections to the research questions (deductive coding) to ensure that no vital elements were missed, resulting in some second and third cycle recoding (cf. Saldaña, 2013, p. 10). In total, ten different broader patterns were identified, coded and re-coded to capture the most salient features in the data with the research questions in mind. In some cases, sub-codes relating to, for example, negative and positive views on particular elements were added. Examples of the ten essence-capturing elements that were revealed include *collaborative and individual work*, *the mention of the syllabus*, *references to literary periods*, and *descriptions of working with films*. The coded data were then clustered into discernible categories. The resulting categories (e.g., the English syllabus, tasks and assignments, and pre-service training) amount to seven areas in total, with the same number of subsequent themes. The categories can be said to represent the main topics in the qualitative data while the themes are an abstract conceptualization of the categories, representing a way to "transcend the 'reality' of [the] data" (p. 12). For example, the category of *tasks and assignments* (a description of the data) was expressed as the theme *tasks and assignments that reveal methods* (a more subtle and tacit process) once the clustered data under this category were analyzed for theme. The seven resulting themes, based on the seven categories of the data are as follows:

1. The significance of the free space in the English syllabus
2. Similarities and differences in concerns and rationales behind text selection
3. Variety in the views of the functions of literary texts in EFL
4. Tasks and assignments that reveal methods
5. The essence of the types of focal questions used in relation to literary texts
6. Similarities and differences in views as regards student-centered and teacher-centered teaching and learning
7. Differing views on pre-service training and literature education

Examples of the categorizations of the participants' statements into the seven themes can be found in table 12.

Table 12

Sample statements by the participants and subsequent themes

Statements by participant:	Themes:
I think it's quite good that they leave it up to us teachers to actually choose what to work with because it depends a lot on the groups.	The significance of the free space in the English syllabus
I always choose to work with short stories or extracts from books, extracts from plays, poetries, music.	Similarities and differences in concerns and rationales behind text selection
I always try to blend the fiction I choose into current social problems.	Variety in the views of the functions of literary texts in EFL
I will introduce the book, I will introduce the writer, possibly even genre, depending. And, mostly, I would say, almost always, I talk about reading and reading strategies as well.	Tasks and assignments that reveal methods
What does the white tree on the train station symbolize? Why are there not many adults in this book?	The essence of the types of focal questions used in relation to literary texts
I want them to discuss with each other, I want them to interact with each other.	Similarities and differences in views as regards student-centered and teacher-centered teaching and learning
I don't think, I mean specific literature or reading comprehension like that, was more than a single assignment at teachers' college.	Differing views on pre-service training and literary texts

In table 12, the classification of the qualitative data into themes is exemplified by means of seven headings and corresponding interview statements. Some of the statements in the left-hand column could also be placed under another theme; for example, the statement "I want them to discuss with each other, I want them to interact with each other" could also be construed as dealing with *Tasks and assignments that reveal method.* In this case, there is no possibility of misconstruing the participant's meaning, but in other cases great care has been taken to ensure that the statements are not construed out of context.

3.3.6 Limitations

One of the issues of conducting interviews is that the researcher has to become accustomed to posing questions in such a way as to ensure that they are clear and unambiguous. There were some issues with the questions on the syllabus, such as what was meant by "non-explicit" and "lecture". This issue may have been avoided had all of the interviews been conducted in Swedish instead of in English. However, this issue was not expected, since the participants could choose freely whether they wished to be interviewed in Swedish or in English. Nevertheless, it might have been preferable to inform the participants of the content of some of the questions so that they could have made the language choice based

on the level of difficulty of the questions. On the other hand, this had to be weighed against the possibility of the participants preparing themselves and their answers beforehand, which would not have been desirable or appropriate, as it might have biased the outcome of the interviews (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 97). Unprepared answers may also be biased, but having to produce an answer on the spot was preferable in this study.

There is also the issue of ensuring that a participant does not digress too much from the topic at hand. This occurred during the first interview, which resulted in an 82-minute recording. However, as the interviews proceeded, the participants were guided more clearly towards the main issues with the help of the checklists and effective phrases such as "Thank you. Let's move on to the next question." The focus and content of the interviews thus became progressively more clustered around the topical areas of the study the more experienced the researcher became as regards interview techniques.

Another issue connected to researcher (in)experience involved technical problems during the recordings. It was discovered after one of the interviews that there were glitches in the recording that affected the quality of the interview (see sub-section 3.3.4). These issues could have been avoided had the researcher used a back-up recorder. After this incident, back-up recordings were used during the remaining interviews.

In retrospect, there were also interview questions that took up too much time, and these questions would have benefitted from being rephrased. The most obvious example is the topic on culture and literary texts. In an attempt to avoid leading the participants, an initial question was posed which did not relate directly to literary texts: How do you approach cultural issues and social features in the subject of English? Some participants quickly related this question to literary texts, while others spent a great deal of time describing other materials and focus areas. This was perhaps only to be expected, but it might have been better if the question had been more firmly linked to literary texts, followed up by more general questions on culture if time allowed it. On the other hand, none of the participants appeared to be stressed over the time factor and none of them needed to or appeared to want to end the interview before it had reached its conclusion.

Furthermore, one of the seven themes was eventually removed, that of the participants' views of their pre-service training. The reason for this was that it was deemed impossible to conduct fair comparisons of the answers on this topic and to firmly connect them to the content of pre-service training courses since some participants had studied English first and pedagogy afterwards while others had completed a whole English teacher program. Some had also studied abroad. In addition, since the lengths of the 16 participants' teaching experiences vary greatly, any differences found would not be of comparable value. However, the data collected may serve as a pilot study for future research.

Another limitation was the decision to allow the participants to freely choose and to subsequently describe a process connected to working with their students on a literary text. This decision was based on the idea that if the participants were given free rein, they might be coaxed into supplying more details of such a process, from pre-reading exercises to post-reading assignments, and thereby reveal both explicit and implicit beliefs about literary

texts. However, it was not necessary to ask them to choose levels freely as well. This resulted in a heavy focus on English 5 (nine participants), some focus on English 6 (five participants), and limited focus on processes in English 7 (two participants). More examples from all three levels would have been preferable as this would have provided a more comprehensive view, and it would also have provided further opportunities for comparisons between levels. On the other hand, since English 7 is an elective course, it may be considered more important to cover English 5 and English 6. The element of choice also seemed to make the participants more enthusiastic about relating their stories, in general. This is in line with Cohen et al.'s recommendation to minimize invalidity or bias in the results by "building on the motivation of the respondents" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 199).

An additional aspect to consider is the possibility of bias due to the concept of social desirability on the part of the participants, that is, the tendency to provide answers that the respondents themselves deem to be socially acceptable or desirable (Cohen et al., 2011, pp. 421-2). The researcher must thus tread carefully so as to be sure not to ask leading questions and take extra care in analyzing the data and in making inferences (Pajares, 1992, p. 316).

Moreover, with regard to the presentation and analysis of the qualitative data, it should be noted that while a researcher may believe that they are meticulous in their approach to the material, taking precautions to remain unbiased and fair, there is still a risk of misinterpretation. Have the opinions and utterances of the participants been construed correctly, and in their proper context? These questions were asked consistently as the data was being presented and analyzed, to avoid "making inferences and generalizations beyond the capability of the data to support such statements" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 199). The goal was thus to stay true to the material and to the participants' views as per the stipulations of the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). However, it may be deemed a missed opportunity that critical readers were not employed to check for validity of coding and results, something that the inexperienced researcher was unaware of in terms of possibilities.

PHASE I

4 EMPIRICAL DATA: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the quantitative part of the study (phase I) is to chart Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers' use of and approaches to literary texts in the EFL context. The survey questionnaire which was created for this part of the study primarily focuses on three major themes: *what* material do the survey participants describe using (and how is the material chosen), *how* do they approach literary texts in the EFL context, based on their descriptions of methods and types of activities, and finally *why* do upper secondary EFL teachers choose a particular approach and/or activity, or, in other words, for what purpose or desired effect are literary texts used? These *what, how,* and *why* factors may in part be related to curricular influences and interpretation issues, which is why questions related to the participants' approaches to the curriculum, the English syllabus, and possible local guidelines as regards literary texts were included in the survey questionnaire. These themes are connected to the first four research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of upper secondary EFL teachers toward the English syllabus as regards literary texts?
2. What text materials do upper secondary EFL teachers describe using when they work with literary texts, and why?
3. For what purposes do upper secondary EFL teachers use literary texts?
4. What methods do upper secondary EFL teachers describe using when they work with literary texts?

4.2 Selection of Materials (*What*)

The first theme connected to the research questions concerns the selection of literary text materials. There are three main survey questions connected to this aspect in the survey. The first survey question concerns material selection and the type or form of literary texts that the students are presented with, and reads as follows:

> *Where or in what form are the students commonly exposed to literature in your EFL classrooms (EN5, EN6, and EN7)?*

The participants were provided with five options to choose from:

- In the course book
- In the form of novels
- In the form of short stories
- In the form of poems or collections of poetry
- In the form of film adaptations

They were subsequently asked to check all relevant boxes related to the three levels. The findings point to certain trends with regard to the choice of material at the three levels, as depicted in figure 2.

Figure 2

Where or in what form are Upper Secondary EFL students commonly exposed to literature
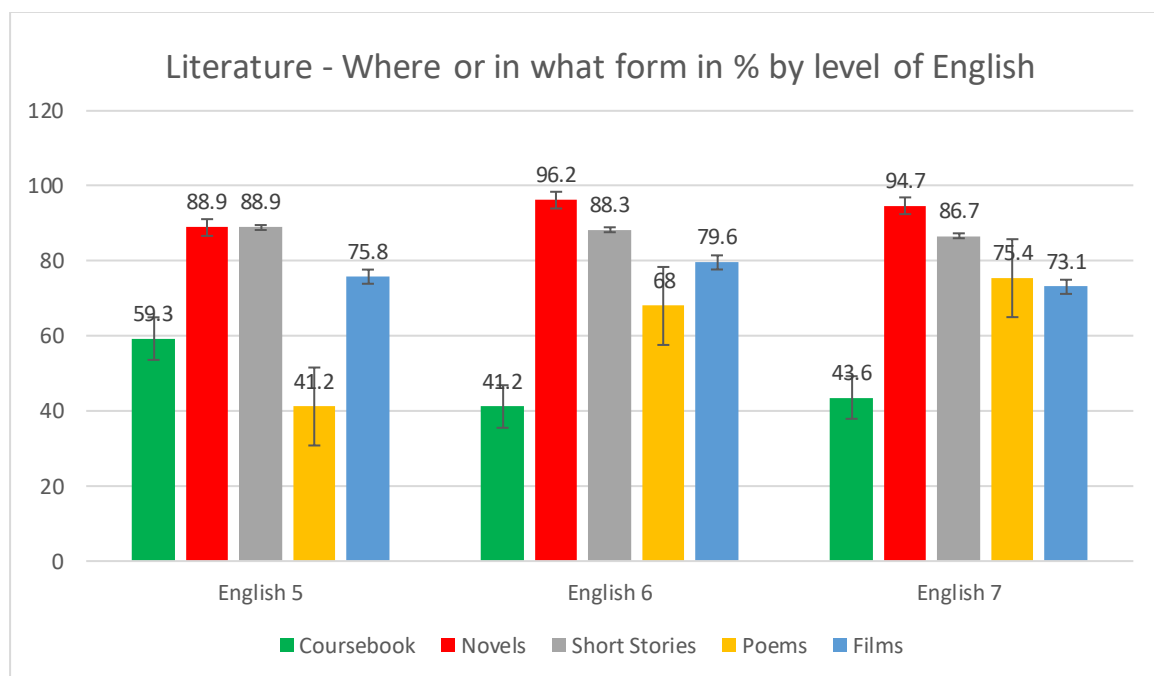
Note. The length of an error bar helps to reveal the uncertainty of a data point: a short error bar shows that values are concentrated, signaling that the plotted average value is more likely, while a long error bar would indicate that the values are more spread out and the mean score is thus less reliable. EN5: n=386; EN6: n=368; EN7: n=264. [52]

In EN5, there appears to be a predilection for using novels (88.9%) and short stories (88.9%), followed by film adaptations (75.8%), then literary texts in general in the course book

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[52]This applies to all of the tables with error bars in this chapter.

(59.3%), and lastly poems (41.2%).[53] In EN6, novels (96.2%) are used slightly more than at the EN5 level, succeeded by short stories (88.3%), film adaptations (79.6%), poems (67.6%), and general literary texts in the course book (56%), in that order. The most striking difference between the levels concerns the use of poems, where only 41.2% of the respondents report a use of poems in EN5, compared to 67.6% in EN6. This is a considerable increase. However, as the error bars indicate, there is a greater spread in the answers regarding poems at all three levels of English, meaning that the participants diverge from each other as to how common it is for them to focus on poems. A similar spread of answers is visible when it comes to the use of course books for approaching literary texts in general at all three levels.

In EN7, novels are still the most prevalent answer (94.7%), followed by short stories (86.7%), then film adaptations (75.4%), poems (73.1%), and finally general literary texts in the course book (44%). The use of poems appears to increase further in the transition between EN6 and EN7, while the other text types remain more or less constant.

Since the reading of novels tends to involve a longer process, often extending over a considerable amount of time, it was deemed important to explore how much focus is afforded to novel reading. The survey question designed to explore this topic is as follows:

How many novels do the students read per level (EN5, EN6, and EN7)?

The participants were asked to check one of the following alternatives:

- No novels
- One novel
- Two novels
- Three novels or more

As figure 3 indicates, the general trend is that the use of novels is prevalent at all levels of English, but that there are some differences in how many novels the students tend to read at each level.

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[53] As explained in the methods chapter, a course book could include poetry, drama, short stories, extracts, song lyrics, and more. For this reason, this choice does not clarify or elucidate to what extent the participants use different text types. However, it does suggest the extent to which these teachers tend to use the course book to approach literary texts in general. The findings show that the course book is not as popular in terms of a literary text focus as some of the other more specific text types are in this regard.

Figure 3

Average number of novels used at each level of English

Number of novels expressed in % per level of English
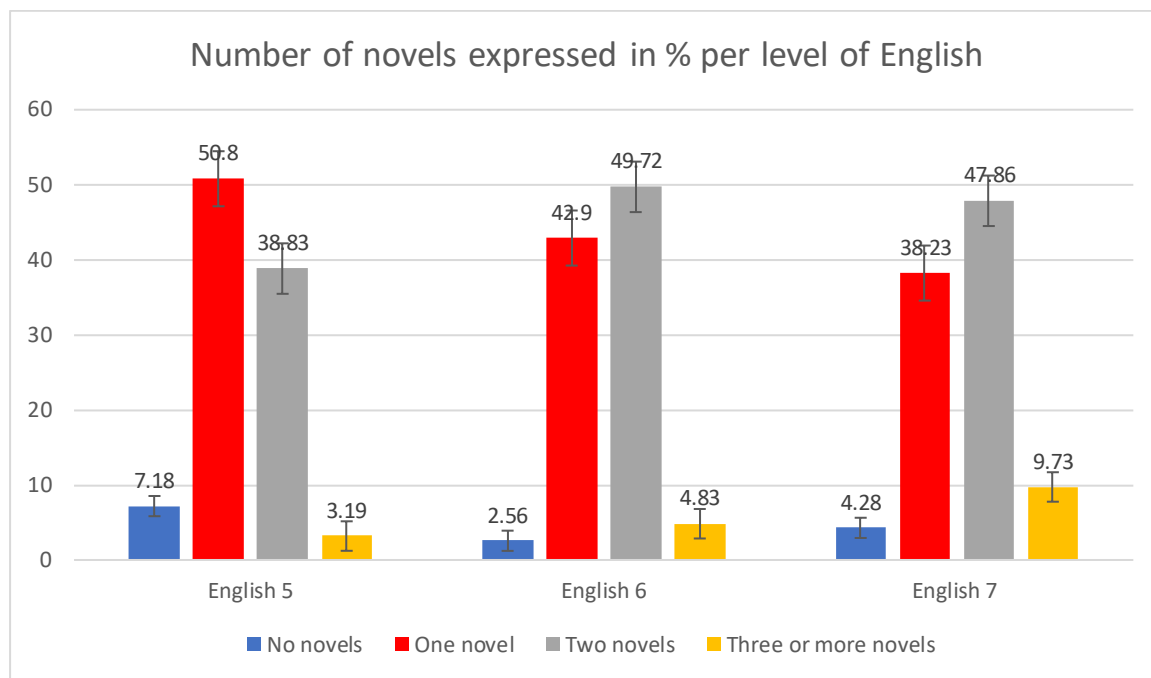
Note. EN5: n=376; EN6: n=352; EN7: n=257.

The most common answer at the EN5 level is one novel (50.8%), while two novels is the most frequently occurring response in connection to EN6 (49.7%) and EN7 (47.9%). The second most prevalent choice in EN5 is two novels (38.8%), while in EN6 (43%) and EN7 (38.1%) it is one novel. Furthermore, a relatively small percentage of the respondents report that their students read three or more novels at each of the three levels (EN5: 3.2%; EN6: 4.8%; and EN7: 9.7%). Hence, there is an increase in the reported number of novels read from EN5, to EN6, and on to EN7. However, a modest yet noteworthy percentage of the participants impart that no novels are included in their focus on literary studies at the three levels (EN5: 7.2%; EN6: 2.6%; and EN7: 4.3%). On the whole, however, it may be concluded that the novel is a commonly occurring text type at all levels of English.

There are some disparities between sub-groups with regard to the number of novels read at each level, and they correlate with the number of years of teaching experience.

Figure 4

Number of novels in % in relation to years of teaching experience per English level[54]
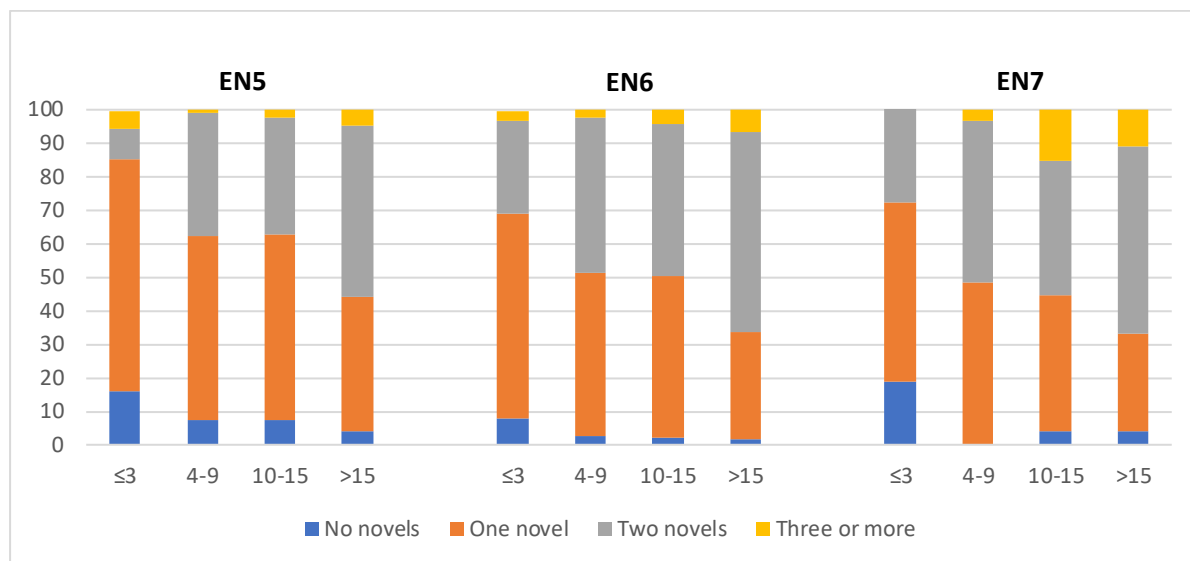
To facilitate the presentation, the participants will be referred to as group 1 (3 years or less), group 2 (4-9 years), group 3 (10-15 years), and group 4 (more than 15 years). Upon reviewing the results pertaining to English 5, it becomes clear that the greatest difference exists between group 4 (most common answer – two novels) and the other three groups (most common answer – one novel), and that the difference between groups 1, 2, and 3 is marginal. This difference between group 4 and the other groups is statistically significant *(p< .05).* The results thus show that participants with more than 15 years of experience tend to include more novels in their teaching than do those with less than 15 years of experience. In EN6, the differences begin to level out, but one novel is still the most common answer in group 1. The most common answer for groups 2 and 3 is also one novel, but two novels is almost as common, and in group 4 two novels is even more common in EN6 than in EN5. In EN7, the trends are similar to EN6. The only notable difference concerning the most common answer is that for groups 2 and 3, one novel is as common as two novels. An additional point of interest is that roughly 15.3% of group 3 report that they focus on three or more novels in EN7, compared to 10.8% of group 4 (in EN5 and EN6, three or more novels is a more common answer in group 4 than in the other groups). The trend is thus that three novels or more is more common in EN7 than in EN5 and EN6, and that the participants in group 3 are more favorably inclined toward three novels or more than group 4 at that level. This means that while the group of participants with the longest teaching experience tend

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[54] EN5: group 1 n=42; group 2 n=95; group 3 n=92; group 4 n=143; 4 missing.
   EN6: group 1 n=36; group 2 n=84; group 3 n=91; group 4 n=137; 4 missing.
   EN7: group 1 n=21; group 2 n=58; group 3 n=72; group 4 n=102; 4 missing.

to use two novels more often than the participants with less teaching experience, there is a break in the trend as concerns three novels at the EN7 level.

In connection to novels, one of the objectives is also to try to surmise who is in charge of the selection of novels at the three levels. The third survey question connected to the selection of material focuses on this topic:

> *Who chooses which novels are to be read (EN5, EN6, and EN7)?*

The participants were presented with three multiple choice answers and were thereafter encouraged to check all of the applicable boxes:[55]

- The students
- The teacher
- A team of teachers

The results presented in figure 5 show that individual teachers are most likely to be responsible for the selection of the novels at each level of English, but there are differences.

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[55] Apart from these three alternatives, it is also possible that novels could be selected by principals or librarians, among others, which will be treated in the course of the qualitative study (chapter 5).

Figure 5

Who chooses the novel? The students, the teacher, or a team of teachers?
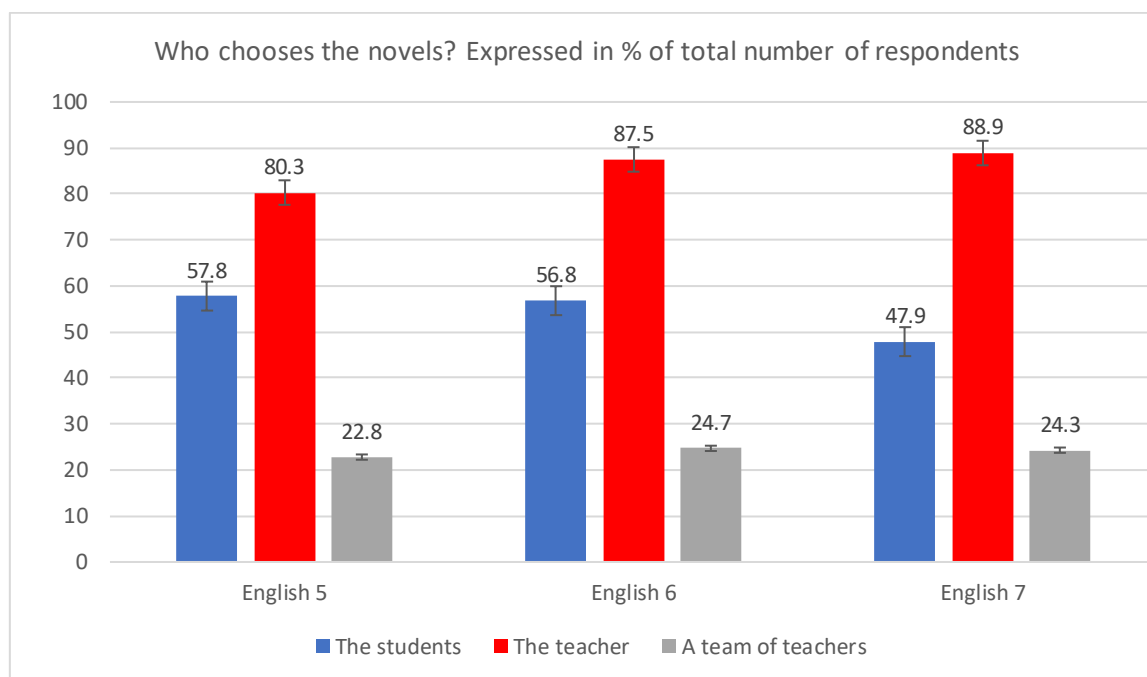
Note: n=377; EN6: n=368; EN7: n=263.

To begin with, the number of valid answers pertaining to the question of *who chooses the novel* in figure 5 is close to the same as the number of responses to the question of how many novels the participants tend to use (see "Note", figure 3) at each of the three levels (EN5: n=376; EN6: n=352; EN7: n=257). This is rather confounding since, as reported in figure 3, between 2.6% and 7.2% of the respondents (depending on the level) also claim that they do not focus on novels at all. However, it is possible that some participants have answered the question based on how the selection of novels is performed at their schools.

The participants report that novels are most commonly chosen by the individual teachers at all three levels, with 80.3% of teachers choosing the novels in English 5, 87.5% of teachers in EN6, and 88.9% in English 7. The percentage of the student input is, however, also rather high, with 57.8% in English 5, 56.8% in English 6, and 47.9% in English 7. This may be construed as teachers and students collaborating in the selection of novels on occasion. Another possibility is that since several novels are reportedly read at each of the levels in some classrooms, one novel may be chosen by the students and another by the teachers. The participants may also be factoring in novels that their students are encouraged to read individually at home. The additional influence of teams of teachers on the choice of novels also affects the overall figures, with around 23%-25% of the input across levels. This result suggests that teacher collaboration around text choice is not the norm. In terms of

differences between levels, there appears to be slightly more individual teacher influence over choices at higher levels, while student influence in this regard decreases, particularly between English 5 and English 7.

Another pertinent point connected to the selection of novels concerns whether teachers tend to collaborate to such a degree that they make lists of suitable or required novels. The survey participants were asked the following question in this regard:

> *Have the English teachers at your school compiled a local list of acceptable and/or suitable novels to choose from for each of the three levels?*

The results show that the 393 valid answers are evenly divided between "Yes" and "No" in terms of whether there are local lists of novels available at the participants' schools or not. 89.3% of the participants who answered in the affirmative also report that they use the local lists of novels. One could argue that just because there are local lists of novels, it does not mean that teachers will find them useful. In a follow-up survey question, the participants were therefore asked to provide an answer as to why they may not use the local list of novels on a regular basis. 54 respondents (28% of those who reported that there were local lists of novels) supplied answers to this question. The respondents could select one or more of four pre-printed suggestions and/or add a comment of their own in free text to allow for other reasons. The suggestions were phrased as follows: *students tend to choose their own novels* (20 answers), *I have my own lists* (22 answers), *I do not like the novels on the local list of novels* (7 answers), *I do not think the novels would work for my students* (16 answers). The 65 answers point to an acknowledgement of the *free space* and the idea of being allowed to make independent choices in one's teaching practices, albeit on an individual basis rather than on a local, collective basis. The free text responses vary greatly in terms of content, but certain trends can be discerned. For example, some comments are connected to the suitability of the novels for specific students and student preferences, such as in the case of one respondent who explains: "It depends on the class I'm teaching, sometimes you need to adapt to their interest and pick a new novel". Concerns related to limited access to novels (funding issues) are also evident, as exemplified by another respondent: "We have a limited number of class sets so sometimes compromises have to be made if another teacher needs the books". There is also the idea that while local lists may be useful, they should not be viewed as required reading. One respondent explains this by saying: "No one has to choose a novel from the list, they are only examples". Another respondent finds that it is "impossible to assess outcome of reading if you don't know the book well", which implies that the novels on the list are not necessarily familiar to them. There are also comments that allude to the idea that novels may not be of use within certain programs: "We don't read novels in my groups. We read shorter texts – often connected to the vocational program they attend" and "I only teach vocational program. We read less novels". This

question and the related answers are analyzed briefly in this chapter but will also be connected to the results of phase II of the study, where the selection of text materials is further examined.

4.3 Functions of Literary Texts (*Why*)

A second theme related to the research questions pertains to the functions associated with literary texts in the Swedish upper secondary EFL context. There are two main survey questions connected to this theme in the questionnaire.

The first question is associated with four possible foci of literary texts, and is phrased in the following manner:

> *How important do you consider the following points to be as regards a focus on literary texts in the EFL classroom?*

The respondents were subsequently presented with four categories based on Bloemert et al.'s study (2016) and Bloemert's model (Bloemert et al., 2019); outlined in chapters 2 and 3, and these include the following:

- A context focus (culture, society, historical and biographical data connected to time periods and the lives of the authors)
- Text focus (close reading, characterization, literary devices, etc.)
- Reader focus (the readers' interpretations and development of critical thinking)
- Language focus (language development: vocabulary/grammar/fluency)

The participants were asked to rate their answers from 1-6 where 1 represents "not important at all" and 6 equals "very important". This procedure was performed for all levels. Since the scale includes six possibilities, a rating of 1-3 can thus be viewed collectively as attitudes deeming a particular focus as not very important, while a rating of 4-6 points to attitudes judging a specific focus as important.

Figure 6

Rating of four foci (context focus, text focus, reader focus and language focus)

Importance of four foci by Level of English
Likert scale 1-6
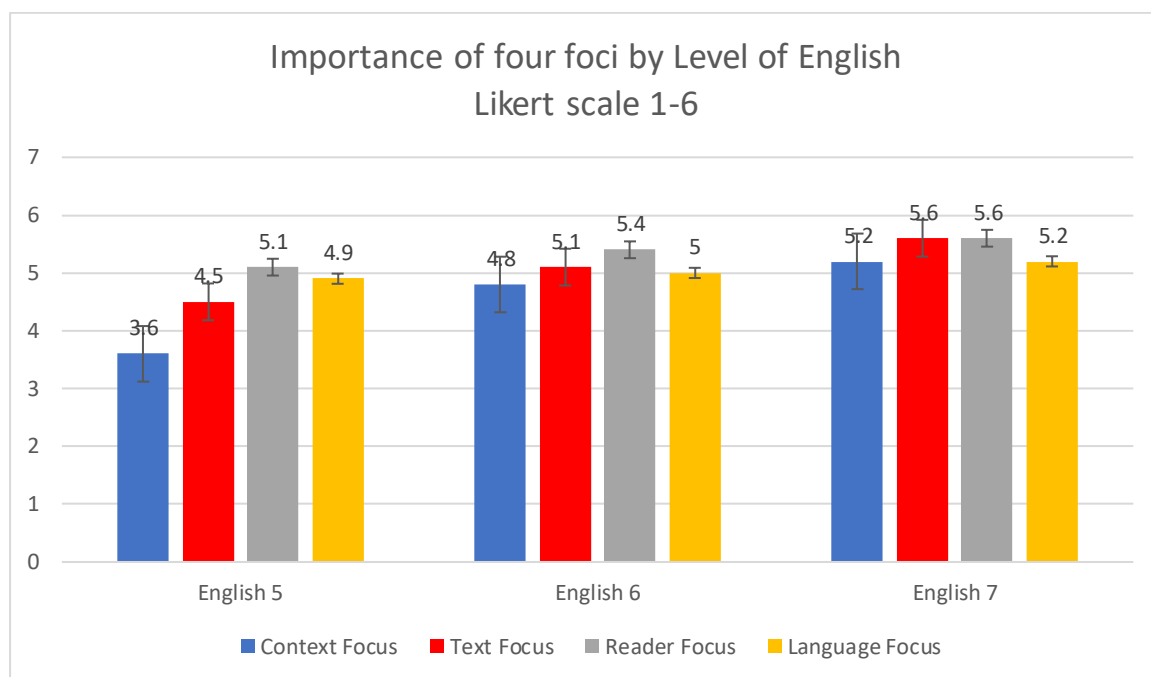
Note. EN5: n=383; EN6: n=366; EN7: n=265.

Upon examining the bar chart, it becomes clear that the participants rate all foci rather high, expect for the context focus at the EN5 level, but that some foci are viewed as slightly more important than others. For example, the results pertaining to EN5 indicate that the reader focus is considered the most important (*M* = 5.08), closely followed by the language focus (*M* = 4.88); thereafter comes the text focus (*M* = 4.47) and lastly the context focus (*M* = 3.60).

The participants' views of the importance of the same four categories in relation to teaching EN6 are somewhat different than those in relation to EN5. In order to facilitate the comparison of results, the mean for EN5 has been included immediately after the mean for EN6. The mean for EN6 indicates that the reader focus is considered the most important (M = 5.38; EN5: *M* = 5.08), succeeded by the text focus (*M* = 5.13; EN5: *M* = 4.47), then the language focus (*M* = 4.96; EN5: *M* = 4.88), and lastly the context focus (*M* = 4.83; EN5: *M* = 3.60). These data point to a difference in preference as regards focus between the two levels. The reader focus still remains the most important of the four categories, but the language focus that appeared in second place as concerns EN5 has been superseded by the text focus in EN6. The language focus is now afforded third place, followed by the context focus. Despite the fourth-place position of the context focus, it is evident that this focus has

gained in terms of perceived importance in the transition between teaching EN5 and EN6 levels.

At the EN7 level, the results suggest that the participants value the text focus (EN7: M = 5.57; EN6: M = 5.13; EN5: M = 4.47) and the reader focus (EN7: M = 5.60; EN6: M = 5.38; EN5: M = 5.08) even more highly than at the EN5 and EN6 levels. These two foci are basically afforded the same status in EN7. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the context focus (EN7: M = 5.20; EN6: M = 4.83; EN5: M = 3.60) and the language focus (EN7: M = 5.15; EN6: M = 4.96; EN5: M = EN 4.88) have also gained in importance. This seems to indicate that while there is a greater focus on the reader and on text approaches in EN7, such as reader perception, critical thinking, aesthetics, literary devices, and analytical skills, there is also more emphasis directed towards different contexts, such as literary periods and cultural and societal concerns. The gradual increase of emphasis on the four foci points to an element of progression from EN5 to EN6 and on to EN7.

In terms of comparisons between sub-groups, it is noteworthy that the results show no significant differences between the participants' views of the importance of the four foci based on teaching experience. However, there are some differences in the ratings based on gender and also related to whether the respondents teach literature within the subject of Swedish in addition to teaching the subject of English.

Figure 7

EN5, EN6, and EN7: Differences in rating of foci by male and female teachers
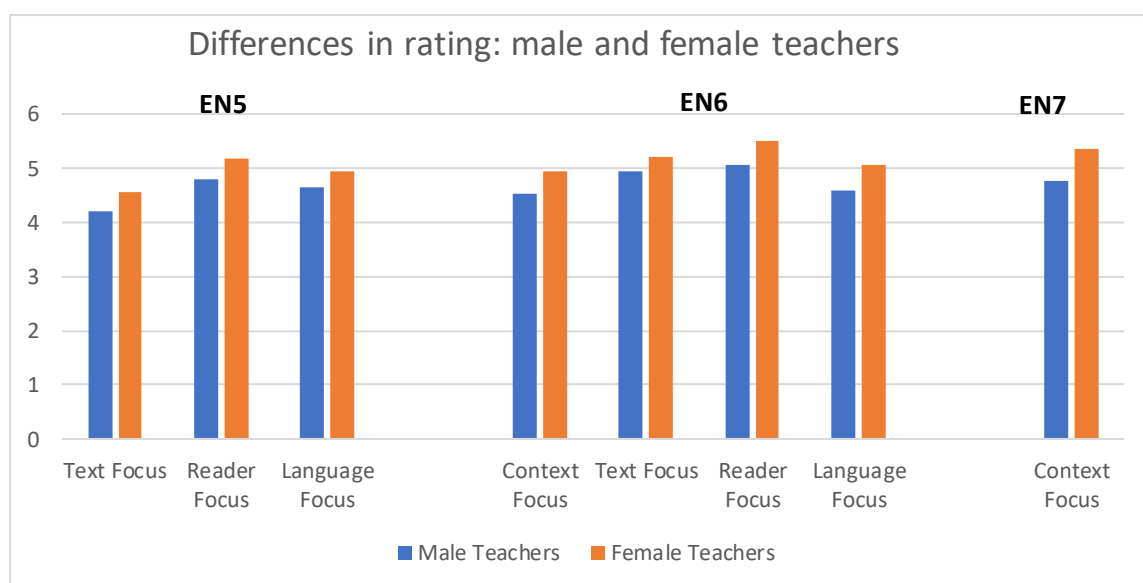
Note. EN5: n=366; EN6: n=348; EN7: n=264.

To begin with, it is worth mentioning that male teachers make up roughly 23% of the participants and female teachers thus represent 77 % in EN5; the same percentages apply in EN6. In EN7, the percentage of male teachers equals 26% and female teachers 74%. There are disparities in the ratings of foci at all three levels of English ($p < .05$). Overall, whenever significant differences have been found, the results show that the female participants tend to rate the foci more highly than the male participants. This applies to all three levels of English.

As concerns EN5, there are statistically significant differences connected to three foci: the text focus ($p = .03$), the reader focus ($p = .003$), and the language focus ($p = .04$). The results show that all three categories are rated more highly by the female participants, as shown in the means related to the text focus, $M = 4.56$ (male teachers: $M = 4.21$), the reader focus, $M = 5.19$ (male teachers: $M = 4.79$), and the language focus, $M = 4.95$ (male teachers: $M = 4.65$). Nevertheless, the means suggest that both gender groups do in fact rate these foci highly, since the mean rating for all three categories in relation to female and male teachers is above a 4. However, the standard deviations related to the male group are greater in all three cases, which indicates that there is a wider spread of opinions amongst the male participants in the survey. Overall, male and female teachers rate the foci in the same order: 1. reader focus, 2. language focus, 3. text focus, and 4. context focus (i.e., there is no difference in ranking order between genders).

At the EN6 level, there are statistically significant differences between the responses of the male and female participants in relation to all four of the foci: the context focus ($p = .01$), the text focus ($p = .04$), the reader focus ($p = .001$), and the language focus ($p = .001$). A similar pattern to that of EN5 emerges, with the female participants rating each of the categories slightly more highly than the male participants, as evidenced by the means concerning the context focus, $M = 4.94$ (male teachers: $M = 4.53$), the text focus, $M = 5.20$ (male teachers: $M = 4.93$), the reader focus, $M = 5.49$ (male teachers: $M = 5.05$), and the language focus, $M = 5.07$ (male teachers: M = 4.60). Furthermore, there is greater variation in the scores in terms of the male participants once again. This notwithstanding, the rating is relatively high, as before, with a mean score above 4.5 applicable to both the male and the female participants with respect to all four foci. The order of importance has now shifted for both gender groups, just as in the survey group as a whole: 1. reader focus, 2. text focus, 3. language focus, 4. context focus. In other words, both gender groups appear to find the text focus more important in EN6 than they do in EN5.

As pertains to EN7, there is only one statistically significant difference in terms of gender, and that is in relation to the context focus ($p = .003$), which the female participants rate more highly ($M = 5.35$) than the male participants ($M = 4.75$). Yet again, it is clear that the rating of this focus is still rather high in connection to both gender groups, and that the standard deviation is larger in relation to the answers of the male teachers ($SD = 1.48$) than of the female teachers ($SD = .98$). The spread of the answers as regards the male participants is thus greater than in the case of the female participants.

Upon comparing group criteria based on whether the participants are "teaching literature within the subject of Swedish" (TS) or "not teaching literature within the subject of Swedish" (NTS) in addition to English, there are statistically significant differences as pertains to EN5. There is a relatively equal distribution of representatives of each group, with 49% TS-teachers and 51% NTS-teachers. The disparity in preferences concerning EN5 are connected to the context focus (p = .03) and the text focus (p = .03).

Figure 8

Differences between TS teachers and NTS teachers – Importance of two foci
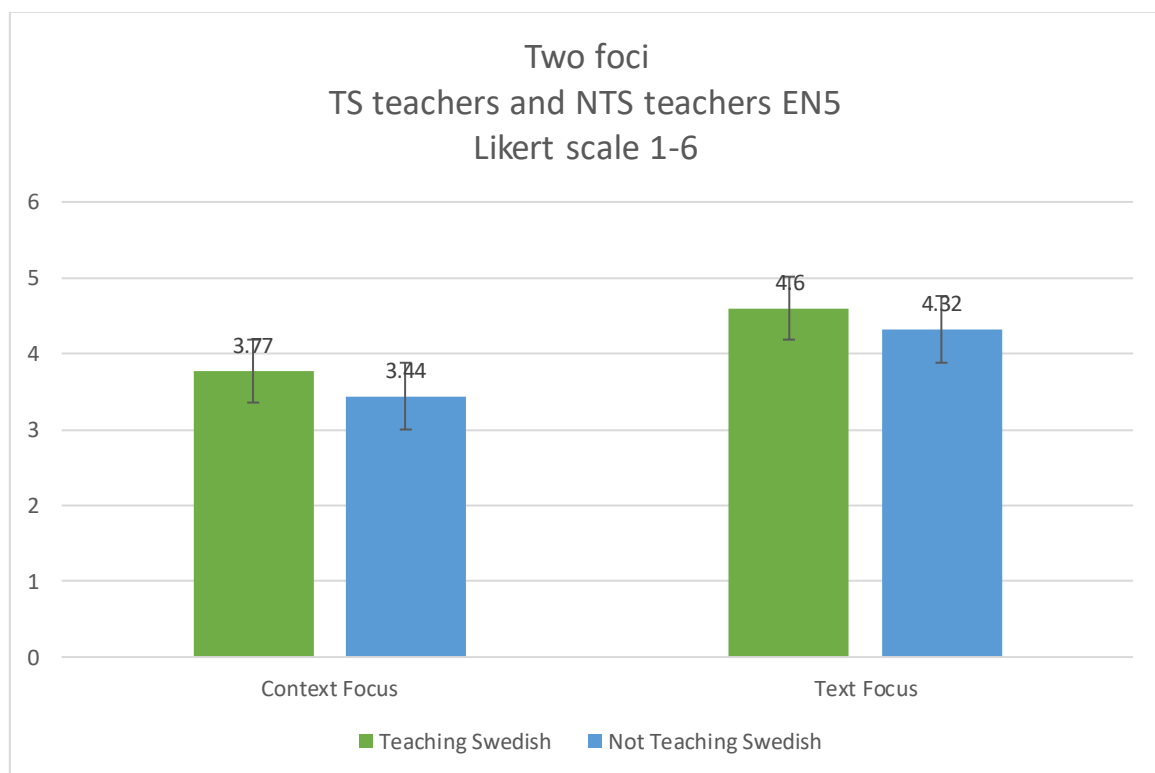
Note. Context Focus and TS: n=176; Context Focus and NTS: 187; Text Focus and TS: n=187; Text Focus and NTS: n= 193.

In general, the findings show that the respondents who teach both English and Swedish tend to be more favorably inclined towards both the context focus (TS: M = 3.77, SD = 1.45; NTS: M = 3.44, SD = 1.49) and the text focus (TS: M = 4.60, SD = 1.25; NTS: M = 4.32, SD = 1.28) than those who do not teach Swedish. The variation is greater within the NTS group in terms of both foci, but there are notable differences of opinion within both the TS group and the NTS group. There are no statistically significant differences between the cohorts as regards EN6 and EN7 in terms of the four categories.

The second survey question on the perceived functions of literary texts is connected to the goals and desired effects associated with literary texts in the EFL context. The question is phrased as follows:

How important do you consider the following goals and/or effects to be when literary texts are in focus in the EFL classroom (EN5, EN6, and EN7)?

The participants were provided with a selection of 11 desired effects, focusing on concerns related to the four approaches outlined previously (the context focus, the text focus, the reader focus, and the language focus):

- Grammar improvement
- Development of vocabulary
- Development of oral fluency
- Development of reading comprehension
- Development of reading speed
- Development of critical thinking
- Development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices
- Development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors
- Development of the students' knowledge of culture
- Motivation for the students to read more through free choices and individual reading
- Motivation for the students to read more through reading and discussing together

The participants were asked to rate their answers from 1-6, where 1 represents "not important at all" and 6 equals "very important", with regard to all three levels (EN5, EN6, and EN7).[56]

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[56] The text below each set of bars has been altered to fit inside the figure (see list above for the complete text).

Figure 9

The importance of specific goals/desired effects in relation to literary texts in the EFL classroom

	Grammar	Vocab.	Oral Fluency	Reading Comp.	Reading Speed	Critical Thinking	Lit. + Literary Devices	Culture	Literary Periods and Authors	Mot. Free choice + Individ. Reading	Mot. Read + Discuss in Groups
EN5	4.05	5.35	4.51	5.68	4.31	4.95	4.46	3.4	4.55	4.61	5.06
EN6	4.3	5.38	4.62	5.65	4.48	5.39	5.06	4.82	5.04	4.77	5.18
EN7	4.23	5.33	4.72	5.66	4.65	5.65	5.52	5.02	5.41	4.84	5.32
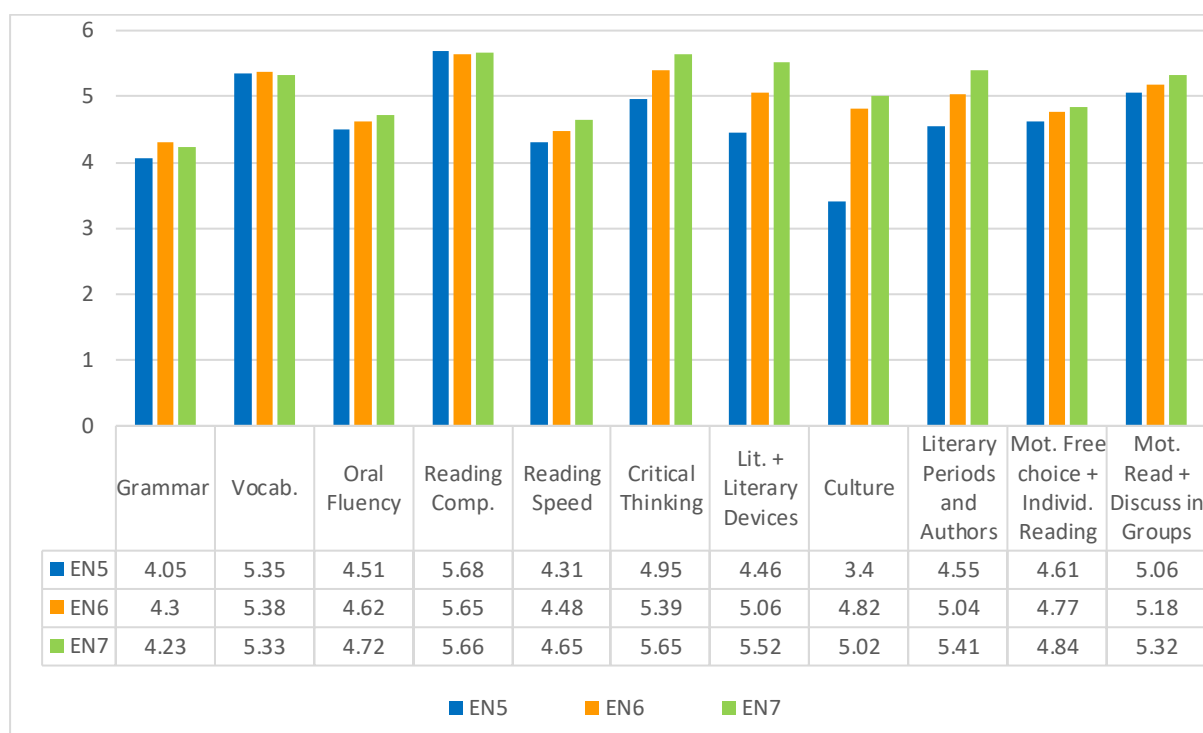
Note. EN5: n=383; EN6: n=361; EN7: n=258

The results show that all of the desired effects available in the questionnaire are considered important by the participants, regardless of the level of English. The only exception is *development of cultural knowledge* in EN5. However, the findings indicate that the most important desired effect is *development of reading comprehension.* This applies to all three levels of English (EN5: *M = 5.68, SD = .57*; EN6: *M = 5.65, SD = .64*; EN7: *M = 5.66, SD = .67*).

In terms of the second most important effect, the preferences vary between the three levels. In EN5, it is *development of vocabulary* that comes second (*M = 5.35, SD = .80)*, while in EN6 and EN7 it is *development of critical thinking* (EN6: *M = 5.39, SD = .82*; EN7: *M = 5.65, SD = .68)*. Additionally, it is important to note that *critical thinking* is a very close second to *development of reading comprehension* in EN7. The difference between the two means of these desired effects is only 0.01, and the standard deviation points to the same minute difference. These two effects can thus be deemed to be equally important in EN7.

As far as the third most important effect is concerned, there are also variations between the levels. In EN5, *motivation for the students to read more through reading and discussing together* is ranked the third most important desired effect (*M = 5.06, SD = 1.10)*,

in EN6 is it *development of vocabulary* (*M = 5.38, SD = 1.11*), and in EN7 it is *development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices* (*M = 5.52, SD = .77),* closely followed by *development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors* (*M = 5.41, SD = .85).*

As becomes apparent when viewing the comparison of means in the bar chart above, the majority of the desired effects are deemed rather important. In fact, all of the means are located at a 4 or above, apart from one single effect, *development of the students' knowledge of culture*, as concerns EN5 (*M = 3.40, SD = 1.35*). This desired effect is thus viewed as the least important in EN5, while *improvement of grammar* is reported to be the least important in EN6 (*M = 4.30, SD = 1.25*) and EN7 (*M = 4.23, SD = 1.39).* However, as stated above, the means pertaining to the latter two are rather high. Nonetheless, the standard deviations are greater here than in relation the effects mentioned previously, which points to a greater difference of opinion amongst the respondents.

In reference to the sub-groups TS (teaching literature in the subject of Swedish) and NTS (not teaching Swedish), it is noteworthy that there is a slight difference of opinion concerning one of the effects (see figure 10). This pertains to the *development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices*. There is a statistically significant difference at all three levels (EN5: *p = .003*; EN6: *p = .02*; EN7: *p = .04*).

Figure 10

Differences between TS and NTS teachers – literature and literary devices
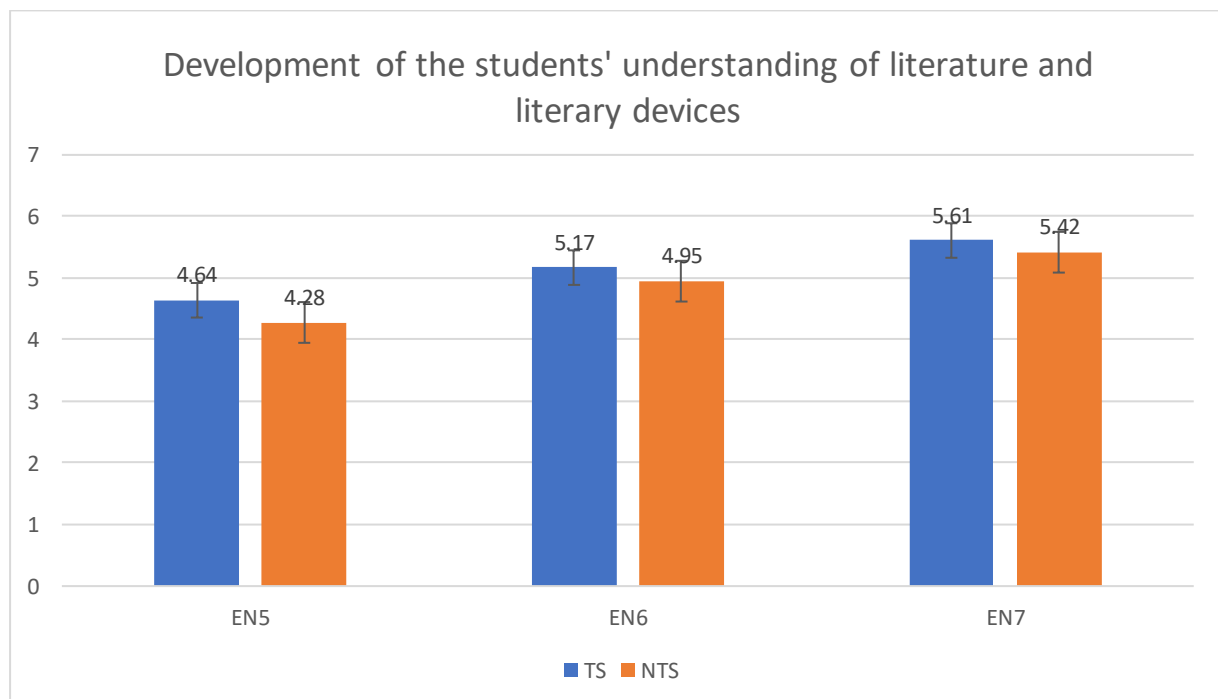
Note. EN5: TS n=187, NTS n=193; EN6: TS n=172, NTS n=186; EN7: TS n=124, NTS n =132.

The means indicate that while the differences are small, they are statistically significant (p =.05). The TS participants rate the understanding of literature and literary devices more highly than the NTS participants do. The standard deviation is the most substantial for EN5 (TS: *SD = 1.17,* NTS: *SD = 1.15*), followed by EN6 (TS: *SD = .85,* NTS: *SD = .91*), and then EN7 ((TS: *SD = .63,* NTS: *SD = .88*). This suggests that differences of opinion within each of the two sub-groups are the most notable in EN5, and that there is greater consensus with respect to EN6 and EN7. Despite the statistically significant differences, it is important to note that both TS teachers and NTS teachers rate the desired effects rather highly.

4.4 Strategies Connected with Working on Literary Texts (*How*)

Another significant theme connected to the research questions is that of the reported strategies and activities employed by upper secondary EFL teachers when literary texts, specifically novels, are in focus. There is one survey question connected to methods in the questionnaire.

> *How common are the following activities when students are to read a novel in your EFL classrooms?*

The participants were asked to answer this question in reference to all three levels of English and also based on three stages in the reading process, more precisely pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. A Likert scale was used once again, ranging from a "1" (not common at all) to a "6" (very common), 1-3 thereby equaling less common and 4-6 more common. The activities that the participants were asked to rate were expressed in the following fashion:

- Listening activities
- Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts, etc.
- Writing activities
- Oral presentations held by one or more students
- Group discussion activities
- Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text

As figure 11 and table 13 indicate, the results for the three levels of English are similar, with considerable focus on, for example, group discussions and teacher-led lectures. However, there are some notable differences.

Figure 11

The most common activities – pre-reading stage (EN5, EN6, and EN7)

The most common activities during the **pre-reading stage**, EN5, EN6 and EN7 on a Likert scale of 1-6
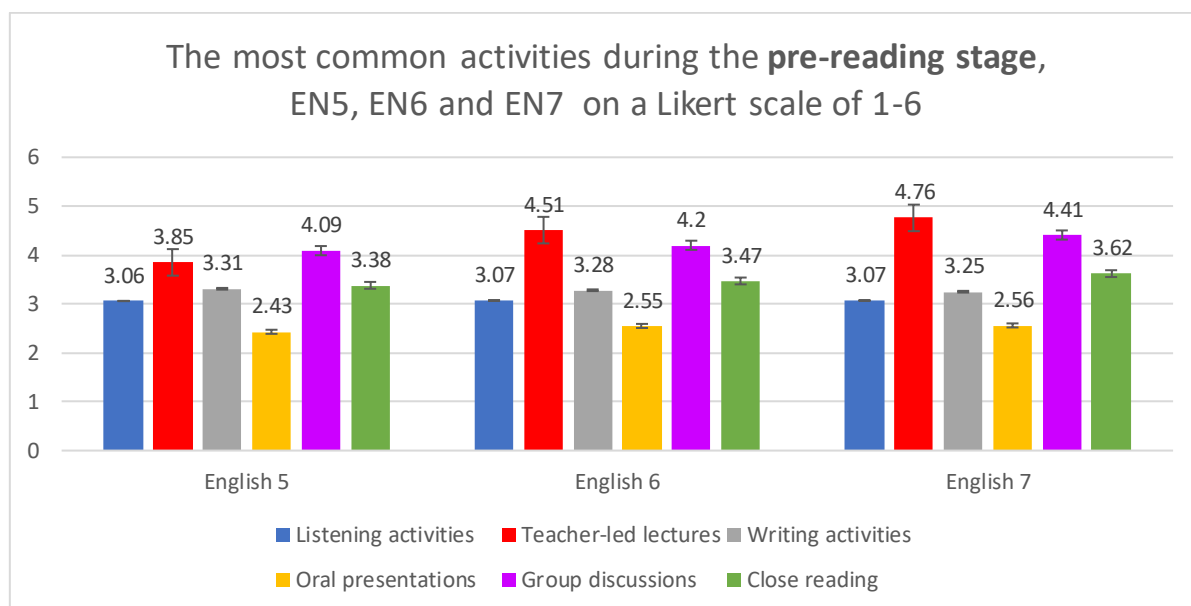
Note. EN5: n=357; EN6: n=332; EN7: n=238.

With reference to the pre-reading stage in EN5, EN6, and EN7, the participants ranked the six activities as follows:

Table 13

Ranking - Pre-reading activities in EN5, EN6, and EN7

EN5:	EN6:	EN7:
Group discussion (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = 1.77)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 4.51, *SD* = 1.47)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 1.42)
Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 1.57)	Group discussion (*M* = 4.20, *SD* = 1.65)	Group discussion (*M* = 4.41 *SD* = 1.67)
Close reading (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 1.75)	Close reading (*M* = 3.47, *SD* = 1.79)	Close reading (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.88)
Writing activities (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 1.75)	Writing activities (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.80)	Writing activities (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = 1.77)
Listening activities (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = 1.67)	Listening activities (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.67)	Listening activities (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.63)
Oral presentations (*M* = 2.43, *SD* = 1.65)	Oral presentations (*M* = 2.55, *SD* = 1.74)	Oral presentations (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = 1.69)

The findings suggest that group discussions take precedence over teacher-led lectures in EN5 during the pre-reading stage, while the reverse applies in EN6 and EN7. The associated means also indicate a substantial increase in popularity as regards the teacher-led lectures from EN5 to EN6 (M = 3.85 in EN5 to M = 4.51 in EN6), with a slight additional increase from EN6 to EN7 (M = 4.76).

The focus on teacher-led lectures during the pre-reading stage suggests that the survey participants attempt to prepare their students for the reading process by supplying information about, for example, authors, literary periods, and literary devices. Despite the apparent preference for group discussion in EN5, the ratings are higher across all activities in EN6 and EN7. This also applies to group discussions, and there appears to be a greater focus on this activity, not a diminished focus, as the ranking might imply (EN5: M = 4.09; EN6: M = 4.20; EN7: M = 4.41). A possible explanation is that the respondents focus on activities other than the choices they were presented with in the survey, particularly as pertains to EN5. Aside from this, it seems a little unexpected that an activity such as close reading should be rated above a 3 at the pre-reading stage, since this would require an interaction with a text, but it is possible that other texts are used in order to practice close reading before a major project is commenced. The activities ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth (writing, listening, and oral presentations) are rated below or very close to a 3, which indicates that these activities are less common in the majority of the participants' EFL classrooms. Lastly, there is notable variation at all levels as far as pre-reading activities are concerned, which signals differences in approach in this regard.

During the while-reading stage, there appears to be a shift from teacher-led lectures to other activities besides group discussions that involve the students to a greater degree, such as writing activities and close reading. Once again, this is a trend that appears to apply to all three levels, but to varying degrees. There are also factors that differ, as demonstrated in figure 12 and table 14.

Figure 12

The most common activities – While-reading stage (EN5, EN6, and EN7)

The most common activities during the **while-reading stage**, EN5, EN6 and EN7 on a Likert scale of 1-6
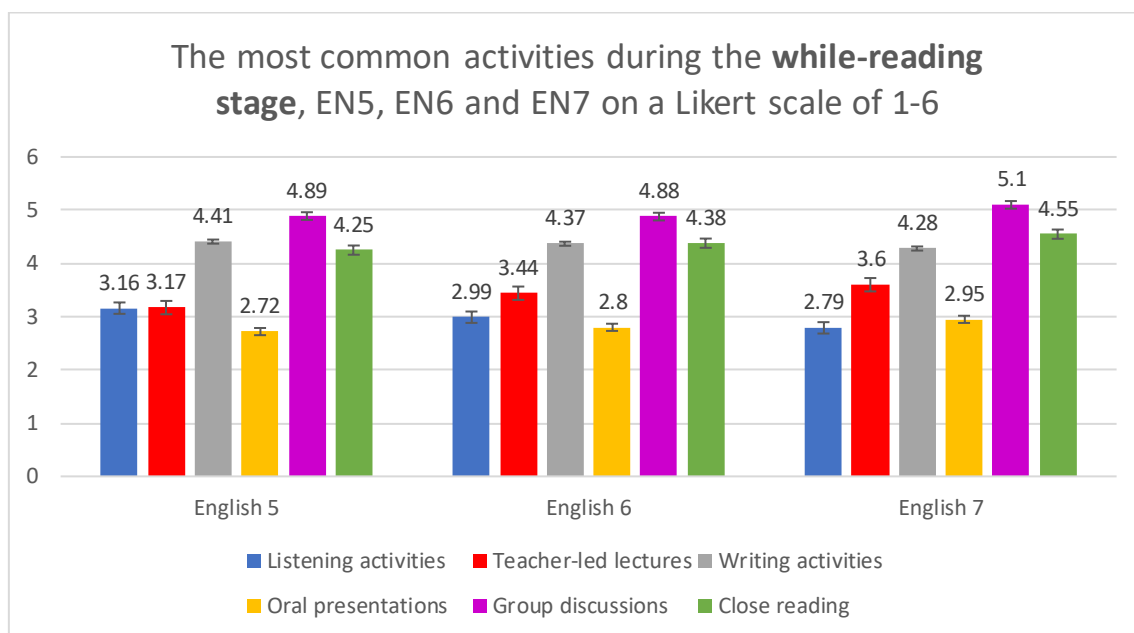
Note. EN5: n=353; EN6: n=332; EN7: n=238.

The question on activities related to the while-reading stage in EN5, EN6, and EN7 generated the following ranking list:

Table 14

While-reading activities in EN5, EN6, and EN7

EN5:	EN6:	EN7:
Group discussion (*M* = 4.89, *SD* = 1.40)	Group discussion (*M* = 4.88 *SD* = 1.43)	Group discussion (*M* = 5.10, *SD* = 1.40)
Writing activities (*M* = 4.41, *SD* = 1.48)	Close reading (*M* = 4.38, *SD* = 1.62)	Close reading (*M* = 4.55, *SD* = 1.73)
Close reading (*M* = 4.25, *SD* = 1.55)	Writing activities (*M* = 4.37, *SD* = 1.55)	Writing activities (*M* = 4.28, *SD* = 1.65)
Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 3.17, *SD* = 1.63)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 3.44, *SD* = 1.64)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 3.60, *SD* = 1.81)
Listening activities (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = 1.69)	Listening activities (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = 1.69)	Oral presentations (*M* = 2.95, *SD* = 1.82)
Oral presentations (*M* = 2.72, *SD* = 1.67)	Oral presentations (*M* = 2.80, *SD* = 1.75)	Listening activities (*M* = 2.79, *SD* = 1.66)

Overall, the ranking of the while-reading activities is similar, with group discussions rating the highest at all three levels (EN5: M = 4.89; EN6: M = 4.88; EN7: M = 5.10), while teacher-led lectures have dropped sharply in the ratings as compared to during pre-reading activities. There appears to be no urgent need for lectures in the middle of the reading process, from the majority of the participants' points of view, and group discussions are hence the preferred choice.

Writing activities come second and close reading third in EN5, with this order reversed in EN6 and EN7. It seems that writing activities are viewed as more suitable exercises while reading than during the pre-reading stage, which could feasibly mean anything from, for example, language-related issues to making notes of quotes and keeping reading logs about the literary texts in focus. Close reading gains in importance, and it also becomes increasingly more common from EN5 through to EN7. The standard deviation is substantial as concerns all of the activities, especially towards the lower ranked activities and concerning close reading in EN6 (SD = 1.62) and EN7 (SD = 1.62). Listening activities are ranked in the last place in EN7, and second to last in terms of the other two levels. However, since these two activities are rated below a 3 and are also fairly close together, these changes in ranking position do not greatly affect the overall results.

At the post-reading stage, there is a detectable shift as compared to the two previous stages of reading. Writing activities now appear to be the most common activities, along with group discussions, across the three levels, but there are also signs of an increased focus on certain activities as the students move from one level to the next, as is discernible in figure 13 and table 15. This trend could thus emanate from a desire for developmental progression across levels of English on the part of the participants.

Figure 13

The most common activities – Post-reading stage (EN5, EN6, and EN7)

The most common activities during the **post-reading stage**, EN5, EN6, and EN7, on a Likert scale of 1-6

Legend: Listening activities, Teacher-led lectures, Writing activities, Oral presentations, Group discussions, Close reading
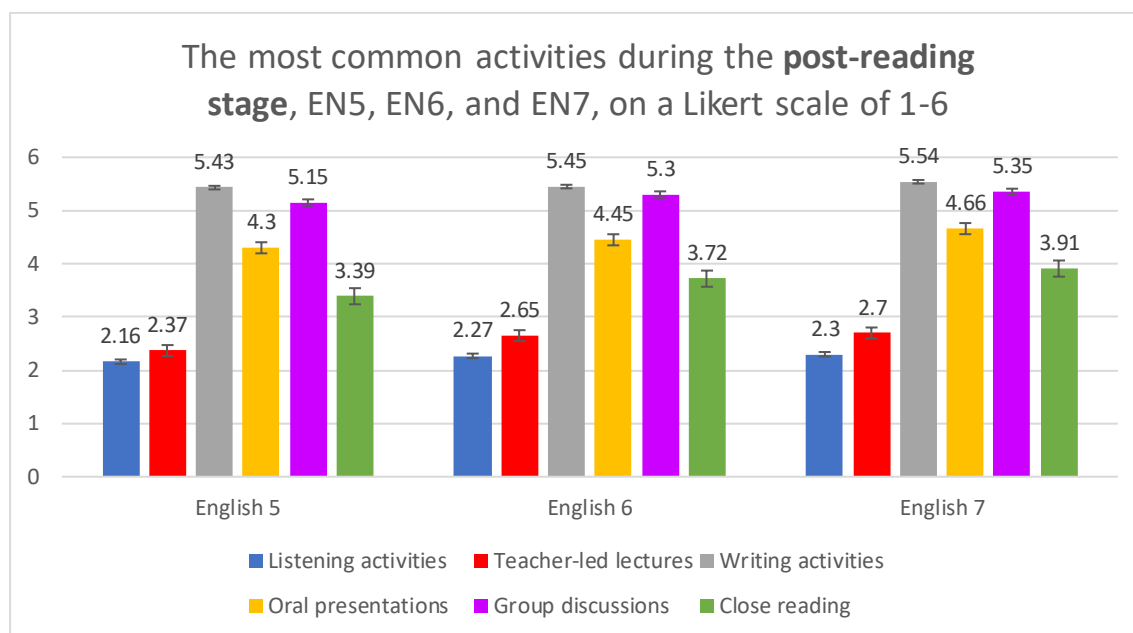
Note. EN5: n=344; EN6: n=332; EN7: n=239.

The six activities connected to the post-reading stage in EN5, EN6, and EN7 were ranked in the following manner:

Table 15

Post-reading activities in EN5, EN6, and EN7

EN5:	EN6:	EN7:
Writing activities (*M* = 5.43, *SD* = 1.03)	Writing activities (*M* = 5.45, *SD* = 1.02)	Writing activities (*M* = 5.54, *SD* = .94)
Group discussion (*M* = 5.15, *SD* = 1.23)	Group discussion (*M* = 5.30 *SD* = 1.16)	Group discussion (*M* = 5.35 *SD* = 1.15)
Oral presentations (*M* = 4.30, *SD* = 1.77)	Oral presentations (*M* = 4.45 *SD* = 1.74)	Oral presentations (*M* = 4.66 *SD* = 1.74)
Close reading (*M* = 3.39, *SD* = 1.86)	Close reading (*M* = 3.72, *SD* = 1.84)	Close reading (*M* = 3.91, *SD* = 1.95)
Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 2.37, *SD* = 1.58)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 2.65, *SD* = 1.67)	Teacher-led lectures (*M* = 2.70, *SD* = 1.70)
Listening activities (*M* = 2.16, *SD* = 1.49)	Listening activities (*M* = 2.27, *SD* = 1.55)	Listening activities (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = 1.56)

As the list demonstrates, the rating patterns concerning post-reading activities are very similar in EN5, EN6, and EN7. Writing activities emerge as the most common activity (EN5: *M* = 5.43; EN6: *M* = 5.45; EN7: *M* = 5.54), closely followed by group discussions. Oral presentations are also a more prevalent activity after reading a novel than before and during the reading process. For the majority of the participants, close reading becomes progressively more common from EN5 (*M* = 3.39) to EN6 (*M* = 3.72), and from EN6 to EN7 (*M* = 3.91), in the post-reading stage. The remaining two activities (teacher-led lectures and listening activities) appear to be less common as they are rated below a 3 at all three levels.

Since written activities and oral presentations appear to be more common in general in the post-reading stage, it suggests that these activities may be employed as a means of assessment, and that close reading may be part of such an assessment, particularly in EN6 and EN7. The group discussions may also serve as a means for testing knowledge, for example pertaining to literary skills and language use in a post-reading context. These types of activities will be examined further in phase II of the study. Despite the high means and similarities in ranking of activities for EN5, EN6, and EN7, the standard deviations point to notable differences of opinion at each level, particularly with regard to oral presentations (EN5: *SD* = 1.77; EN6: *SD* = 1.74; EN7: *SD* = 1.74) and close reading (EN5: *SD* = 1.86; EN6: *SD* = 1.84; EN7: *SD* = 1.86).

In summary, the results point to a general trend across the three levels of English, with slight differences. At the pre-reading stage, group discussions and teacher-led lectures are the main focus. Group discussions continue to be common during the while-reading stage and writing activities along with close reading begin to be emphasized at this stage of the reading process. Close reading tasks also become increasingly more common at each consecutive level of English. During the post-reading stage, much focus is directed towards writing activities, but also towards group discussions and oral presentations. No statistically significant differences were found associated with teaching experience, gender, or subject combination and the activities of the three reading stages

Once the participants had responded to all of the questions about the three reading stages in relation to the three levels of English, they were also asked to list any other activities that are common in connection with novel-reading at the three levels in their EFL classrooms.[57] Answers to this question were provided by 114 participants and deal with a wide variety of areas connected to speaking, listening, reading, and writing, many of which could be said to be linked to the pre-printed options in the survey. However, some examples do point to additional activities, such as those involving multimodal materials and tasks. For example, one respondent points to "using multimodal interpretations such as assigning students a quotation or paragraph and then having them take a picture that represents the

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[57] This question was only asked once and is thus not divided by level nor reading stage. This was deemed necessary to avoid missing answers due to time constraints.

quote or the poem and explaining their interpretation". There is both a multimodal element and a creative element discernible in this approach, which is also visible in another respondent's description of reading activities where students are asked to perform "reenactments of passages" of the literary text in focus. Another participant weaves "watching film adaptations, video clips" into the reading stages, that is, making use of multimodal means to complement the reading process.

Some participants emphasize the central place of literary skills in their reading-related activities. One example is a participant who specifically elects to analyze "literary figures (starting with plots and characters and moving on all the way to motifs and symbols)", which may or may not be included in close reading, depending on the text one chooses to focus on. In this case, there is evidence of a focus on progression (i.e., starting with simpler literary devices such as "plot" and moving on to more challenging aspects such as "symbols").

Yet other respondents convey that they tend to mix it up by focusing on several different areas in addition to literary analysis. This is exemplified by one participant who remarks, "in preparation it's more common with listening generally, both to me and programs for context, while reading there is a lot of discussion, close reading and interpretation. After reading, analytical lectures as well as discussions are more common". Here it becomes evident that context, literary skills, and interpretation are all in focus. A different scenario with mixed activities is described by another respondent who chooses to include "miscellaneous activities connected to themes in the text such as interviews, role playing, poetry writing, drama, working with pictures etc." Traditional literary activities are here interwoven with multimodal activities and creative assignments, and these activities appear to be designed in part to scaffold the learning process with regard to the acquisition of literary skills.

There are also examples of methods that indicate an interest in developmental progression, such as in the case of one participant who lists the following activities connected to the three levels of English:

> Eng5: We commonly discuss the process of reading, how to immerse yourself in a book and how to picture what you read. Eng6: We often look at specific ways to analyze, such as finding a specific theme or looking for characterization. Eng7: Often much freer choice and I encourage the students to find an interesting aspect and study that further.

In this example, it is clear that reading strategies are taught at an initial stage, while at a later stage, when these reading skills have been acquired, the focus is transferred to analytical skills. After this, students are given freer reins to pursue individual interests since it can be assumed that they have then gained the knowledge for such an undertaking.

While reading logs could easily be incorporated into *writing activities,* some participants have elected to supply free text answers on this particular activity. One respondent, for example, remarks that they use "dialogue logs – students reflect on

questions connected to the book in groups. One question per person, then they switch and reflect on each other's reflections and so on". These activities thus involve both individual and collaborative segments. Yet another respondent refers to using "vocabulary exercises" and thereby considers language-related concerns.

Intertextuality is another topic that is considered important. This is highlighted by two separate participants. One of them writes: "EN6: I always spend time on intertextuality; comparing the novel with other novels, films, poetry, drama, music, pictures, real life", while the other conveys that "sometimes students have to find a song/novel/film/short story/TV series that have intertextual relationships with the novel we are reading (both En5 and 6)". Hence, comparative intertextual elements come to the fore in these two cases, as well as the use of multimodal means. There are also examples where the participants emphasize a particular topic in the novel and explore it by means of different media, such as assignments, where the focus is on "reading articles, watching TED Talks on subjects/themes related to the novels". This is presumably done to provide a context and perhaps also to create an interest. Cultural aspects of the English syllabus may also be a contributing factor in these decisions.

As far as lectures and presentations are concerned, there are two notable comments. For example, one respondent conveys that there is "cooperation with the school librarians where they participate by giving lectures and take part in novel seminars heading the discussions while I take notes and assess the pupils". The expertise of librarians is thus elicited to enhance the reading experience. In some cases, the students themselves are asked to give lectures or presentations, which is alluded to by one participant who writes that they use "group author presentations", presumably to provide a contextual background on authors and perhaps also on related time periods.

To conclude, the activities that are most prevalent in the participants' comments, and which are not already covered by means of the pre-printed answers (such as group discussions) involve, for example, multimodal texts, literary analysis, role playing, reenactments, reading logs, language acquisition/production, and intertextuality. Other less frequently mentioned activities include reading strategies and presentations.

4.5 The National Curriculum, The English Syllabus, and Local Guidelines

The participants' responses concerning the national curriculum, the English syllabus, and possible local guidelines as regards literary texts provide an indication of the participants' attitudes to and use of such steering documents and also their views of local collaboration overall. The topic of curricular concerns connects phase I to phase II of the study, since questions related to curricular domains will be approached during the interviews. The main survey question relating to the curriculum is as follows:

> *How is the curriculum for the subject of English interpreted at your school? You can choose several alternatives.*

The respondents could check one or more of these four alternatives:

- Individually by each teacher
- By a team of teachers
- The curriculum is rarely discussed
- The curriculum is rarely used

Figure 14

How is the curriculum for the subject of English interpreted at your school?
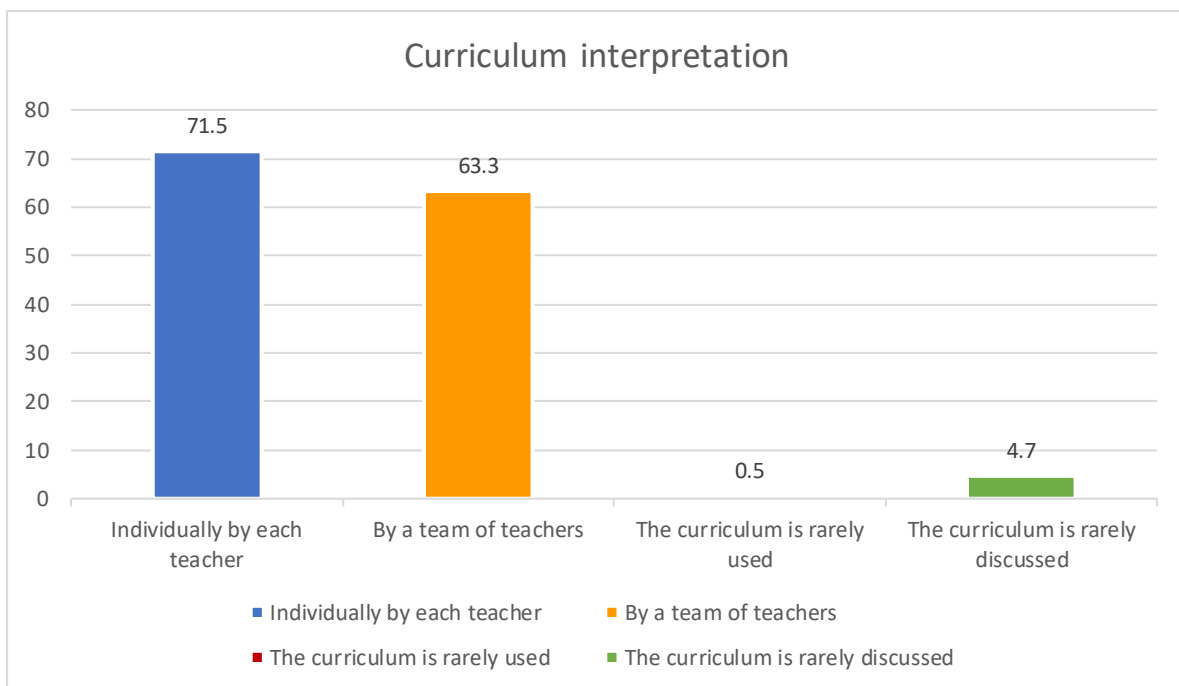
Note. n=404.

Firstly, the findings indicate that the participants do pay heed to the curriculum since a very low percentage (0.5%) report that the curriculum is rarely used. Furthermore, there is considerable collaboration regarding curriculum interpretation, with 2/3 of the participants stating that teams of teachers perform these duties together. However, the most common scenario is still that the curriculum is interpreted on an individual basis by each teacher (71.5% of the respondents chose this answer). Since the participants were able to select more than one option, combinations were possible. Hence, it appears that many of the

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participants both interpret the curriculum individually and in collaboration with their colleagues.

A follow-up question connected to the curriculum was designed to explore whether additional guidelines have been constructed at the local level (i.e., at the individual schools where the participants are employed), which deal particularly with literary texts, with the aim of further examining the prevalence of collaborative work.

> *Are there local guidelines at your school connected to the national curriculum for English as regards literary focus in the EFL classroom?*

Figure 15

Local guidelines on literary texts
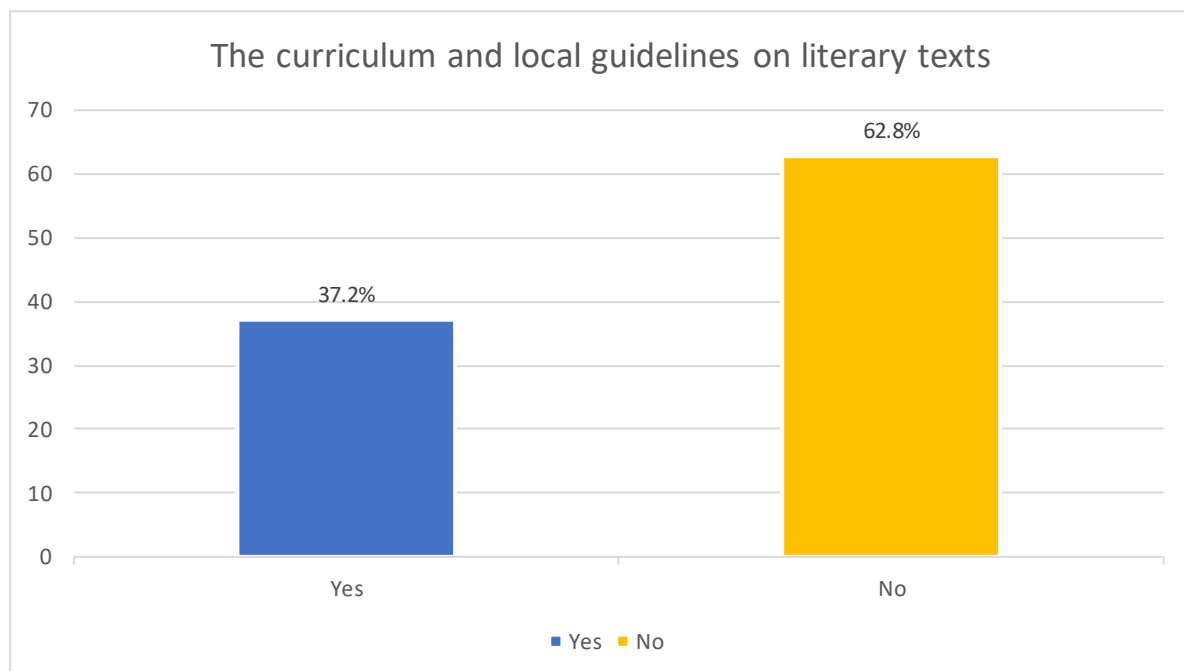
Note. n=393.

The results show that just under 67% of the participants are teaching in schools where there are no local guidelines for literary texts in relation to EFL. The remaining 33% report that such guidelines do exist. However, 30% of these respondents have added that they do not always follow the local guidelines on the grounds that they are, for example, too demanding for their students, or not sufficiently demanding for their students, or that they feel that they can interpret the curriculum on their own, or that they do not agree with the choices made in the local guidelines. Lack of time is also a reason given for electing to ignore local guidelines, but also the idea that guidelines are just that, guidelines, and as such may be

viewed as support and not as a requirement. The answers relating to the curriculum that were generated in this sub-section will mainly serve as a bridge between phase I and phase II of the study. In phase II, approaches to the curriculum will be explored more closely, and connections will therefore be made to these results in chapter 5 and 6.

4.6 Analysis and Discussion: Phase I

The participants' responses to the questions about text selection, the four foci, the reported activities during the three reading stages, and about the desired effects provide indications of how upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden interpret the English syllabus. Moreover, the findings show which text types (i.e., novels, short stories, poetry, films, or various text types in the course book) they choose to work with, as well as, to some extent, why and how they use these texts in the EFL context. These results will consequently provide a partial answer to the first four research questions, which address the participants' views on the English syllabus (S11), their descriptions of text selection, their views on the functions of literary texts, and related methods. A theoretical framework comprising curricular domains, repertoires, teachers' beliefs, and teaching and learning methods will be applied in the analysis of the data. More specifically, Goodlad's (1979) concepts of *ideological curriculum* (the ideological views behind the steering document), *formal curriculum* (the physical steering document and its stipulations), *perceived curricula* (the individual interpretations of the formal curriculum on the part of each teacher), and the new construct *protracted curriculum* (the suggested use of an expired curriculum on the part of a teacher) will be employed to highlight curricular domains. The new constructs *teacher literary repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts and literary studies which cannot be firmly linked to the English syllabus) and *EFL repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts which can be connected to the English syllabus) – based on a combination of McCormick's (1994) terminology and teachers' beliefs – as well as McCormick's own concepts of *general ideology*, *general repertoires*, and *literary ideology* will be applied to the data that concerns the perceived functions of literary texts. Finally, Applebee's (1996) terms *knowledge-in-action* (student-centered, active learning), *knowledge-out-of-context* (learning out of context), and *instructional scaffolding* (teacher and peer-based support) will be used to analyze the methods that the teachers have described using in conjunction with teaching literary texts.

4.6.1 Curricular Domains

The survey results point to considerable use of the English syllabus; that is, only 0.5% of the respondents convey that it is rarely used. However, additional local guidelines pertaining to literary studies have been created at 33% of the participants' individual schools. These two findings combined may be viewed as both positive and negative, but more importantly, they

do highlight the importance of teacher professionalism in terms of making the necessary decisions.

The English syllabus (S11) is thus the steering document that guides Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers' work, and as such it represents *the formal curriculum* in Goodlad et al.'s (1979) terms. This syllabus, and the Swedish curriculum as a whole, is permeated by an idea of the importance of a cultural focus, based in part on the impact of the "cultural turn" (cf. Persson, 2007, p. 85). As such, the syllabus can be viewed as having ingrained values that are manifested in an *ideological curriculum* (Goodlad et al., 1979), where a focus on culture is viewed as essential. These values are based on a societal view of the importance of students discussing and learning about cultural elements in different forms. The focus on culture is evenly balanced in the syllabus across the three levels of English. For example, under "Aim of the Subject" it is stipulated that "teaching should encourage students' curiosity in language and culture" and afford opportunities to develop "the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used" (Skolverket, 2011b). Under the heading for each level (English 5, English 6, and English 7), it is also specified that "Content and Communication" should include "cultural conditions in different contexts" (2011b). Despite this even distribution of cultural elements, the participants rate the importance of the goal *development of the students' knowledge of culture* by means of literary texts rather differently from one level to the next (EN5: *M*=3.40; EN6: *M*=4.82; EN7: *M*=5.02), implying a view of the importance of progression in terms of a cultural focus. The difference between the evenly distributed focus on culture in the syllabus and the survey participants' gradual increase in focus reveals the concept of *perceived curricula*, whereby the participants' reading of the stipulations is translated into a focus on progression rather than on a similar focus across levels, at least in terms of a cultural focus in connection to working on literary texts. However, the standard deviations show that there is a greater difference in how the participants view the importance of teaching culture in relation to literary texts at the three levels than in how they view the importance of the development of literary skills and language skills, where there is greater consensus. It may be suggested that cultural concerns can be covered in a variety of ways, and that it is not necessary to rely on literary texts to achieve this aim. This could in part explain the uneven distribution of answers. In addition, the limited focus on culture in connection to working on literary texts at the English 5 level could perhaps also be explained by the possibility that EFL teachers may opt for non-literary texts to address the issues of culture as such texts may be viewed as less difficult.

Further instances of *perceived curricula* are visible in the results when it comes to text selection. For example, on the one hand, typographic narrative fiction such as novels and short stories are not mentioned directly in the syllabus, but they may be included in the term "literature". On the other hand, films, "other fiction" (e.g., animations or narrative films), poetry, and drama are mentioned specifically, albeit sometimes as suggestions.[58] In

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[58] Narrative fiction = recounting a story by means of interconnected events.

spite of the clearer stipulations as regards films and poetry, the results show that the novel and the short story are the most commonly used text types among the participants across all levels, and that films are the third most commonly used text type in EN5 and EN6, while poetry comes third in EN7. The choices made in this regard are thus clearly within the realm of *perceived curricula*, as they are based on the teachers' individual interpretations of the syllabus. An additional explanation is that teachers teach as they have been taught or that a remnant of a former curriculum colors the more experienced teachers' teaching methods and focus. In Lpf94 and the English syllabus, for example, it was stipulated that a focus on "a number of contemporary novels from different English-speaking countries" was required (Skolverket, 1994b, p. 25). [59] This could feasibly account for some of the more experienced teachers' reasoning and justifications behind including more novels, and thereby more reading, in their EFL syllabus. If this is indeed what has precipitated the decisions of the more experienced teachers, this represents the idea of a *protracted curriculum,* that is, an older curriculum taking precedence over a current curriculum.

The fact that poetry is used by the participants to a greater extent in EN6 and EN7 than in EN5 may be explained in part by the English syllabus (S11). In the EN5 section of the syllabus, "literature and other fiction" are the specified text types. Poetry could feasibly be included, but this is not the most commonly occurring interpretation of the syllabus. Instead, the participants appear to exclude poetry in EN5 in favor of narrative fiction, both of the typographic and the non-typographic (i.e., films/adaptations) variety. In EN6, on the other hand, the syllabus specifies that "contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs" should be in focus in EN6, which is most likely why the participants elect to focus on this text type to a greater extent at this level (Skolverket, 2011b). However, in EN7 the use of poetry is even more prevalent, despite the lack of a specific mention of poetry in the syllabus. Instead, the syllabus states that "contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres such as drama" should be read, viewed, or listened to. The idea that poetry should be included in the content of EN7 is thus not part of the *formal curriculum*, but rather, is a representation of the participants' *perceived curricula,* as per Goodlad et al.'s (1979) definition. The results thus indicate that the participants construe the phrase "older literature" as encompassing, among other things, poetry, or as one of "the various genres" that they need to teach. As a result, the increased focus on poetry clearly points to a manifestation of *perceived curricula*, since both the exclusion and the inclusion of poetry is possible based on the syllabus stipulations.

Evidence of *perceived curricula* is also visible in the data as far as the functions of literary texts are concerned, such as when it comes to the gradual development of literary skills. However, these aspects also hint at the participants' underlying rationales about the functions of literary texts and will therefore be analyzed in conjunction with the concept of *repertoires.* Furthermore, the methods that the participants employ when approaching literary texts appear to be grounded in the formal curriculum and in the ideological

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[59] Original quotation: "några samtidsromaner från olika engelskspråkiga länder".

curriculum, being concerned with active, meaningful, and student-centered teaching. For this reason, the reported methods will be analyzed further using Applebee's (1996) concepts to highlight elements of *knowledge-in-action*, *knowledge-out-of-context*, and *instructional scaffolding*.

4.6.2 Ideologies and Repertoires

The findings of phase I of the study reveal certain aspects of the participants' beliefs and assumptions about literary texts. The participants' standpoints are often clearer when their answers cannot be specifically linked to stipulations in the syllabus. In those cases, their rationales and decisions can be more readily connected to their own beliefs and assumptions about the functions of literary texts, and as such to the new constructs of *teacher literary repertoires* (the assumptions and beliefs that teachers harbor about literary studies, literary skills, and aesthetic reading in the EFL context which cannot be firmly linked to stipulations in the English syllabus) and *EFL repertories* (teachers' assumptions and beliefs about literary texts in the EFL context which can be connected to stipulations in the English syllabus, such as objectives related to language development). These new constructs are inspired by a combination of McCormick's (1994) notion of reading repertoires and the concept of teachers' beliefs. McCormick's own concepts of *general ideology* (a society's general views, beliefs, and values), *general repertoires* (the appropriation of values and beliefs on the part of an individual), and *literary ideology* (a society's views, habits, and beliefs as regards literary texts) are also applicable.

How the participants rate the four foci (the reader focus, the text focus, the context focus, and the language focus) and the goals/desired effects of working with literary texts demonstrate their views of the functions of literary texts in the EFL context. On the surface, the prominence of *the reader focus* (the readers' interpretations and development of critical thinking), which ranked the highest at all three levels of English, suggests a primarily student-centered approach and a *teacher literary repertoire* that favors literary competence and particularly Rosenblatt's (1995) notion of reader response where critical reevaluation of one's response is key.[60] However, the decisions made in this regard may also be partially attributable to the syllabus and to a general underlying *general ideology* expressed by means of the "Aim of the Subject" of English (S11), which stipulates that students should be able to "relate the content to their own experiences and knowledge" (Skolverket, 2011b) as well as to an *EFL repertoire* where communicative competence is central. Nonetheless, there is greater depth in the term reader response than in the idea of relating the text to one's experiences, which suggests that a *teacher literary repertoire* is at the core of the preference for *the reader focus.*

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[60] The reader focus and the text focus both have the same mean score in EN7.

The high rating of the desired effect of *motivation for the students to read more through reading and discussing together* can be connected to *general ideology* on a macro level where Vygotsky's sociocultural views of interaction and learning are at the fore. The idea of motivation through cooperative learning is further implied in S11 under the "Aim of the Subject", among other places, where interaction and learning in meaningful contexts are mentioned (Skolverket, 2011b). However, a *teacher literary repertoire* is also visible where reader engagement appears to be part of the intended goal.

Teacher literary repertoires are likewise revealed when it comes to the participants' ratings of the importance of literary skills. For example, as the students progress through the levels, the participants report that a *text focus* (close reading, characterization, literary devices, etc.) becomes increasingly important, as is also partially visible in the syllabus. For example, in the EN5 section of the syllabus it is specified under "Content of communication" that "content and form in different kinds of fiction" should be taken into account when reading, while in EN6 "themes, ideas, form and content in film and literature; authors and literary periods" should be emphasized (Skolverket, 2011b). This does suggest an increase in focus on, for example, literary devices (text focus) from EN5 to EN6, since in addition to the word "form" the word "theme" has been added for EN6 (Skolverket, 2011b). However, there is no mention of elements that can be associated with literary texts and a *text focus* under "Content of communication" in the EN7 section of the syllabus. On the other hand, literary texts are referred to under the heading "Reception", but only in terms of which types of texts should be read (contemporary texts, older texts, different genres such as drama) rather than specifications of focus, as is the case at the EN5 and EN6 levels. Despite the absence of stipulations as regards a *text focus* in EN7, the participants report that they find the *text focus* even more important at the EN7 level than below this level. This illustrates a *teacher literary repertoire* where literary skills and literary knowledge are viewed as valuable, with these skills or knowledge areas needing to be introduced over time to achieve the ultimate learning outcomes. This is supported by the results connected to the desired effect of the *development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices* (EN5: M=4.55; EN6: M=5.06; EN7: M=5.52), which reportedly increases in importance the higher the level, irrespective of stipulations in the syllabus. The idea of a *teacher literary repertoire* concerned with the gradual development of the students' literary skills and knowledge is further reinforced by the continued, albeit it somewhat small, increase in focus on close reading activities during reading projects throughout the levels of English (EN5: M=4.25; EN6: M=4.38; EN7: M=4.55). Hence, it seems to be teachers' beliefs about the importance of literary skills that result in an increased focus on such educational content and not stipulations in the syllabus.

An initial hypothesis as regards literary texts and language learning is that the participants' high ratings of a *language focus* point to *EFL repertoires* which are centered on the usefulness of these texts (as a means to an end) rather than on aesthetic elements of literary texts (an end in themselves). However, it is notable that despite the fact that the present study focuses on EFL teachers, a *reader focus* is deemed marginally more important

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than a *language focus*, which points to a slight precedence of *teacher literary repertories* with a focus on reader engagement and the development of critical thinking over *EFL repertoires* and, for example, linguistic competence. Nevertheless, the focus on sociocultural learning along with the communicative ideal inherent in the *general ideology* of the curriculum as a whole as well as in the English syllabus may also contribute to the high rating of the *reader focus.*

The findings further indicate that the language-related functions of literary texts are primarily based on group discussions (meaningful communication), vocabulary learning, and to some extent also the development of oral fluency, rather than on grammar development. The *EFL repertoire* that is discernable as regards the three prioritized areas is thus that literary texts are treated as sources for language instruction by means of a holistic approach to language learning (focus on meaning) and thus not to traditional approaches (focus on form) (cf. Hall, 2015, p. 116; Van Gorp & Bogaert, 2006, pp. 101-102). This focus is clearly linked to the influence of the *general ideology* of the curriculum, where phrases like "use of language in functional and meaningful contexts" and "interacting with others in speech and writing" are introduced on the very first page of the English syllabus (Skolverket, 2011b). This approach to language acquisition is thereby legitimized, which appears to have an effect on the participants' *EFL repertoires*.

Upon comparing some of the results, a conflict of repertoires is revealed. Given the prominence of the *reader focus,* which includes a focus on critical thinking, one might expect *development of critical thinking* to be the top answer when it comes to goals, and as such one of the main functions of literary texts. However, while critical thinking is ranked high, the primary goal of the majority of the participants across levels is the *development of reading comprehension.*[61] As is shown in the analysis of S11, literary texts are legitimized in the "Knowledge Requirements" of the steering document by means of authorization and instrumental rationalization based on language-related stipulations, particularly reading comprehension. The participants' prioritizations thus correspond to stipulations in the syllabus. In the EN5 section of the syllabus, for example, it is stipulated under "Knowledge Requirements" that students must show that they "can understand the main content and basic details […] in clearly expressed written English in various genres" (Skolverket, 2011b). Students should then progressively learn to understand more difficult and formal texts from this level onwards, but the essence of the knowledge requirement remains the same: reading comprehension. The results thus expose a conflict between the teachers' own *teacher literary repertoire,* where reader engagement and literary skills are central, and *EFL repertoires* focusing on the importance of reading comprehension, grounded in the *general ideology* of the syllabus. While reading comprehension is a precondition for a progression to

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[61] A desired effect that can be connected to *reading comprehension* is *development of reading speed.* This goal is not as highly valued as *reading comprehension*. However, while *reading speed* becomes increasingly important as the students progress through the three levels of English, the importance of reading comprehension remains constant.

high order thinking skills, the absence of knowledge requirements that connect literary texts to critical thinking could have a limiting effect.

Furthermore, the *development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors* is a goal that the participants find increasingly important as the students progress through the levels (EN5: *M*=4.55; EN6: *M*=5.04; EN7: *M*=5.41), which is also evidenced by the importance of the context focus (culture, society, historical and biographical data connected to time periods and the lives of the authors) at the three levels (EN5: *M*=4.55; EN6: *M*=5.04; EN7: *M*=5.41).There is a requirement to include authors and literary periods as per the instructions in the EN6 section of the syllabus (S11), and a reference to a possible focus on literary periods in EN7. Despite the vagueness of the reference in the EN7 section of the syllabus, the results show that the perceived importance of this desired effect is considerably higher in connection to EN7 than in relation to EN6. The participants' decision to include and then gradually increase the focus on authors and literary periods is likely to be based on a wish to provide their students with a good grounding in general knowledge about literature. This illustrates *teacher literary repertoires* based on a belief that knowledge about a literary cultural heritage is of value or that background knowledge is important in order to fully understand a text, and that such knowledge should have greater focus than the syllabus implies.

To conclude, there are several instances where *teacher literary repertoires* concerned with, for example, reader response, reader engagement, the development of literary skills and critical thinking become apparent, and where a desire for progression in the development of such skills throughout the three levels of English comes to the fore, despite the limited stipulations in this regard in the syllabus. *EFL repertoires* are also visible, and these instances can generally be firmly linked to stipulations in the syllabus, such as when it comes to reading comprehension, language focus, communicative abilities, and cultural elements.

On a final note, the respondents' free text explanations as to why they might not choose to read novels from a list of approved books at their schools reveal something about their own beliefs and assumptions about literary texts, but also about their attitudes toward the students. For example, the comment about the idea that it is not necessary to focus on the novels on the lists, since they are only examples, seems to be connected to the *free space* and more importantly to a *teacher literary repertoire* that does not assign value to having a common canon. Instead, the *teacher literary repertoire* indicates that the students' needs or the teacher's own predilections are of greater importance. Moreover, the statements about electing not to read novels with students on vocational programs or about not reading as many novels with vocational students could be construed as keeping the students' wishes in mind. However, it also hints at a *general repertoire* grounded in the assumption that students on vocational programs share a common attitude toward literary texts and would therefore not appreciate a full-length text or that they would not be able to handle such texts. The reference to the necessity of adapting to the students' interests, on the other hand, indicates that student motivation is at the fore. This translates to a *teacher*

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literary repertoire that is based on the belief that reader engagement and finding novels with characters and themes that the students can identify with are of vital importance. It can also be connected an *EFL repertoire* and communicative language teaching principles where students should be encouraged to discuss things that they are familiar with.

4.6.3 Knowledge-in-Action, Knowledge-out-of-Context, and Instructional Scaffolding

The concepts of interaction, collaboration, meaningful situations, teamwork, and intercommunication that are described as central in the English syllabus (Skolverket, 2011b) are also evident in the methods of the survey participants, revealing *knowledge-in-action* approaches. Applebee (1996) describes this concept as "gradual immersion in new conversations rather than standing alongside and being told about them" (p. 123). This entails activities in which students are actively engaged in their own learning processes by means of discussions, critical thinking, and explorations of new areas of knowledge. A central concern associated with *knowledge-in-action* activities is *instructional scaffolding*, which involves enabling "the students to accomplish in the context of the classroom what they could not accomplish alone" (p. 114). Evidence of such approaches emerges upon examination of the high mean scores related to the *development of critical thinking* (EN5: *M=4.95*; EN6: *M=5.39*; EN7: *M=5.65*) when literary texts are in focus and to *motivation for the students to read more through reading and discussing together* (*M=5.06*; EN6: *M=5.18*; EN7: *M=5.32*). A combined reading of these results suggests that the participants favor a student-centered approach containing elements of *knowledge-in-action*, where active participation and the exploration of different possibilities by means of critical thinking is at the fore. Moreover, the results indicate that the participants favor an approach where the scope of the focus on critical thinking should also be increased over time. This, along with the focus on collaborative learning, is a demonstration of an approach linked to *instructional scaffolding* where teacher and peer support are central.

The heavy focus on *group discussions* across levels, pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading, likewise demonstrates methods that involve student-centered *knowledge-in-action* activities. However, *teacher-led lectures* are also commonly occurring pre-reading activities, particularly in EN6 and EN7. This activity can be classified as teacher-centered. A pre-reading, teacher-led lecture involving literary texts is likely to focus on either biographical data, historical data, or instructions on how the students are to interpret the text they are about to read (e.g., close reading instructions and presentations of literary devices). A focus on *knowledge-out-of-context* is possible here; that is, a focus on the characteristics of literature rather than the piece of literature itself (Applebee, 1996, p. 26), particularly where dates and facts are concerned. Nevertheless, such lectures may also serve as a first step in a process towards *knowledge-in-action*, whereby students learn about literary devices and historical facts that they can apply to their own reading projects.

Unlike these commonly used activities, listening activities seem to play a minor role in EFL when literary texts are in focus. One conclusion that may be drawn from this result is

that teachers do not seem to elect to make use of audiobooks, reading aloud activities, or other types of multimodal audio texts to any great extent. However, in terms of other multimodal texts, the free text comments connected to the three stages of reading show that several respondents make use of various multimodal texts and related tasks, focusing on, for example, students listening to the teacher or a program of some kind for inspiration during the pre-reading stage, taking pictures of an image that represents an idea or a quote and then having to explain their interpretations, reenactments of passages in novels, and role playing. These examples are clearly within the realm of *knowledge-in-action*, since the students are actively taking part in their own learning processes, for example, by means of productive and creative learning. Since the teachers are likely to be present in a supporting or tutorial role, *instructional scaffolding* is also in use. Likewise, opportunities for peer support are possible during the activities focusing on reenactments and role playing.

The results concerning *close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text* are noteworthy due to the fact that the participants make use of this method to a great extent, and also since they increase the focus on close reading from EN5 to EN6, and again from EN6 to EN7. This finding points to *instructional scaffolding* being in use, both in terms of a general concern with the gradual introduction and learning of the concept and through the clear collaboration between teachers and students, as well as amongst the students themselves.

In terms of the final reading stage (post-reading), the participants have ranked the activities in the same order for all three levels. *Writing* is the preferred activity during this stage of the reading process, closely followed by *group discussions*. The third most common activity during this stage of the process is *student oral presentations*. These activities all translate to a student-centered focus and *knowledge-in-action* processes, as per Applebee's (1996) definition, since they (at least in principle) invite participation. For example, group discussions tend to focus on the students interacting with one another in problem solving tasks, analytical tasks, or in personal reflections of some kind, which is supported by the reported importance of the *reader focus*.

Writing activities are by their very nature student-centered, but such activities may also vary greatly in terms of content and embedded expectations (Applebee, 1996, p. 108). The comments added by some participants in relation to additional activities provide some examples of writing activities, such as writing letters to characters, as well as keeping reading logs during the reading process, which appear to be *knowledge-in-action* oriented.

In summary, as far as methods are concerned, there are discernible elements of *knowledge-in-action* in the approaches to literary texts through the use of student-centered collaborative work and close reading tasks. Such activities do point to elements of *instructional scaffolding*. There are also suggestions of teacher-centered methods in the pre-reading stage, which may involve *knowledge-out-context* in relation to literary periods and authors, for example.

4.6.4 Discussion of Results

There are several noteworthy parallels that may be drawn to previous research. For example, upon reviewing the results of Bloemert et al.'s (2016) Dutch study, it appears that a *text approach* is deemed slightly more important than a *reader approach* amongst the Dutch participants. This result may be linked to Dutch EFL syllabus instructions where objectives involving literary skills and literary analysis are outlined in some detail. In the present study, a *text focus* is considered less important than a *reader focus* in English 5 and 6, and equally important in English 7, which may only be partially linked to syllabus specifications. However, the results of the present study show that meaningful communication, personal response in combination with critical thinking exercises, and interaction play a prominent role when literary texts are in focus, since the *reader focus* has received the highest rating. Stipulations with regard to personal development are also more common in the Swedish EFL syllabus than references to literary skills. The *general ideologies* inherent in the Dutch and the Swedish syllabi may thus guide the EFL teachers differently in the two countries, and yet *teacher literary repertoires* point to literary skills being prioritized to some extent in the Swedish EFL context despite curricular stipulations.

On the other hand, TS teachers (teaching both Swedish and English) in Sweden are more favorably inclined toward both the *text focus* and the *context focus,* albeit marginally. The reason for this may be linked to their pre-service training and to their exposure to literary studies. The results of Dodou's (2020) study, which focuses on the purposes of literary studies in secondary and upper secondary English teacher education programs in Sweden in the academic year 2017-2018, partly in relation to Swedish teacher education, supports this line of reasoning. Dodou's findings show that pre-service training for future teachers in the subject of Swedish tend to treat "literary history and poetics" in relation to the literature component of the program, while English teacher programs tend to focus on literary texts as vessels for "worldly knowledge and understanding" (p. 143), which is discernible in the English syllabus (S11)*.* The focus on poetics (theory of literature) in the Swedish teacher programs suggests that TS teachers have had additional exposure to literary studies (literary devices, analysis, etc.), as well as training in how to work with the development of such skills, which may have an impact on how likely they are to focus on literary skills and literary analysis in their own classrooms.

A central finding regarding the use of literary texts in the upper secondary EFL context reveals that student engagement is important to the participants. These concerns are discernible in the participants' methods, which involve, for example, group discussions, reader response, and a variety of creative and/or productive tasks (taking pictures of poems and explaining them, reenactments, role playing). Such approaches can be linked to Matz and Stieger's (2015) ideas of activities with an action or product orientation grounded in reader-response theories which can both enhance the literary experience and help students to grasp the essence of literary studies (p. 134). In addition, the results show that the idea of the students working together on the same text is viewed as a positive motivational factor.

Research in the L2 context by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) supports this idea: "Cooperative learning has been shown to generate a powerful motivational system to energize learning" (pp. 27-28). The result concerning the predominant focus on student-centered, collaborative work also shows that opportunities for language development in meaningful settings based on communicative language teaching (CLT) principles with connections to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theories are central concerns.

In conclusion, despite the fact that the participants favor a *reader focus*, based on *teacher literary repertoires* where personal responses and critical thinking are of the essence, other concerns are prioritized when it comes to the demands on the students, and particularly the desired effect with the highest rating, *development of reading comprehension*. The main reason for this appears to be the stipulation pertaining to reading comprehension, which is the "Knowledge Requirement" (2011b) in the English syllabus that can be most clearly linked to literary texts. The findings demonstrate that the participants follow the syllabus stipulations closely, and thereby adhere to elements of measurability. The heavy focus on measurability in Swedish educational policy, as discussed by Borsgård (2020), overshadows the subjective dimension of education where personal development, critical thinking, and the reading experience are located. A parallel can thus be drawn between concerns over measurable knowledge requirements and the overlap or possible clash between repertoires which the present study has brought to light, that is, that reading comprehension takes precedence over reader response and critical thinking, if only marginally. This indicates a predominance of *EFL repertoires* over *teacher literary repertoires* on the one hand, but also that a *reader focus* takes precedence over a *language focus* on the other hand, pointing to the reversed scenario.

Several questions have surfaced as a consequence of the findings of phase I of the present study, and they will be addressed in phase II. For example, it would be of value to determine how and for what purpose upper secondary EFL teachers employ both typographic literary texts and film adaptations, and combinations thereof, as well as why certain text types are preferred over others. A topic that was not broached in phase I of the study is how contemporary texts and older texts are viewed, which warrants a closer look. Furthermore, it would be meaningful to explore upper secondary EFL teachers' reasoning about student engagement, collaborative reading projects, individual reading projects, teaching literary periods, and reading comprehension, as well as to explore their views on literary analysis, among other things.

Lastly, the disparities found between the answers of female and male teachers, between teachers of varying teaching experiences, and between TS and NTS teachers are notable yet difficult to analyze, since all of the answers reveal high ratings. As a result, the interview participants have been selected and categorized based on criteria related to gender, subject combination (English/other subject and English/Swedish), and teaching experience in an attempt to achieve as varied a selection as possible, to represent the variation in answers in the survey as well as to represent all of the participants overall.

PHASE II

5 EMPIRICAL DATA: INTERVIEWS PART I – TEXT SELECTION

5.1 Introduction

Findings from phase I of the study indicate that 63.3% of the survey participants interpret the curriculum and the English syllabus together with their colleagues and, furthermore, that 71.5% do so on an individual basis, either in addition to collaborative interpretations or on an individual basis only. Moreover, the survey results point to a widespread tendency to pay heed to syllabus instructions. Phase II of the study helps to clarify the participants' views of the curriculum and the English syllabus, which texts they select and why, their perceptions of the functions of literary texts, and their approaches to such texts in the EFL context. During the interviews, the 16 participants explicitly discussed their attitudes to the English syllabus as regards text selection and their own rationales in this regard, that is, *what* materials they use and why. These topics will be addressed in this chapter, followed by an analysis and a discussion of the findings, while the perceived functions of literary texts (*why*) will be presented and analyzed in chapter 6, and strategies and approaches to literary texts (*how)* will be in focus in chapter 7.

5.2 Teacher Attitudes to the Free Space

The English syllabus of 2021 (S21) allows educators considerable freedom in terms of choices and focus, which also applies to the use of literary texts.[62] What are the attitudes of the teachers who participated in the interviews toward the non-explicit nature of the English syllabus when it comes to literary texts?

Firstly, it is primarily the material (*what*) to be used rather than the methods applicable (*how*) and the role of literary texts (*why*) in the EFL context that the participants tend to associate with the free space that the syllabus affords. Concerning text selection (*what*), there are both positive and negative attitudes toward this freedom, but the positive views dominate. Participant 1EM, for example, is clearly in favor:

> I can't really say that I think it's our duty to, like, make every student read *Catcher in the Rye* and *Of Mice and Men* and so on. So, personally I think it's fun, like I can use literature from New Zealand, Australia, India, Jamaica, or whatever I like.

This points to an appreciation of a syllabus free from a prescribed literary canon, which allows teachers the opportunity to choose literary texts from different parts of the world.

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[62] This freedom translates to the concept of *local free space* and was introduced in SOU 1992:94 (Skolverket, 1994c).

Participant 2EF reasons along similar lines, but also emphasizes the likes and dislikes of the students:

> I think the advantages is that you can choose and you're not tied down to actually work with a specific type of literature or author or period so you can change and choose and, you know, different angles and maybe work with something that actually would interest the students and myself because after a while you get a bit bored with your own material.

Besides the predilections of both the teacher and the students, there are also statements about the benefits of free choice in relation to the different types of students the teachers have in their classrooms. Participant 3SM, for instance, explains:

> I think it's very useful for us teachers to be able to adapt our choice of literature and authors in relation to whatever group of students we have in front of us. So, I do appreciate that, rather than having a set curriculum or syllabus of specific authors and works to have to read.

Hence, it is the students' proficiency levels and backgrounds, among other things, that appear to come into play here. Participant 4SM has similar concerns in mind when he considers the advantages of a non-explicit curriculum:

> I can make a lot more decisions together with my students, you know, based on their needs and desire, it should all be based on you meeting the student where the student is, and then helping the student develop as much as the student can develop.

Thus, on the one hand, the freedom to choose which literary texts to include as well as how much to read (number of pages, novels etc.) is deemed a strength, as it allows both teachers and students to choose texts based on predilection, level of difficulty, and depending on which program the students are enrolled in, among other things. Additionally, as 4SM states above, this freedom is also seen as being beneficial in that it facilitates a student-centered approach where a teacher is able to meet the students where they are in their learning processes and to encourage them to read and work with a literary text that they are able to handle.

On the other hand, the non-explicit nature of the syllabus may also be construed as negative if teachers are left wondering what is required of them in relation to what material to choose. 4EM expresses a frustration over what is expected of him and other teachers when it comes to the selection of material. He asks: "Which books [are] approved? Some people would say it's got to be heavy stuff, like Shakespeare or Charles Dickens or… But other people would say, 'oh, no, you know *About a Boy* or something very easygoing'". This statement may be viewed as a call for clarification and support in the syllabus as regards text selection, both in terms of level of difficulty and concerning the amount of text. Participant 3EM reasons along similar lines, but also stresses that he sees a certain value in

having a general base of cultural material on a national level in the form of literary texts. He explains:

> I'm a fan of a literature canon. I think there are certain things that we need to share as a culture, and I would almost like some kind of canon within the course curriculum to sort of either limit us or give us a bit more guidance in what the students are supposed to leave with, [the] working knowledge.

Apart from the call for stipulations regarding text choice, this statement also points to a wish for clarification pertaining to the learning objectives attached to literary texts. 3EM clearly also assigns value to having a common EFL text canon which every student should be exposed to.

Moreover, there are also teachers who express that they do not have sufficient knowledge about the types of texts that are suitable for the different levels of English and that they therefore need help and instructions in this regard. Participant 3EF remarks:

> I've never been a person that reads that much. I do wish for some guidelines in terms of what sort of novels would be suitable, so that could be written in [to the syllabus]. Maybe not specifically this, a title per se, but at least this author has written several novels that would fit the level of English.

This is further evidence of the sense of frustration that some of the teachers experience with regard to the lack of guidance in the text selection process. Not all teachers have the same interest in reading literary texts, and for this reason some request additional help in the matter.

As the results show, there are both perceived advantages and disadvantages connected to the freedom of choosing what literary texts to include in an English course at the upper secondary level. While the teachers generally take a firm stand for or against any kind of stipulations and/or guidance as regards the choice of literary texts, there are other areas related to the syllabus where they are more ambivalent in their attitudes and where certain factors (such as the role of literary texts in the subject of English) do not come to the fore until later in the interviews, when they are asked specific questions in this regard. For instance, additional questions were posed concerning whether the teachers perceive that there are indications in the syllabus regarding *how* to approach literary texts (by means of which methods) and concerning the role of literary texts (*why*) in the EFL context. These factors will be addressed further in chapter 6.

5.3 Rationales Behind Text Selection

The term *text type* refers to the main genres employed in phase I of the study, that is, poetry, novels, short stories, and film adaptations (or narrative films), but it also incorporates drama, songs, and song lyrics, which are mentioned in the English syllabus and discussed in phase II of the study. The term thus includes both typographic and non-typographic texts. The data regarding text types are first presented by employing a general perspective where the participants' text preferences and views are shown for all three levels of English and related concerns, such as progression, are mentioned. This is followed by a presentation of the participants' rationales behind text selection based on the level of English (English 5, English 6, and English 7), where the use of Young Adult (YA) literature and literature for adults is explored, as well as the use and prevalence of contemporary and older texts. The use of extracts of different text types in relation to complete texts is also examined.

5.3.1 General Aspects of Selection of Text Types

Several participants mention that they use a mix of different literary text types throughout the three English courses at the upper secondary level, but a focus on short stories and novels is predominant while, for instance, poetry is less prevalent (2SM,2SF, 2SM, 3EF, 4EM, 1EM, 4SF). This is in line with the findings of phase I of the study. However, several other participants state that they focus as much on poetry as on any other text type (1EF, 3EM, 2EM, 3SF, 4EF, 3EM). A couple of participants mention no poetry at all (1EM, 4SM). Plays are mainly brought up in connection to film adaptations. However, two participants specifically mention that they read plays or drama with their students as well (2SM, 4EF). Moreover, one participant, referring to both English 5 and English 6, explains:

> I use a big mix of all [the literary text types] because I feel that one should have gone through all of them, roughly, so that one has been allowed to experience sort of to read a whole book, to read a short story, to read an excerpt of a text and sort of work with it. I have included four different poems that I am working with right now. And the same with plays.[63] (2EM, my translation)

Exposing the students to different kinds of written literary texts and teaching them how to approach them is therefore important to 2EM.

Another participant, 2SF, alludes to the idea that there is some progression in the types of texts that she uses. She states, "I try to read novels in 5, 6, and 7. At least one, each

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[63] Original quotation: "Jag använder en stor blandning mellan alla… bara för jag tycker att man ska ha gått igenom alla ungefär så… Att man ska ha fått uppleva liksom att läsa en hel bok, att ha läst… att ha läst en short story, att ha läst utdrag ur en text och liksom ha arbetat med den… jag har med fyra olika dikter som jag jobbar med just nu… så att man har upplevt det. Och så samma med pjäser".

year. Short stories are also definitely a part of it. Poetry, I use mainly in English 7, but sometimes in English 6 and 5 as well". 2EF reasons along similar lines, stating that she works more with poetry in English 7 than in the other two English courses. When asked to explain why this is, she responds: "I don't work a lot with poetry, actually. I've worked with song lyrics more. And I think that's depending on the group I have. Because that's something that they can relate to more than poetry" (2EF). She thus focuses on the students' perspectives and uses songs to reach them, thereby highlighting the importance of the students' own experiences and interests. It is also suggested that poetry may be used with some students, perhaps those who are interested in the genre. Individualization thus appears to be essential to 2EF.

In reference to a focus on novels, there are only two participants among the 16 who state that they either do not focus on novels at all in their EFL classrooms or that they find that it is not actually necessary to read a whole novel. 1SF elects to focus on shorter texts, partly due to the time constraints involved in her work as a teacher in adult education, where the courses are shorter.[64] She further explains:

> I always choose to work with short stories or extracts from books, extracts from plays, poetry, music, academic texts, and so on as well, but if we focus on the fictional, literary ones, I want to do different medias. Or if we watch an episode from a TV series or a movie adaptation, but I want to focus on things that are shorter so that I can do a broader variety.

The rationale here is thus to be able to cover as wide a variety of different kinds of texts, such as literary texts, fictional texts in other media, and non-fictional texts. The widened text concept is clearly discernible in this example. 4SM, on the other hand, explains: "My general strategy, I'd say, would be that like in English 5 I try not to set the bar too high in terms of page numbers and stuff like this. So, we work a lot with short stories… and excerpts". However, he also adds that if students so wish, they can read a novel if they feel that they have the time. At all three levels of English, when novels are in focus, it is not important to 4SM that a student has completed a whole novel as long as they have tried to do so to the best of their ability. The reasoning is that if a particular student is not an avid reader, it is better to help them onto the right path and to allow them to listen to parts of a story and then read the rest (4SM). Hence, encouragement and individual goals are of the essence in this case.

The remaining 14 teachers all state that they ask their students to read at least one novel per level of English. Why do they make this choice, given that it is no longer an explicit requirement in the syllabus? Some teachers assert that a novel allows for greater depth in the discussion or in the understanding of a text. 1EF, for instance, explains: "Why I choose novels is because it creates that depth. It creates that… I at least feel that in order for

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[64] Komvux (adult education) follows the same syllabus as the regular upper secondary schools do, but courses tend to run over one semester rather than two.

students to understand a novel is to get into the characters… into the ways of feelings of how society affects them in different ways". When asked if short stories would not work as well, she responds that in this text type the students "don't really see the characters. But in a novel the characters are, you know, they are with you all the time, and in that sense, you give the students time to understand them". In essence, her standpoint is that a novel allows the students to become intimately familiar with the characters and that they will thereby understand and empathize with them to a greater degree, but there is also the element of decoding the message of the novel by means of a deeper understanding of its characters. The concept of depth is further discussed by 2SM, who remarks that working with novels creates an opportunity for

> continuous work around a focal point, which gives me the time to pose more questions during the work process, as opposed to if we had worked with a shorter text for only a couple or three weeks. So, it allows for in-depth study, which shorter texts do not.[65] (my translation)

In this regard, an in-depth focus entails exposing and discussing a particular theme or topic to a greater extent and from different angles. It further implies that working on a novel affords the opportunity for more process-related work, allowing the students to reflect and respond over a greater period of time than when they focus on shorter texts. 3EF also hints at the idea that reading novels provides opportunities for in-depth study. She remarks:

> The excerpts that you get in textbooks, they're good, but you only get a very small portion of it. I would like for the students to read a full novel because then they can look at the dramatic curve, where's the climax, when is it resolved, you can look at the characters, the setting. You can look at so many more things if you read full novels. And it's also easier to detect the different things that we look at.

Hence, what is seen as beneficial in this case is the space that is frequently devoted to in-depth descriptions and depictions in a novel, allowing for a more detailed examination of a variety of literary devices. This benefit may be one possible explanation as to why it is more common for some of the participants in the survey to use novels than to employ the course book to approach literary texts.

A few participants point to the importance of reading a full-length novel for the sake of factors related to reading skills and strategies. 3SM, for example, conveys that people in general do not read very much these days and that it is important to focus on novels for the benefit of reading skills. He states further that "one skill that's sort of general and universal that a lot of students lack is focus and sort of focus for a longer period of time as it were, so focus and stamina in a way". Hence, it is perceived as important to include a novel in the

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[65] Original quotation: "Det blir ett kontinuerligt arbete kring en fokuspunkt, vilket gör att jag hinner med fler frågor att ställa under arbetets gång visavi om vi hade jobbat med en kortare text i bara ett par tre veckor. Så det ger en möjlighet till fördjupning som kortare texter inte ger".

course content for extended reading purposes and to improve the students' reading skills. 3SF takes a similar stance when discussing literary texts. She stresses the importance of not only providing the students with the opportunity to read extracts and short stories, but to "read a longer book as well, also for the sake of literacy and endurance. To have the energy to read a whole book. It does wonders for reading comprehension, I think" (my translation).[66] Thus, both the factor of stamina and a perceived positive effect associated with reading comprehension are discernible in this statement. Aside from factors related to stamina, 2SF points to reading strategies as a crucial factor connected to reading full-length novels. She asserts that students need to be confronted with "large amounts of text", such as novels, to better prepare them for university studies, for example. Here it is the idea of sifting through texts to find vital information or themes that is the main focal point, but also preparation for future tasks related to life after upper secondary education has been completed.

Besides the more clearly defined reasons for focusing on novels pertaining to, for example, matters of depth and reading skills, there are more equivocal statements regarding why teachers elect to focus on novels. 2EF, for instance, explains: "Novels I do because I think everybody should read a novel". It is possible that she also discerns similar benefits to those outlined above, but this is not clear. However, the statement could also be interpreted as meaning that students should be exposed to different types of literary texts and that a novel is one such type. This may be related, for example, to cultural traditions or to curricular concerns.

While there is a major focus on typographic literary texts in the participants' descriptions, film adaptations are certainly included in the course content as well. In some cases, teachers use these film adaptations as complements to novels that have been read or that will be read by the students. One such example is 3SM, who finds that it is meaningful to look at the differences between a novel and a film adaptation and further remarks that they "always watch the film afterwards, in that case, trying to keep the students away from it whilst we read the novel version, which isn't always that easy, of course. But it can of course be a great assignment at the end of a process, to compare a novel and a movie version of something". He thus appears to value the opportunity for students to work on comparisons, which is a term that permeates the syllabus as well, while also clearly fearing that students will opt for the film version rather than reading the novel. Hence, there is an underlying suggestion that the teacher wishes to ensure that the students, first and foremost, partake of the text by means of reading.

The opportunity for comparisons that a combination of a novel and a film adaptation affords is also valued by participant 2SF. However, she prefers to show the film adaptations before the students read the novel. She reasons that "sometimes it's easier for students

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[66] Original quotation: "Jag tycker att det är bra att få med sig en hel bok också, att inte bara läsa utdrag eller bara läsa noveller som är korta. Utan att man får en längre bok också, även för läskunnighetens skull och uthålligheten. Att orka läsa en hel bok. För det… 'it does wonders' för läsförståelsen, tänker jag".

who struggle if they've seen the movie beforehand, they understand the novel better". The visual input of the film adaptation therefore appears to be viewed as a useful educational tool in this case, which will allow the students to better grasp the sometimes challenging contents of a classical novel. Similarly, participant 3EM also alludes to this benefit of film adaptations. He remarks: "Why I use film adaptations is to give students some kind of visual clues as to what has actually gone on in the book". From this perspective, a film adaptation is construed as a complement and as a scaffolding tool.

3EF favors comparisons between novels and film adaptations as well, but in her classroom, they also focus on issues such as cinematic techniques and directing, adding another dimension to the learning focus. Participant 4SF also focuses a great deal on film adaptations. She describes a project where the students first read *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Highsmith, 1955), then watch the film adaptation, and then move on to a research article entitled "Not as Good as the Book". After this, they all, teacher and students, discuss "artistic freedom and what happens with a text when it is made into a film" (4SF, my translation).[67] She adds that she likes to mix it up in this way in order to cover as much of the core content of the syllabus as possible, but also because both she and the students really enjoy working with films and written texts in this fashion. This points to a combination of useful and educational advantages, with elements of engagement and motivation to enhance both the teaching and the learning process.

Many of the participants appear to have a variety of reasons for focusing on film adaptations, such as the opportunity to analyze "film language" and "how things are presented" (2SM, my translation).[68] 2SM further reports that he always chooses to use film adaptations for the purpose of demonstrating the genre of plays. Another participant mentions that she uses film adaptations more "as a start for introducing a theme when we work with society and culture and living conditions" (4EF), but also to introduce students to plays. Hence, there is a combination of factors behind the use of a film adaptation. This can be connected to two stipulations in the core content of the English syllabus (Skolverket, 2021c). The specifications of focusing on culture and society in contexts and places where English is used, as well as of exposing students to different types of literary texts, are covered by 2SM. In the case of 4EF, the specifications relating to culture and society as well as to different literary genres are emphasized.

Two of the participants find that focusing on both the novel and the film adaptation is not possible due to time constraints (2SM, 1EF), while another (4SM) expresses that he selects film adaptions and not novels to save time. Participant 3SM explains that while he has used a film adaptation to provide students with visual clues, he recognizes that there is often too much focus on the film. He perceives that

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[67] Original quotation: "*artistic freedom* och vad händer med en text när den blir en film".
[68] Original quotation: "filmspråk"; "hur saker och ting visas upp".

[the] students tend to forget the novel in favor of the film. So, any written work, for example, as a follow-up on what they have understood, tends to focus very, very heavily on the film. Because that's probably the medium where they feel most comfortable.

3SM further conveys that he has gradually gone over to using mainly film adaptations, which he seems to attribute to time constraints.

There are also participants who have either come to realize that a combination of films and novels does not always yield the desired result or who have elected to avoid film adaptations altogether. Participant 2EF explains: "last year, we watched a film [after reading the novel] and they wrote a comparison. It didn't work out that well, so I'm going to skip the film this year and give them a different final assignment that would be written. I haven't decided yet". While it is not clear why the assignment was not successful, from her perspective, it seems to point to too much emphasis on the film adaptation on the part of the students. Yet another participant is adamant about not focusing on film adaptations at all. He states that "I do avoid films. Because I mean it's reading, not watching" (4EM). This statement points to a specific interpretation of the syllabus as regards literary texts, translating to literary texts being viewed as typographic texts only.

While the results of phase I of the study point to a widespread use of film adaptations, they do not provide an answer as to how film adaptations are judged in relation to typographic literary sources. The findings from phase II suggest that typographic literary texts are viewed as more important than film adaptations by several participants, but there are also those who perceive them as equally important and some have also elected to start using film adaptations instead of typographic texts.

5.3.2 Selection of Text Types per Level of English

The participants' text type selections at each level of English reveal both differences and similarities in terms of a focus on YA fiction and literature for adults, as well as concerning the use of contemporary and older texts. Moreover, complete texts, especially novels, are the most frequently mentioned text types, but some participants seem to prefer extracts. The reasons behind the participants' text selections are sometimes made apparent, but not always.

5.3.2.1 Text Selection in English 5

The majority of the participants appear to focus mostly on contemporary texts and on *young adult* (YA) literature in English 5, but older text types also occur. 3SM discloses a preference for contemporary fiction and mentions YA literature in particular. He provides an example of YA literature in the form of a novel his students have just worked on together, *Big Mouth & Ugly Girl* (Oates, 2002). A similar view is expressed by 2EM, who states that he

asks his students to select novels specifically written for "teenagers"; he also provides examples of novels he used to like when he was younger. 3SF recounts that at her school they decided upon three suitable novels for their English 5 students; they are *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (Chbosky, 1999), *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Haddon, 2003), and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007). A focus on novels and contemporary YA literature thus appears to be preferred amongst the participants as regards English 5 overall, but differences exist. For example, one participant (4SF) includes somewhat older literary texts at this level and has focused on both *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1949).[69] 4SF explains that these choices are possible since she works at a school with students that she labels as "high achievers". She states that, consequently, she can ask "the students to read practically anything" and they will do so. Furthermore, participant 4EF mentions reading the novel *The Wave* (Strasser, 1981) with her English 5 students, a novel that is not strictly speaking categorized as older literature but that may be viewed as older by the students. This novel is also classified as YA literature. This is something that 4EF alludes to when she says: "it takes place in a high school, the main characters are their age, a bit of relations, leadership, and yeah I think topics and issues that they can easily relate to". Hence, she also refers to the identification factor as an added benefit of focusing on this novel. 3EM, on the other hand, explains that he gives his English 5 students the "freedom to choose any novel by an English-speaking author", which could of course mean that some students choose older texts while others opt for contemporary texts.

The reasoning behind text selection is not always made explicit, but it seems fair to assume that the preference for YA literature is based on the idea that these texts both tend to be somewhat easier to read and focus on topics and characters that are relevant for young people. This provides an indication of how and why the material is selected. Furthermore, while 2EM's and 3EM's students select the books on an individual basis and read these books individually, 4SF's, 3SM's, and 3SF's students read and work on set novels, either as a whole class or in smaller groups. It should also be added that in the case of the latter example, the teachers have also read the novels the students are working on.[70]

5.3.2.2 Text Selection in English 6

The participants focus on a variety of text types, such as novels, plays, poetry, and films, either complete works or extracts in English 6. Both contemporary and older texts are mentioned and the main focus appears to be on literature for adults rather than for young adults. In cases where the titles of the works are mentioned, these are book titles. To begin with, some participants mention using contemporary autobiographies. 1EF, for example,

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[69] In the commentary material on the English syllabus (S21), the Swedish National Agency for Education defines older literature as literary texts written before 1950 (Skolverket, 2021b).
[70] The participants' views of and reasoning about collaborative and individual reading projects are explored further in chapter 6.

often works with the full-length book *I am Malala* (Yousafzai, 2013). 1SF, on the other hand, explains that she uses extracts of *Angela's Ashes* (McCourt, 1996), an autobiography. Finally, 4EF focuses on the memoir *Educated* (Westover, 2018). These teachers mention the titles listed when questions are raised related to literary texts, so it appears that they view these memoirs and autobiographies as such, as evidenced, for example, by 1EF, who states that she has introduced *I am Malala* to try "to angle fiction into [the students'] everyday life". She further sees topics in the book as "absolutely current, I mean with Afghanistan and women's rights being extremely insulted and going back to how it used to be", and therefore deems the book to be an appropriate choice. It may also be easier to encourage the students to read a text that is based on true events. This connection to real life people and events is something that 4EF believes that her students value. In conjunction with reading the memoir *Educated*, she lets the students watch an interview conducted by the actor and television host DeGeneres with the author of the book, and she perceives that

> students they seem to, they are familiar with the program and they get a bit interested "oh, she was there" and they see that she is quite young, and when they hear, well, Ellen she is really impressed by the writer so they see that as well and then when they hear that this is a true story, I think that helps.

There is thus a motivational factor attached to the selection of an autobiography or a memoir. These examples are both autobiographical and of the contemporary variety.

Some of the other participants choose to focus on complete novels from another era in English 6. The reasons for such a focus vary. 4EM, for example, explains that he has chosen to use novels by "Charles Dickens because there's lots of quite small books around, not too thick… it's giving a very good image of what society was like in those days". He thus values the descriptions of 19th century society in Dickens' novels and does not appear to be daunted by the possibility that such novels may be perceived as difficult by the students. Another example is described by 2SF, who has elected to focus on the classical novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960) because this novel helps to highlight "racial segregation in America" at the time, as well as the situation of young people "struggling to fit in". This novel allows 2SF to focus on historical and social aspects while also considering the aspect of identification on the part of the students. 3EM focuses on similar concerns by means of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde, 1890), but from a slightly different angle. The rationale behind his text choice is that students can sometimes become more aware of issues of today when reading an older text. He explains that

> it's always a great way of getting someone interested in a modern-day problem if Oscar Wilde is talking about the same images and issues with beauty 150 odd years ago, or whenever it was, so they can somehow relate to their Snapchat, Instagram, worlds of artificial beauty, and say "well, you know, this guy was talking about this 120 years ago".

Hence it is suggested that older works can serve not only as vehicles of thought and depictions of bygone eras but can also help students to detect similarities and to identify with characters from the past, as well as helping them to recognize that certain problems and issues are universal.

Complete plays, particularly by Shakespeare, are also prevalent amongst the answers, both typographic and non-typographic varieties. 1SM states that he frequently focuses on Shakespeare's *Othello* from beginning to end, and that the students generally work on this project for four weeks. A similar approach is outlined by 4SF, who states that her students work on a complete play by Shakespeare, but it appears that the choice of play may vary. It is not clear why these participants make the choice of focusing on a complete work, but participant 4SF does remark in another context that she prefers to work with novels that have "a beginning, a middle, and an end", which may apply to the plays as well. It is also evident that the choice of a somewhat longer text, like a play by Shakespeare, allows for or requires more time to be spent on the work, thereby resulting in project-like work rather than smaller task-based units. Lastly, one participant, 2SM, explains that he elects to cover plays, particularly older plays, such as by Shakespeare, by means of film adaptations.

In terms of shorter, older texts or extracts of older literary texts, there are four specific examples. 4EF states that in her English 6 classroom, they "do a little bit of Shakespeare", that is, extracts of Shakespeare's work. However, she does not specify whether this entails poems, plays, or both, or why she focuses on extracts. Participant 3SF chooses to focus on some short stories from different eras, such as by Poe and by Shelley. These texts are not extracts, but complete, relatively short, texts, allowing for more time to be spent on a variety of other texts as well. 2EM states that he starts English 6 with "classical literature, which many tend to abhor".[71] He has therefore selected extracts rather than longer texts from classical authors (Shakespeare, Defoe, Austen, Shelley, Hemingway, Greene, and Tolkien) as well as some WWI poetry for this level that he covers each year. These texts are then followed by a focus on some song lyrics by the rapper Eminem. Hence, he mixes old and newer texts of different kinds in an attempt to motivate the students, and to expose them to different literary contexts, genres, and periods.

The change in focus from English 5 to English 6 seems to entail a greater focus on literature for adults rather than on YA literature, and a broader focus on older texts of different kinds, although contemporary texts are still the most common, which is also in line with the syllabus. Narrative texts appear to be the favored text type, but other text types such as poetry, plays, and film adaptations are mentioned. In some cases, there are clear differences between the participants' answers, such as when it comes to difficulty levels and the use of older texts.

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[71] Original quotation: "klassisk litteratur, vilket många brukar avsky"

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5.3.2.3 Text Selection in English 7

With regard to English 7, there is no clear pattern when it comes to text selection. Instead, the participants prioritize a variety of text types and time periods for different reasons. There are also fewer answers connected to English 7 and text selection. Nonetheless, the responses do contribute to confirming the idea that the syllabus stipulations at this level allow for greater variety.

An initial observation is that some participants opt for a contemporary novel or a contemporary memoir at the English 7 level. 1SM, for example, uses the novel *The God of Small Things* (Roy, 1997), which is set both in the 60s and in the 90s. He explains that this novel allows him to work on post-colonial theory and focus on themes such as "racism, as part of how India developed", among other things. 1EF, on the other hand, focuses on the contemporary memoir *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Kamkwamba, 2009) with her English 7 students. Yet another participant, 4SF, uses a "true crime" story entitled *In Cold Blood* (Capote, 1965). The latter two examples suggest that narrative texts based on real life events are popular at the English 7 level as well as at the English 6 level.

Allowing the students in English 7 to choose between a number of set novels, both contemporary and older ones, is an approach that 2SF has made use of in the past. She recounts that the choices included the novels *Game of Thrones* (Martin, 1996) and *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1818) as well as one other novel that she could not recall. Her students were thereby afforded the opportunity to decide between a contemporary novel and an older one. She perceived that they appreciated this but explains further: "I was like overwhelmed with all the work I needed to be able to do beforehand and afterwards and… So, I mean, in the best of worlds, sure". From this angle, the workload associated with trying to accommodate everyone's wishes and covering different time periods simultaneously is thus a factor in how much a teacher can accomplish in this regard.

At the English 7 level, there are two factors that appear to contribute to the use of film adaptations or extracts from different text types: exposing the students to a variety of genres, as well as time constraints associated with the many parameters in the syllabus. 1EF explains that, in English 7, she includes sections of "all these famous *David Copperfield, Great Expectations*, and *A Christmas Carol*. And I put [the students] in three different groups. They get to see the film, and then they have questions that I ask them". She perceives that this combination of films and discussions "is very much appreciated" by the students. However, upon considering the option of using the typographic variety of these older texts, 1EF adds that "sadly, we [would] not have the time for all three". 1EF thus focuses on the English 7 syllabus stipulation regarding older literary texts by means of the widened text concept and student interaction, which she perceives provides an enjoyable experience for the students, while it also frees up time for her to focus on a variety of other course objectives. Moreover, 3EM describes using "extracts from novels because they do have so much more to do in English 7". He clarifies this statement by adding that "short stories and extracts, also quite a bit of poetry" from different time periods are prioritized,

rather than longer texts. However, it is not only the demands of the English syllabus that are a concern, but also other subjects. 3EM adds: "[The students) might have two or three novels in Swedish to be reading at the same time", which is another reason for the focus on shorter texts and extracts in the final year of their studies. He explains: "I have some resources where I have the best short stories of the 20th century, and I pick out ten of those from different time periods". Time constraints and syllabus stipulations thus appear to be at the root of these decisions, as well as a desire to share historical and literary aspects of these texts.

5.4 Analysis and Discussion

The participants' views of the freedom that the syllabus affords, as well as their interpretations of the syllabus as regards text selection, will be analyzed using Goodlad et al.'s (1979) conceptualizations of two particular curricular domains. These domains are expressed as *formal curricula* (the steering documents) and *perceived curricula* (the individual interpretations of the syllabus on the part of each teacher). Moreover, the participants' beliefs and assumptions about text selection in the EFL context will be explored using the new constructs of *teacher literary repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts and literary studies which cannot be firmly linked to the English syllabus) and *EFL repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts which can be connected to the English syllabus, such as objectives related to language development and cultural knowledge), based on McCormick's (1994) concepts and teachers' beliefs, as well as by means of McCormick's own concepts *general ideology* (a society's general views, beliefs, and values) and *literary ideology* (a society's views, habits, and beliefs as regards literary texts).

The results suggest that the participants generally appreciate the freedom of choice or the professional *free space* that the English syllabus affords, particularly in relation to the selection of materials which can suit their students (e.g., 1EM, 2EF, 3SM, and 4SM) hinting at *EFL repertoires* concerned with personal development and student engagement. Yet some participants express uncertainty over which texts to opt for (3EF) and whether they are in fact focusing on materials and topics that the Swedish National Agency for Education has intended (e.g., 4EM). This feeling of uncertainty is also something that Lundström (2007) noted in his study of L1 teachers in Sweden, a feeling which he suggests results in an overreliance on colleagues, as well as on the teachers' own beliefs and assumptions about literary texts. In the present study, there are indications that additional stipulations in what Goodlad et al. (1979) term the *formal curriculum,* that is, in the English syllabus, would be welcomed by some participants. This becomes evident in statements such as that expressed by participant 3EM, calling for a form of canon within the course curriculum to either limit teachers or to provide more guidance, which also indicates a desire for consensus in terms of what EFL teaching is meant to impart. The mention of a canon further suggests a *teacher literary repertoire* that values certain authors, titles, and/or text types over others and not

an *EFL repertoire* since such notions are not broached in the syllabus. It also reveals assumptions about literary text canons as conveyors of vital knowledge about a literary cultural heritage. A wish for a more detailed *formal curriculum* can furthermore be detected in comments regarding a teacher's personal lack of knowledge about literary texts and the issue of doubts over self-efficacy that participant 3EF voices. She pleads for guidelines about which novels are deemed suitable in terms of level of difficulty and age groups. Such recommendations might then include, for example, YA novels (cf. Matz & Stieger, 2015, p. 124). These positive and negative reactions to the free space with respect to text selection reveal differences in *teacher literary repertoires*, particularly concerning the absence of a canon and the absence of guidelines.

As far as the participants' own approaches to text selection are concerned, the overall results reveal *EFL repertoires* concerned mainly with text-driven and student-driven criteria for text selection connected to the syllabus but there are also *general repertoires* linked to the *general ideology* of the curriculum. Text-driven criteria involve the importance of exposing students to a variety of text types (e.g., films, novels, short stories, plays, and poetry), as described by 2EM, which appear to be based on *EFL repertoires* since such examples are provided in the English syllabus. In addition, there are text-driven criteria for text selection based on *EFL repertoires* relating to cultural content, such as selecting texts with themes that treat culture and society (as described by 1SF and 4EF). However, language-related concerns are not made evident when it comes to text selection. Such concerns may be more readily discernible in the answers pertaining to the functions of literary texts and related approaches (see chapters 6 and 7). The student-driven criteria for text selection reveal both *EFL repertoires* and *general repertoires* connected to the curriculum as a whole where the student is placed at the center and where personal choice is valued. This is visible in the participants' descriptions whereby the importance of motivational factors such as the students' interests and suitability factors involving age and proficiency level are highlighted (cf. Bland, 2018; Matz & Stieger, 2015; Thyberg, 2022), as illustrated by, for example, 4EF and 3SM. It is further revealed in the examples where students are allowed to select the novels themselves (e.g., 4SM and 3EM).

On a more detailed level, the results of the present study point to *perceived curricula* of text selection, which are manifested in different ways, revealing both similarities and differences in *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires.* For instance, 2EM's observation that it is essential for the students to experience various text types (e.g., novels, poems, and short stories) appears to be connected to an *EFL repertoire* since such guidelines are available in the syllabus. The comment by 3EF on the significance of reading novels as they allow for the examination of narrative structure (e.g., dramatic curve and setting), however, depicts a *teacher literary repertoire* grounded in a belief that teaching literary competence in the EFL context is deemed to be of value (cf. Freese, 2015; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Torell, 2002).

Whether it is viewed as important to focus on films and other media or whether the focus should be on written texts only when it comes to literary studies in the EFL context

can be connected both to the *formal curriculum* and to *perceived curricula* as well as to *teacher literary repertoires*. For example, when literary texts are equated exclusively with written material, as expressed by 4EM, this is a representation of a certain way of reading the syllabus stipulation: "themes, form and content in films and literature" (Skolverket, 2021c, my translation), a stipulation which appears to assign equal importance to film and literary texts in general. [72] The *teacher literary repertoire* expressed by 4EM, however, depicts a belief that typographic literary texts are of higher value than multimodal or non-typographic texts or that the word "literature" is synonymous with a typographic literary work, which is in part also suggested by the English syllabus. There are additional examples of *teacher literary repertoires* which favor typographic literary texts over non-typographic varieties, as demonstrated by concerns over the students' misinterpretations of novels and overreliance on films to the detriment of novels (e.g., as reported by 3SM and 2EF). The idea that typographic literary texts are of higher value than, for example, film adaptations is a value judgement which at first glance appears to be unrelated to the English syllabus. However, as previously mentioned, it is noteworthy that the Swedish National Agency for Education differentiates between films and literary texts, that is, films are not incorporated into the term literary texts.[73] This could account for some of the differences in views and beliefs expressed by the participants. In contrast to 4EM, 3SM, and 2EF, the findings reveal that some teachers (e.g., 4SF and 2SM) appear to view non-typographic texts, such as films, and typographic texts as more or less equally important. Additionally, the results show that some participants clearly favor both the scaffolding opportunities afforded to students of lower proficiency levels in the form of visual clues (3EM and 2SF) and the motivational aspects attached to using films (1EF and 4SF), that is, the potential that films have in terms of captivating low proficiency learners (see Sert & Armi, 2021) and as regards what Thyberg (2022) calls their value as "high-interest vehicles" (pp. 30-31) which can introduce students to literary analysis by means of something they are already familiar with (p. 31). The two *teacher literary repertoires* discernible here thus point to a difference in the perception of films as pedagogical tools when it comes to literary studies in EFL, which could conceivably also have an impact on educational content where multimodal texts are not in focus to the same extent. Nonetheless, it is possible that films, or multimodal texts in general, are covered in other EFL classroom situations which are unrelated to literary studies.

The prevalence of and focus on YA literature is also an aspect that has been brought to light in the present study. The results show that YA literature is the preferred genre in English 5 but that it is not mentioned to the same extent in connection to English 6 and English 7. As concerns English 5, the majority of the participants thus seem to equate "literary texts" in the syllabus with YA literature that, among other things, suits the language

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[72] Original quotation: "teman, form och innehåll i film och skönlitteratur".

[73] In the syllabus of the subject of Swedish at the upper secondary level (Skolverket, 2022) films are excluded from the term literary texts (skönlitteratur) in one place, that is, literary works *and* films (p. 3), and incorporated in the term in another place, that is, literary works *including* films (p. 6).

levels of the students and allows them to relate to the characters and to the themes which suggests *EFL repertoires* concerned with teen relevance, and identification factors (cf. Matz & Stieger, 2015) which are prevalent in the syllabus. Such repertoires are visible both on an individual level and also through the description of teacher collaborations, as demonstrated by a comment by 3SF about the fact that three suitable YA novels have been selected at the local school level for English 5 students, taking into account both the differences between the students and their age.

To what extent a teacher focuses on contemporary or older texts falls within the realm of *teacher literary repertoires*, since the syllabus either does not make a differentiation between older and newer literary texts (EN5) or does not specify whether these stipulations should receive equal focus or not (EN6 and EN7). In addition, the rather loose definition of older literary texts as involving those written before 1950 (Skolverket, 2021b) also opens the door to a free space. While it is not altogether clear why some participants favor contemporary texts over older texts (particularly when it comes to novels), as in the case of 1EM and 1EF, it is fair to assume that it partly involves text accessibility and current themes which the students can relate to. Such a rationale would thus mean that similar reasons for choosing YA literature lie behind the choice of contemporary narrative texts for adults. This suggests an *EFL repertoire* based on the same premise, choosing compelling stories to encourage student engagement and motivation (cf. Bland, 2023). When older texts by, for example, Dickens, Wilde, and Salinger, are favored (as in the case of 4SF, 3EM, and 4EM), the findings point to *teacher literary repertoire* concerned with exposing the students to matters such as ideologies of the past, related social norms, connections between the past and the present, and/or a cultural heritage (cf. Alexander, 2000; Persson & Sundmark, 2022). The aim behind this comparison is not to suggest that either of these repertoires is better than the other, but simply to highlight that there may be a difference in educational content attached to these choices and beliefs.

The results do also show that the participants tend to focus on older literature to a greater extent in English 6 than in English 5, which may be connected to the explicit mention of "older literature" in the English 6 section of the syllabus. While some participants elect to work on extracts of older texts in English 6 (2EM and 4EF), some opt for complete novels by Dickens and Salinger, as described above. The choice between using extracts from older texts and using classic novels reveals different *teacher literary repertoires* which, on the one hand, appear to be based on a belief that older text extracts should serve as examples of different texts or literary periods to cover syllabus stipulations (as alluded to by 2EM) , and, on the other, that they hold greater importance and should therefore be prioritized (as suggested by 1SM). Such differences in *teacher literary repertoires* further suggest that these EFL teachers' course objectives differ to some extent.

Moreover, the responses that concern older literary texts in English 6 reveal additional *teacher literary repertoires*. While Shakespeare is not mentioned in the syllabus, several participants seem to view this playwright as a natural part of an English 6 course, such as participants 2EM, 1SM, 4EF, and 4SF. This belief is thus based on a *teacher literary*

repertoire that assigns value to Shakespeare as key to the English-speaking literary heritage. There may also be a connection to the prevalence of Shakespeare (as well as Dickens and Austen, to name a few) in the course books that are available to the teachers. As a consequence, producers and publishers of teaching materials may also contribute to the formation of *teacher literary repertoires* by means of *literary ideology* which, according to McCormick (1994), represents society at large and which may result in a form of informal canonization of certain authors or titles. This idea is supported by Persson (2007) when he comments that course books may have an authoritative role as regards course content and which authors and works are to be prioritized. The impact of English teacher education may also be a factor, since there is a ubiquitous focus on Shakespeare in the literature components of these programs (Dodou, 2020, p. 130). Nevertheless, there are participants, such as 1EM, who do not assign any particular value to classical writers such as Shakespeare, and who thereby minimize the importance of relating literary texts to a specified cultural heritage. These findings support the supposition that there are clear differences in *teacher literary repertoires* as concerns the role of older literary texts and as to the importance of a cultural heritage focus in upper secondary EFL education.

In the syllabus of English 7 (an elective course), it is possible to infer either that equal focus is to be afforded to contemporary and older texts or that teachers can choose from the two options as they see fit. As the findings show, the participants do also focus on different time periods and difficulty levels, as well as on both typographic and non-typographic texts, which reveals differences in *teacher literary repertoires*. For instance, the decision to work with the contemporary novel *The God of Small Things*, as in the case of 1SM, to address issues of post-colonial theory and the theme of racism, points to a *teacher literary repertoire* where text-driven criteria are at the fore. The choice to focus on several film adaptations of Dickens' works in English 7 (such as described by 1EF), on the other hand, suggests a *teacher literary repertoire* based on student-driven criteria and the idea that non-typographic texts carry with them motivational factors in terms of captivating the students, as previously noted above, which has the potential of making the students more interested in older texts (cf. Thyberg, 2022) while an appreciation for the time-saving aspects of multimodal text types is also highlighted.

To conclude, the rationales behind text selection indicate both similarities and differences in *perceived curricula* as regards the selection of text types, YA literature, and literature for adults, as well as in terms of contemporary and older literary texts. The central premises of the repertoires that are revealed in this regard span from prioritizing texts based on their perceived potential in creating an interest conducive to student engagement, their suitability as representatives of literary periods, and their cultural and historical significance, as well as whether the general themes of the works are considered to be suitable for analysis and discussions with various aims. The choices between typographic and non-typographic texts are also revealed, and they highlight beliefs about what constitutes a literary text as well as fears about lack of reading and the perceived benefits of motivation and scaffolding.

The findings concerned with text selection in this part of the present study (phase II) can be connected to both relevant research on text selection and to related concerns. In the Nordic context, Lyngstad's (2019) study of Norwegian upper secondary EFL teachers pointed to a preference for novels while a small-scale study by Luukka (2019) in the Finnish upper secondary EFL context showed that poetry and novels are the preferred text types. The results from these two studies, in combination with the findings of the present study, do point to the widespread popularity of the novel, and narrative fiction in general, in the Nordic context. In terms of the present study, this popularity could be associated with a preference for novels in English teacher education (Dodou, 2020, p. 140), where future teachers may begin to form their *teacher literary repertoires* and their *EFL repertoires.*

The benefits of focusing on novels with opportunities for in-depth understanding and analysis of its characters and themes, as alluded to by 3EF, 1EF, and 2SM, is supported by research on the topic. The findings of Thyberg's (2016) empirical study show that the novel affords opportunities for focusing on and revealing the students' progression in learning literary skills, which is suggested by 3EF. Similar conclusions are drawn by Öhman (2009) who favors the novel over other text types due to the depth of the storyline, its potential role in opening up new worlds and helping to create new meaning for the reader (p. 168). Öhman further advocates the use of whole and complete texts, such as novels and short stories, in the classroom in order to motivate and encourage students to read and to practice reading literary texts (2015, p. 167).

Moreover, when novels (or literary texts in general) are selected and discussed in terms of different forms of engagement (4SF) and enjoyment (4SM and 4EF), this implies *teacher literary repertoires* where aesthetic values of literature are at the fore (cf. Borsgård, 2020). However, the aspect of text suitability was emphasized to a greater extent than other aspects of the reading experience when the participants reasoned about text selection, that is, in terms of consciously voiced explicit teachers' beliefs (see Fives & Buehl, 2012, pp. 473-474; Pajares, 1992, p. 314). However, implicit beliefs about enjoyment through student engagement are present in the results when it comes to the idea that the students' interests should guide text selection. Additional angles on implicit beliefs about "enjoyment" will be explored further in chapters 6 and 7 in conjunction with findings concerning functions and methods associated with literary texts.

The widespread use of YA literature, which comes to light in the present study as concerns English 5 in particular, is also notable in the Norwegian context (Lyngstad, 2019) and in the Finnish context (Luukka, 2019). This indicates that elements such as compelling themes and recognition factors as well as the age of the students and level of difficulty are perceived to be vital criteria for text selection by the participants in all three of these Nordic studies. This perception of YA literature is supported by researchers such as Bland (2013; 2018; 2023) and Matz and Stieger (2015).

In the present study, it is clear that contemporary texts are more common than "older texts" in general, but that there are differences in this regard. A similar picture emerges in both the Norwegian (Lyngstad, 2019) and the Finnish (Luukka, 2019) contexts,

where some teachers focus mainly on contemporary texts while others use a mix of contemporary and older texts. However, while the results of the present study show that "older texts" tend to become more common after English 5, such differentiations are not made in the Norwegian study nor in the Finnish study. Nevertheless, the unevenness unveiled in the three studies does seem to suggest that there may be a difference in the types of texts that are being used by upper secondary EFL teachers overall in the three Nordic countries, which may be an indication of differences in educational content, that is, cultural heritage concerns, on the one hand, and motivation and reader response elements on the other hand.

There are additional similarities and differences as regards a focus on "older texts" in the Nordic context, particularly concerning the use of Shakespeare. This is demonstrated by Lyngstad's (2019) Norwegian study, which points to a difference in how some teachers view the importance of teaching a cultural heritage. For example, some participants in the Norwegian study choose to focus on Shakespeare (as well as on other authors such as Orwell and Golding), even though this is not a requirement in the current Norwegian EFL syllabus; they reason that, for example, Shakespeare is a representative of a certain cultural heritage and should therefore be included in the curriculum content. Nonetheless, it appears that some teachers in Lyngstad's study do not express this view, much like in the present study. Luukka's (2019) Finnish study points to a similar underlying rationale, since there are no specific curricular stipulations that demand an inclusion of Shakespeare, and yet some of the 21 participants in the study refer to using the famous playwright (six references to Shakespeare and one to Donne), while others clearly only choose modern writers from the 20th and 21st centuries. The non-explicitness of the syllabi of all three of these countries thus contributes to a notable difference in foci in regard to the use of older and newer literary texts as demonstrated by the results of the three studies. In the present study, Shakespeare and Dickens are frequently mentioned, but not by everyone. In Denmark, on the other hand, Shakespeare is mentioned by name in the syllabus at the higher level of English, and there is also the possibility of a focus on Shakespeare or on another classical writer in the oral exam at the end of the course. As a consequence, one would assume that such stipulations are largely adhered to by the Danish upper secondary EFL teachers, as these stipulations serve as a form of legitimization of this particular focus. To clarify, this comparison is not made to criticize the idea of an inclusion or an exclusion of Shakespeare, merely to highlight potential differences in course objectives based on curricular stipulations.

In conclusion, while the freedom of text selection is generally appreciated by the participants of the present study (phase II), there is also evidence of some uncertainty and frustration as to what is expected of the teachers in terms of text selection. Moreover, while it seems as though the participants tend to have their students' best interests in mind when choosing text types and specific titles, there are considerable differences in the selections and in the reasoning behind these selections, which is a result of *perceived curricula* where *teacher literary repertoires* need to fill in for what is not present in *the formal curriculum*. On

the one hand, the differences in the interpretations of the term "literary texts" in the syllabus may be viewed as a positive result of the free space, allowing teachers to choose freely, and based on different criteria, such as suitability factors and differences between students. On the other hand, limited curricular guidance in terms of what may be gained from these texts (i.e., an absence of legitimization), produces uncertainty for some teachers when it comes to implementing curricular stipulations, as illustrated by the findings of the present study and by the results of Lundström's (2007) L1 study where three out of four of the participants rely on school cultures to make their decisions, rather than on curricular stipulations. This may, among other things, result in differences in educational content.

6 EMPIRICAL DATA: INTERVIEWS PART II – FUNCTIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

6.1 Introduction

When the interview participants were asked about their views of stipulations in the English syllabus concerning literary texts, both positive and negative views were abundant about the freedom the stipulations offer in terms of text selection, that is, when addressing the issue of *what* materials to use. However, possible stipulations or guidelines in the syllabus as to *why* and *how* to approach these texts did not seem as pertinent, since they were not mentioned by the participants. As a result, additional questions about syllabus specifications in relation to functions of and approaches to literary texts were posed which elucidated this point. The participants subsequently described what they focus on while working with literary texts. These descriptions revealed their views of the functions of literary texts both by means of inferred meaning (implicit beliefs) and through more explicitly and consciously voiced views (see Fives & Buehl, 2012, pp. 473-474; Pajares, 1992, p. 314). This chapter will thus present the results connected to the topic of perceived functions of literary texts.

6.2 Teacher Views on English Syllabus Stipulations

When it comes to the participants' views on the stipulations and guidelines in the English syllabus as to the functions of and approaches to literary texts, there are several statements that elucidate this issue. A few comments indicate that some additional instructions and guidelines would be valuable, which is illustrated by 2EM who calls for clearer directives. He requires answers to the following questions: "What should literature treat? What… How is one to use it?" (my translation).[74] This points to an element of concern as to whether he is in fact approaching literary texts in the way that the Swedish National Agency for Education has intended. There is also more candid criticism regarding how both the functions of literary texts and related methods are described in the syllabus, as demonstrated by 1SF who expresses a need for greater clarity, examples of tasks, clarification in terms of the aims and goals of focusing on literary texts, and guidance concerning methods. She explains,

> I feel there could be a lot added to [the syllabus]. 'Cause there isn't much about how to work with them, it's just like the students should work with different kinds of texts. Even if they added just examples, they don't have to say, you have to do this,

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[74] Original quotation: "Vad skönlitteraturen ska bearbeta? Vad… hur ska man använda den?"

but if they added 'you could do this or you could do that'. Then at least we have some guidelines, which would be good. I know a lot of students don't see the point in doing older literature, so it would be good if Skolverket could actually go in and say this is what you're supposed to do with it. This is the relevance of it, and how these are guidelines to how you could work with it. To show why it's relevant.

Besides the call for elucidation about tasks, as well as guidance in general, 1SF also highlights another significant aspect connected to a wish for clarification or stipulation of the aims connected to literary texts, namely the reluctance to read older texts on the part of the students, and how teachers therefore need support in justifying an inclusion of older literary texts.

A similar concern is expressed by 1EF. She states, "the curriculum doesn't really pinpoint the purpose of why we have fiction in Swedish schools. Why it is important, why it is vital for students to learn English in the variety and to understanding culture". While highlighting the importance of connecting literary texts and culture, she further stresses the value of literary texts in exploring language differences, such as regional differences and slang, and that these attributes should be made visible in the aims and core content of the syllabus.

The perceived lack of clarity in terms of aims and methods pertaining to literary texts is also commented upon from a political angle. 2SM, for example, remarks that the sparse directives suggest that the reason why literary texts are included in the syllabus in the first place is mainly as a dutiful, political statement meant to impress:

My impression is that it looks impressive that it is written there. Someone writes something about, in this case, literary texts, and then we can show this to, who knows, school politicians in other countries and thereby demonstrate that we view literary texts as important while at the same time it is just for show and really nothing that is prioritized, which I do not think it is in the Swedish school system in general.[75] (my translation)

2SM, who also teaches Swedish, thus suggests that the focus on literary texts in the Swedish curriculum overall is nothing but empty words designed to dazzle outsiders, and that there are no clear intentions behind such a focus.

In order to deal with the need for examples of methods, some participants mention that the commentary material attached to the syllabus of English could be utilized to a greater degree, and it could also be expanded, as suggested by 1SM:

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[75] Original quotation: "Mitt intryck är att det ser tjusigt ut att det står där. Någon skriver någonting om i det här fallet skönlitteratur, och då kan vi visa upp den för, vad vet jag, skolpolitiker i andra länder och peka på att vi tycker att det är viktigt med skönlitteratur samtidigt som det är just väldigt pliktskyldigt och egentligen ingenting som det läggs någon vikt vid, vilket jag generellt sett inte tycker att det gör i den svenska skolan".

With clearer or more common tasks, you know, they sometimes write comments. They could have been able to write something like we would love to see that the student should be able to develop this skill to analyze, to close read longer literary texts. Like something like that would be able to help us to argue that you have to do this because the Swedish School Agency says you kind of have to.

This comment indicates a wish for clearer instructions in terms of tasks and methods associated with literary studies. It also suggests that clearer course objectives attached to literary texts are wished for to guide teachers in the right direction. 1SM also alludes to the idea that an inclusion of actual requirements attached to literary texts would help teachers to justify the course content.

There are also those who fear that the freedom that the syllabus affords may result in differences in educational content. 4SF discusses this subject, and remarks that

It is very important to have quite a lot in writing anyway so that we have a clear framework so that I know as a teacher or as a student that, well, it doesn't matter if I attend an upper secondary school in Arvidsjaur or I attend an upper secondary school in, who knows, Västerås and southern Sweden. I know that I… in any case there is, built into the system, a sense of equivalence in what is being taught. We need to have guidelines, we need to have things that are clearly expressed about our literary texts, but it should not be too controlling.[76] (my translation)

It is clear that 4SF would appreciate clearer guidelines to establish a national common ground connected to literary texts, which should then be applied at each school in Sweden, while still maintaining an element of freedom on the part of the teachers. Besides this concern, 4SF further alludes to the idea of legitimizing a focus on literary texts in the EFL context with specified learning objectives. A similar opinion is expressed by participant 3SF. She surmises that teachers approach literature in a variety of ways and for different purposes and that this, in part, is due to the non-explicitness of the syllabus. She perceives that

it contributes to [education] not being so equal, if one looks at how schools work on a nationwide level, I'm thinking. One might work in an equal way within the unit one

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[76] Original quotation: "Det är väldigt viktigt att det finns ganska mycket framskrivet ändå så att vi har tydliga ramar så jag vet som lärare eller som elev att ja men det spelar ingen roll om jag går på den här gymnasieskolan i Arvidsjaur eller jag går på en gymnasieskola i, inte vet jag, Västerås och södra Sverige. Jag vet att jag… det finns i systemet inbyggt i alla fall att det ska finnas en likvärdighet i vad jag undervisas i. Vi behöver ha riktlinjer. Vi behöver ha saker och ting som är uttalat kring vår litteratur, men den får inte vara för styrande".

is at, or within a certain brand, the district one is in, but not in Sweden on a national level. There the inequality is quite palpable, I believe.[77] (my translation)

3SF's impression is thus that teachers probably do collaborate to a large extent on the local level, sharing methods, exercises, and ideas about learning outcomes. This may conceivably add to a general belief that teachers are operating within a community of practice on a macro level (national level), while collaboration is in fact mainly taking place on the micro level (local level).

A similar view to that of 3SF's is expressed by 3SM. He expresses apprehension over the idea that teachers or schools stand alone in the decision-making process. He clarifies this by saying that "it's a bit insecure in a way to leave that choice to teachers and to individual schools". He concludes that

the quality standard, if you will, isn't there if an individual teacher has to make the choice, so I guess as always when it comes to the Swedish school system, there's too much of a difference between individual schools in a way.

This statement suggests that differences in the quality and focus of education are likely to emerge when teachers or individual schools are allowed to make the decisions about educational content on their own. It alludes to the idea of the importance of teacher professionalism and that such professionalism must be brought into question or at least considered when a syllabus is constructed.

These collected statements show that several participants view the syllabus instructions as somewhat unhelpful and that they desire clearer specifications. A few comments also demonstrate that there are some concerns over differences in educational content connected to literary texts on a national scale and to some extent also over differences in quality of education.

6.3 Teachers' Beliefs about the Functions of Literary Texts

What do the participants consider to be the main functions of literary texts? One main function that literary texts have, according to some of the participants, is that of contributing to the creation of a democratic society. 4SF, for instance, returns several times during the interview to the importance of literary texts in this regard:

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[77] Original quotation: "…det bidrar väl också till att det inte blir så jämlikt, om man ser till hur skolor jobbar nationellt sett. Tänker jag. Man kanske jobbar jämlikt på den enhet man är, eller i det varumärke, det… den kommun man är, men inte i Sverige nationellt sett. Där blir ojämlikheten ganska stor, tror jag".

When we are to create these good democratic citizens, we find that in literature we can do this. Because here we get recognition, here we get the identity, we get, they get to travel without having to physically travel. We expose them to other people's conditions, but in the classroom. So that is what it is for us. And since ethical questions and existential questions… social conditions are mentioned [in the syllabus]. Everything can be found in literature.[78] (my translation)

She thereby connects literary texts to the general concerns and aims of the Swedish curriculum on a macro level and also to the English syllabus. Another function that can be linked to the idea of educating students to become democratic citizens is that of "historical empathy", highlighted by 1SM, who frequently refers to this term. He explains:

I add history empathy [to literary studies] to help the students develop this culture awareness. So, for me, I need the students to understand that people haven't been thinking the same things during all humanity. So, if they can develop the skill of understanding that people did think differently, then we're on to something. Then we can discuss more complex matters, like what happened there in the world, whatever place.

While this function of literary texts is clearly connected to culture and cultural awareness, it also seems to be about the bigger picture of helping students to mature and to become empathetic members of society who are able to read texts in a critical way and to discuss and reflect on important matters on a deeper level.

The most common function that is associated with literary texts at the English 5 level is clearly reading comprehension, which is referred to by 1EM, 1SM, 2EF, 2EM, 3EF, and 4EF. However, while several teachers mention that reading comprehension is the main priority at this level, some also state that the acquisition of literary skills becomes increasingly more important thereafter. 3EM, for instance, explains: "the way I look at it, reading in English 5, introduction to analysis in English 6, and then full-on literary analysis in 7, which seems to work". Similarly, 2SF mentions focusing on "reading comprehension" and choosing "maybe a bit more mechanical questions" in English 5. She goes on to explain that, in English 6, she asks the students "to pick an emotion to set the mood, stuff like that, more open analytical questions". This also points to a greater focus on comprehension at the lower level and toward literary analysis, or analysis in general, at the higher levels. More specific examples of a progression in difficulty level as regards literary analysis are illustrated by 4SF. She describes using an analytical model in English 7. In relation to a short story by Faulkner, she

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[78] Original quotation: "När vi ska skapa dessa goda demokratiska samhällsmedborgare så finner ju vi att i litteraturen så kan vi göra det. För här får vi igenkänning, här får vi ju identiteten, vi får… de får resa utan att fysiskt behöva resa… Vi utsätter dem för andra människors villkor, men i klassrummet. Så det är det vom det är för oss. Och i och med att det står det här med de etiska frågorna och de existentiella frågorna, sociala förhållanden. Allting finns ju i litteraturen".

explains that "the initial approach [in English 7] is 'close reading' as they have never done it before. We are down to each line of the text".[79] This suggests a gradual progression from previous levels. Another example is 2EM's focus on literary analysis, which he finds important at all three levels. However, he conveys that "I usually start by analyzing quite a bit in English 5 anyway, but rather superficially, I think. And then in English 6, but particularly in English 7, [we] really delve deep".[80] The reference to an increase in depth of analysis also suggests an element of progression.

There are those amongst the participants who do not specifically mention literary analysis as one of the main functions of literary texts, but instead focus more on cultural and social issues. This is exemplified by 1EF, who says: "I always try to blend the fiction I choose into current social problems". For instance, when they worked on the book *I am Malala* in English 6, 1EF recounts that themes and discussions would center on:

> human rights activists, it would be about Pakistan, it would be about culture, it would be about religion, it would be about politically… political issues to understand the background of the Taliban example of the war, etc.

Besides these social and cultural concerns, participant 1EF also makes use of "reading comprehension tests" to ensure that the students are following the main story. Hence, there is a mixture of cultural/social issues and comprehension issues attached to this participant's rationale behind the function of literary texts. Another example of literary texts as cultural resources is expressed by 1EM, who remarks that "an easy way to learn about the culture, and maybe to discuss a culture is to read like a fictional story about that place or time". A similar view is presented by 2EM, who conveys that he perceives literary texts as a means "to understand today's society, to understand or create some form of empathy for characters in other subjects" (my translation).[81] Hence, from these perspectives literary texts are viewed as tools for cultural, historical, and societal instruction, with aims connected to a global education.

Other responses suggest that the primary functions of literary texts are to provide opportunities for language acquisition and subsequent language production. 4SM, for instance, explains when speaking of a recent project in English 6 that it involved "[the students] showing their sort of productive skills, based on inspiration from the book"; he adds later that while the students were reading in class, he asked them: "Have you found any good words lately?" He further remarks, in relation to a post-reading essay, "I also encourage them to sort of include all the vocabulary that they have picked up in their new text, and even highlight them so I know". These statements point to language acquisition

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[79]Original quotation: "… ingången där är 'close reading' som de aldrig har gjort förut. Vi är nere på raderna i texten".

[80] Original quotation: "Jag brukar ändå börja med att de ska analysera rätt mycket i engelska 5, men väldigt översiktligt, tycker jag. Och sedan engelska 6, men framförallt engelska 7 man går verkligen ner på djupet".

[81] Original quotation: "för att förstå dagens samhälle, för att förstå eller för att skapa någon form av empati för karaktärer i andra ämnen".

and language production as being the primary functions of teaching through literary texts. 4SM does not mention, for example, literary analysis when describing the purpose of literary texts at any level of English. Instead, he prioritizes language development and also personal development linked to social concerns and what he calls "a discursive teaching style" where the students' views of what literary texts can do for them come into play.

Yet other participants clearly view literary texts as having multiple functions. From 3SM's perspective, while his students are reading a novel, he perceives that "[they are] learning about culture, learning new words, learning grammatical structures, whilst also learning how to try literary devices and applying and analyzing literature, it just makes a great mixture". Hence, there is a focus on cultural issues, language acquisition, and literary analysis all at once. He also adds that he encourages the students to ask questions like: "how can we connect this to a certain culture, society, and timeframe and how can we connect this to our society as a point of comparison?" Cultural elements connected to social knowledge are thus essential to 3SM.

The idea that one function of literary texts is to provide an aesthetic experience associated with enjoyment is not a subject that is broached to any great extent, at least not directly. However, there are intimations of such concerns. This is illustrated by 4SM, who states that one of his aims is to: "get [the students] to the realization that reading isn't just a job. Do you know what I mean? It can also be enjoyment". Hence, while he sees the main purpose of literary texts as a means to language acquisition and production, such texts can also be appreciated simply for their aesthetic value, and for the reading experience. An additional example is participant 4EF's view. She stresses the importance of guiding the students to a point where they end up with a "feeling of 'yes, I got through this book, and I quite enjoyed it!'". The latter statement suggests a function of literary texts concerned with extended reading, but where elements of aesthetic reading are hoped for.

To conclude, the perceived functions of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education vary. Some participants state that literary texts are mainly used for reading comprehension purposes, while others speak of a gradual progression from primarily comprehension-related concerns to the acquisition of literary skills. One participant mentions language-related learning as the primary function of literary texts, while some prioritize societal, cultural, and/or political concerns in this regard. The function of educating students to become democratic citizens is also highlighted. Some participants clearly also view literary texts as having multiple functions related, for example, to gaining cultural knowledge, enhancing language skills, and acquiring literary analysis skills all at once.

6.4 Analysis and Discussion

The main functions of literary texts cannot be said to be clearly defined in the English syllabus (S21), which is also the intention behind the *free space*. Teachers thus need to consider their students' needs and wishes as well as their own beliefs and assumptions about literary texts, both for the purposes of curricular interpretation and when it comes to making decisions and choices in this regard. It calls for time for reflection and a *deliberative curriculum*, in Englund's (2015) terms. To analyze the participants' interactions with and attitudes to the English syllabus, two of Goodlad et al.'s (1979) concepts of curricular domains will be employed (*formal curriculum* and *perceived curricula*) along with the new construct *protracted curriculum*. Moreover, the participants' own rationales as to the functions of literary texts will be examined by means of *teacher literary repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts and literary studies which cannot be firmly linked to the English syllabus) and *EFL repertoires* (teachers' beliefs about literary texts which can be connected to the English syllabus, such as objectives related to language development and culture). McCormick's (1994) terms *general ideology* (a society's general views, beliefs, and values) and *general repertoires* (the appropriation of societal values and beliefs on the part of an individual) will also be utilized.

On a general level, the *ideological curriculum*, representing the ideals and norms of society (Goodlad et. al., 1979, p. 59), shines through in a number of the participants' descriptions of the functions of literary texts. This is illustrated by the suggested function of literary texts in developing democratic values, such as 4SF's objective of creating good democratic citizens. However, since the development of democratic values is not directly linked to literary texts in the English syllabus, that is, the *formal curriculum*, this construal of the function of literary texts can be viewed as a representation of a *perceived curriculum* (a personal interpretation on the part of the teacher) as regards literary texts.

With reference to curricular stipulations, it is clear that some participants are concerned over the absence of details in the English syllabus (*formal curriculum*) relating to the functions of literary texts and how to approach them. Apprehensions over differences in approaches seem to indicate that a primary goal for some teachers is the idea of similarity in terms of methods rather than equity in education (1SM, 1SF, 3SF), whereby different methods and approaches could be used to support all students in reaching the goals.[82] When it comes to the absence of stipulated functions of literary texts, however, the disquietude seems to entail concerns over possible differences in equivalence in regard to educational content (1SM, 4SF). Teacher professionalism is also in question (3SM), where the supposition appears to be that differences in teaching practices could affect learning outcomes. This can be connected to Johansson's (2003) discussion on the precarity of expecting each individual teacher and subsequently teachers at each individual school to

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[82] The topic of equity in education will be explored further in chapter 8 in relation to the concept of *instructional scaffolding.*

reflect on the meanings of the goals and to ascertain how to reach them. However, Englund (2015) argues that teachers are professionals with the competence to make sound decisions about teaching practices and subject content, and as a consequence they must be trusted to do what is required of them. Nevertheless, since some of the participants in the present study voice concerns over the actual function of literary texts in the EFL context, it does highlight an issue that deserves further attention.

In general, when the participants reveal how they reason about the main functions of literary texts, the rationale is often connected to the *formal curriculum* and syllabus stipulations, as demonstrated by the prevalent emphasis on reading comprehension. The gradual increase in focus on literary elements likewise points to an adherence to formal stipulations. For instance, the results reveal that reading comprehension is in focus in English 5, and that literary skills are increasingly important in English 6, as in the case of 3EM, which are clearly in line with formal stipulations under "Core Content" in the EN5 ("form and content") and EN6 ("form, themes and content") sections of the syllabus. However, it is also evident that an increased importance is ascribed by some participants to the development of literary skills in EN7, despite the absence of a reference to literary skills under "Content of Communication". Under "Reception", apart from the phrase referring to an inclusion of literary texts, there is a phrase that could be attached to the development of literary skills: "How stylistics and rhetorical devices are used for different purposes and how language is used as an instrument of power" (Skolverket, 2021c, my translation).[83] Nevertheless, this phrase cannot be as clearly linked to literary texts as the instructions under "Core Content" at the EN5 and EN6 levels, since stylistic devices may also be used, for example, by a journalist in a newspaper article. There is thus a more pronounced tendency toward different *perceived curricula* in EN7, where the stipulations are more equivocal. The *teacher literary repertoire* discernible in some of the participants' answers indicates that literary competence (cf. Torell, 2002) and interpretive competence (cf. Volkmann, 2015) are important and valuable skills and that such educational content should be introduced gradually, that is, a focus on progression is essential since these skills are of an advanced nature (4SF, 2EM and 3EM). Moreover, the difference in perception as to when to introduce literary analysis, or indeed whether to introduce it at all (4SM), conveys disparate *teacher literary repertoires* where literary skills are either prioritized and thus viewed as essential, used in conjunction with other aims, or not prioritized. This suggests that there is a difference in educational content from one EFL classroom to another.

Returning to the idea that literary texts can be used to teach democratic values, it may at first glance hint at a *general ideology,* that is, a belief that teaching materials overall should serve as vessels of worldly knowledge from a societal standpoint and as expressed in the Swedish curriculum. However, the participants' descriptions of using literary texts in this regard indicate that there is a combination of factors at play that involve not only general

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[83] Original quotation: "Hur stilistiska och retoriska grepp används för olika syften samt hur språk används som maktmedel".

worldly knowledge but also other aspects of cultural competence which can be associated with literary skills (cf. Volkmann, 2015). For instance, the idea of developing the students' cultural competence by means of literary texts through exposing them to uncomfortable topics and challenging them as in the case of 1SM (historical empathy) and 1EF (injustice and women's rights) seems to point to considerable depth and a need for different types of skillsets concerned with *interpretive competence* (cf. Volkmann, 2015) and *narrative imagination* (cf. Martinsson, 2018; Nussbaum, 2010; Persson; 2007). A focus on narrative imagination entails, among other things, allowing students to explore different social conditions as well as existential and ethical questions through literary texts in order to better understand the position and predicaments of other human beings, as is described by 4SF. Hence, it is fair to suggest that the decision to focus on teaching democratic values by means of literary texts is grounded in both an *EFL repertoire,* since social and cultural elements are central. and in a *teacher literary repertoire,* since interpretive competence and narrative imagination are prioritized. There are some references to a focus on culture and society, however, where more superficial aspects of culture seem to come into play such as when culture and society are treated as examples of English-speaking countries and cultures (as described by 1EM and 3SM), which may be understood as an anthropological perspective on culture (cf. Fornäs, 2017). The latter examples can be associated with *EFL repertoires* but with clearer connections to the concept of *protracted curriculum* since two former English syllabi (Skolverket, 1994b; 2011b) focus on English-speaking countries and their cultures while S21 (Skolverket, 2021c) emphasizes areas and contexts where English is used, thereby abandoning the exclusive focus on English-speaking countries.

The results also show that there are *EFL repertoires* with a focus on using literary texts as tools in language-related learning. The emphasis on vocabulary learning and language production, as in the case of 4SM, translates to a view that attaches particular importance to the language stipulation under "Core Content" in the syllabus, which states that *linguistic phenomena* are to be in focus as regards the students' production and interaction (Skolverket, 2021c). Since no reference is made by 4SM to literary analysis or literary studies during the interview, this points to a precedence of *EFL repertoires* over *teacher literary repertoires*. A similar perspective is discernible in the focus on reading strategies and mechanical questions, as in the case of, for example, 1EM and 2EF, where an *EFL repertoire* concerned with reading comprehension is clearly predominant, particularly as regards English 5.

In addition to the functions outlined above, the connection between literary texts and "enjoyment" made by 4SM points to a *teacher literary repertoire* which, at least in part, values the aesthetic reading experience. According to Rosenblatt, aesthetic reading concerns the relationship between the reader and the text and what the reader is experiencing during this transaction (1978, pp. 16-19, 25), as 4SM's statement suggests. The other intimation of enjoyment of the reading experience, voiced by 4EF, combines both efferent reading considerations ("getting through a book") and aesthetic reading concerns ("and I quite enjoyed it"). Efferent reading involves what the readers carry away with them

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from the reading in terms of information and general comprehension. Rosenblatt remarks that when students read literary texts, both aesthetic and efferent reading should be involved (i.e., decoding assertions and making associations, as well as experiencing feelings that the words of the texts evoke in them) for a richer reading experience (Rosenblatt 1978, pp. 24-26). This may be linked to 4EF's view of the perceived main function of literary texts that appears to be that of providing opportunities for extensive reading, which indicates that an *EFL repertoire* based on instrumental rationalization is at the fore and that concerns associated with a *teacher literary repertoire*, in this case aesthetic reading, are an added bonus rather than the main focal point.

Key findings relating to the perceived functions of literary texts can be connected to three empirical studies focusing on upper secondary teachers' views of the functions of literary texts, Luukka's (2019) Finnish study, Bloemert et al.'s (2016) Dutch study, and Lyngstad's (2019) Norwegian study. According to the findings of the Finnish study, the EFL teachers' views of the primary functions of literary texts are based on language-related concerns and cultural knowledge (Luukka, 2019), in the Norwegian context *bildung* and cultural knowledge are perceived as the most central functions of literary texts (Lyngstad, 2019), and in the Dutch context teaching literary skills (literary competence) is the main function in this regard (Bloemert et al., 2016).[84] The findings of phase II of the present study show that Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers assign different functions to literary texts, but that reading comprehension and thus functional literacy (see Bland, 2013) is key at the English 5 level, which is also shown in the Finnish study, and that literary competence (cf. Torell, 2002) is a central concern in English 6 and English 7, just like in the Dutch study overall. The results in phase II of the present study regarding reading comprehension and literary competence further support key findings of phase I of the study. One aspect that could not be ascertained in phase I of the study, however, was what roles literary texts play from the perspective of upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden when it comes to the rather slippery term *culture*. Phase II of the study has shed some light on this question, revealing that literary texts serve as important bridges to cultural competence (see Volkmann, 2015) and narrative imagination (see Nussbaum, 2010) which in turn may foster democratic values. This finding can be linked to the importance of *bildung* in Lyngstad's study (2019), a term that is also associated with fostering democratic values. Salient results of the four studies show that some of the reported functions of literary texts are related to functional literacy and linguistic competence, which is to be expected given the fact that they make up the materials of a second language course. Nevertheless, Delanoy's (2015) remark about literary texts being marginalized in the EFL context due to the narrow European standardized *language competencies* that can be quantitatively tested does not correspond to the findings of these studies. Instead, it would seem that literary texts are

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[84] Luukka (2019) mentions the terms "transcultural knowledge", but also adds that the results show that literary texts seldom function as sources for such knowledge.

reportedly used extensively for literary purposes and/or for the development of cultural competence in at least three out four of these European countries, albeit not by all of the participants.

To conclude, the findings of phase II of the present study reveal a variety of repertoires as regards the perceived functions of literary texts, such as language-related purposes grounded in the English syllabus which are clearly within the realm of *EFL repertoires*, such as reading comprehension and language development, but also *teacher literary repertoires* with a focus on aspects of literary competence which are not as clearly visible in the English syllabus. The focus on literary competence includes elements of structural narratology, which may be linked to narrative competence and the proposed benefits of such a focus in the EFL context (Freese, 2015; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000), to critical thinking and interpretive competence (cf. Langer, 2011; Volkmann, 2015) as well as to cultural competence (cf. Volkmann, 2015). The focus on culture in relation to literary texts is not clearly prevalent in the results, given the proposed impact of the cultural turn (cf. Persson, 2007), which may in part be explained by syllabus changes. Cultural competence is a central concern in English syllabi, past and present, but the term has come to be expanded in S21 where it is stipulated that students are expected to develop an understanding of current events and social as well as cultural conditions and values in areas and contexts where English is used and compare them to their own situations and experiences (Skolverket, 2021c). This is a progression from previous syllabi where the cultural focus was more narrow and where the emphasis was on learning about the culture of English-speaking countries (Skolverket, 1994b; 2011b). Nevertheless, there are no direct links in S21 between literary texts and teaching, for example, democratic values, and the ways in which the participants describe approaching such matters can be interpreted as involving both *teacher literary repertoires* and *EFL repertoires*. Lastly, the findings of two out of the three European studies outlined above contradict Delanoy's (2015) statement about the marginalized role of literary texts in the European EFL context. The results of the present study support the findings of these two studies. The conclusion is that literary texts seem to play a major role in these EFL contexts, that they are valued for their literary content, and that they have multifaceted functions from the perspective of many upper secondary EFL teachers.

7 EMPIRICAL DATA: INTERVIEWS PART III – APPROACHES TO LITERARY TEXTS

7.1 Introduction

Literary texts could be approached in a variety of ways. The Swedish curriculum code suggests that methods in general, regardless of subject area, should be based on student-centered, communicative tasks that are meaningful (Skolverket, 2021c, p. 1). This general sentiment should thus apply to literary texts as well. How do the participants describe their approach to working with literary texts and what are the reasons behind using certain strategies? Results from phase I of the study suggest that group discussions commonly occur at all three levels of English, but that teacher-led lectures are also a popular choice, particularly as pre-reading tasks in English 6 and 7. There is thus a mixture of student-centered and teacher-centered approaches. Writing activities are reportedly the most commonly occurring activities in the post-reading stage at all three levels. Phase I of the study thus provides a rudimentary view of how teachers approach literary texts. Phase II of the study helps to elucidate how upper secondary EFL teachers might reason about such issues more specifically. For example, what kinds of tasks are described in terms of the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages? What types of questions, mechanical (controlled) or analytical, do the participants describe using when it comes to oral and written tasks, and why? In order to include group discussions, students would presumably have to work on the same literary texts. Are there differences in approaches, such as with regard to individual and collaborative work on literary texts?

To ensure that the participants could speak freely and without influence from the researcher, they were asked to select a process (either from English 5, English 6, or English 7) involving a literary text, and were subsequently asked to describe this process from beginning to end. This would allow for inferences to be made regarding implicit beliefs about methods and approaches (cf. Fives & Buehl, 2012, pp. 473-474; Pajares, 1992, p. 314). Explicit beliefs about strategies and approaches could of course also be expressed. All of the participants elected to focus on projects involving narrative texts including novels and memoirs or extracts of novels, presumably since such work is more process-related and reportedly affords opportunities for reading logs, discussions, and activities focusing on progression, to name a few examples. Two of the teachers, rather than focusing exclusively on narrative texts, focused on a mixture of genres and multimodal formats including a novel, while another described a process focusing on excerpts of a novel. The rest of the participants focused on a process involving one narrative text only. Despite the focus on one major project each, the participants frequently referred to how they had approached such projects in the past and how they work with literary texts in other contexts.

7.2 Collaborative and Individual Reading Projects

To begin with, it appears that collaborative reading projects, that is, projects that involve all of the students reading the same text, are more common amongst the participants than individual reading projects, but both approaches exist. The reasons for why one approach is chosen over the other vary. 2EF explains that she tends to opt for a collaborative process in English 5: "Generally, we read the same book. Sometimes I try that they read different books. That gets a bit messy sometimes because it's hard to get the assignments together". In this case, it appears that the collaborative approach is seen as advantageous as it makes it easier for the teacher to structure the assignments and to have a certain amount of control over the situation, as opposed to having all the students read different books.

Some participants discern multiple benefits in focusing on one and the same literary text, in this case a set novel. 2SF outlines some of these advantages:

> I want to guide them in their reading, and if they can choose…uhm…if I haven't read the book or if I need to read all of the books that they have chosen, I can't guide them, I can't help them with, you know, underlying messages in the story, and to help them analyze the novel.

The general support that a teacher can provide when both the teacher and the students are focusing on the same book is highlighted here, as well as more specific guidance in acquiring what could be viewed as more advanced literary skills. 2SF adds that when reading together in this fashion it means that you "can do a lot of other activities together in regard to the novel, like discussions, you can have writing tasks. Everything together, depending on the content of the novel". When asked whether there are any drawbacks to choosing one novel for everyone, she responds that it is possible that not everyone will like the book, "that they have struggled with it or that they would prefer another novel […] I don't think I've ever managed to pick a novel that suits everyone". Despite these drawbacks, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, in 2SF's opinion.

Some participants choose to work with both individual and collaborative reading projects. 2EM, for example, remarks that in English 5 he starts by letting his students choose a book to read on their own, and he helps them to choose by suggesting titles that he read and enjoyed himself when he was younger. After this, the students all read a second novel together, for example the sci-fi superhero novel *Steelhearts* (Sanderson, 2013). He adds that it appears that the students get more out of reading a text together, which he believes is because then "you can discuss it in a completely different way when everyone knows what has happened so you can discuss that… how you yourself have interpreted it".[85] Motivational factors and the learning potential associated with discussing the same piece of

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[85] Original quotation: "Man kan diskutera det på ett helt annat sätt när alla vet vad som har hänt så kan man diskutera det… hur man själv har tolkat det…".

literature, as well as the quality of such discussions, are thus brought to light in this comment.

Individual reading assignments are also described as beneficial by some participants. 3EM, for instance, explains that his approach to novel reading projects varies, but that in English 5 "it tends to be individual and it also tends to be their homework. So, it's not supervised in English 5 and 7 in the same way as their reading is supervised in English 6". His rationale behind having individual reading projects in English 5 is that since students are different, they can read at their own pace outside of class. He adds: "it frees me up to bring a little more variety", such as working on song lyrics and other genres where students can analyze the content together. Differences between students and the importance of variety are therefore critical factors behind this participant's reasoning about individual and collaborative reading projects.

There are also participants who clearly prefer individually chosen novels but who then include collaborative elements in post-reading tasks. Participant 4SM, for example, conveys that he does not see any specific advantages associated with everyone reading the same novel:

> I realized, like literary discussion can be so much more than us talking about one story together. Do you know what I mean? So, basically, I hardly ever decide that everybody has to read one title. I very occasionally provide them with three or four options, but I'm more likely to basically leave it completely open. Instead of trying to control what they read, I determine and control how we work with what they read.

The actual reading process is thus individual, so as to ensure that students can choose what to read based on their own likes and dislikes, and the students are encouraged to work on their vocabulary while reading. However, 4SM does focus on interactive discussions after the reading has been completed, with the focus being "on thoughts that the book might have triggered". Since each student has read a different novel, this would mean that the collaborative part of the reading project involves the students discussing different cultural and societal issues in general, rather than the content of the novels themselves. 4SM provides examples of this, such as that "one person had read a book that was about sexual abuse and then she had formulated a thought" about this. The topic would then be open for discussion. In this case, the student's choice of novel serves as inspiration for a class discussion on societal issues.

Besides differences in the participants' choices of collaborative and individual reading assignments, there are also comments which point to differences in approaches at the participants' respective schools. For instance, 1EF remarks that they approach reading projects differently at her school. She explains that many of her colleagues "have let students choose literature, and therefore the teacher has read [the books]. So, they will know the background etc. For me, it's more delving into specific books, to really get to the core of it". This comment indicates a degree of variety in teaching practice even at the local

school level. It further suggests that collaborative reading projects provide opportunities for greater depth in subsequent discussions and analyses.

To summarize, the rationale behind whether to focus on collaborative or individual reading projects varies. Considerations of individual choice, the depth of class and group discussions, motivational factors connected to both free choice and collaborative benefits, time factors, and variety of genres are emphasized.

7.3 Pre-Reading Tasks

How a reading project is first introduced also varies. In English 5, there are several different examples of pre-reading tasks. 2EF describes that she begins with some pre-reading exercises, in this case related to the novel *The Outsiders* (1967) which involves them discussing "what is family for them because the book is a lot about unity and family and gang members". This is done to awaken the students' interest by relating the topics of the novel to their own lives.

Narratological concepts are often introduced in the pre-reading stage, as described by 1SF. Once she has introduced these concepts, she asks the students to "think of a story from their own culture", which she follows up with questions such as "what is the setting, who is the main character, what is the point-of-view?" The aim is to allow the students to apply these concepts to the stories they have chosen to focus on. After this, the students can begin to read a set text, usually extracts in 1SF's case, in a collaborative reading project, and can apply their newly acquired literary skills to this literary text. For the collaborative reading project, 1SF also includes pre-reading tasks which focus on cultural and historical knowledge, to set the scene for the literary texts in focus.

Biographical information is also in focus during the pre-reading stage. 1EF describes how she usually begins the reading process with some background information, in this case on an autobiography:

> First of all, I give them a background. Who is… well actually first of all I ask them, 'Do you know who Malala is? Have you heard of her? What does she do? What is she famous for?' And most of them… some of them nod and some of them don't nod.

She thus tries to coax the students into responding, but it appears that she generally has to provide the information herself. This background consequently helps to set the scene so that the students can understand the context of what they are about to read. Participant 2SF reasons in a similar way when she explains that she introduces the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by providing the background context about racial segregation. She adds that in class she and the students have talked "about slavery and… civil rights movement and all that" to allow the students "to understand [the context] in a better way". Pre-reading contextual information, as described by these two participants, is mainly connected to history, culture, and society.

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Pre-reading tasks are not always used, as in the case of 3EM, whose English 5 students are allowed to select the books on an individual basis and therefore read and work on their literary texts individually. However, 3EM adds that "obviously, there are times throughout the term where we can do some follow-up. I can help them out with some of the cultural codes that are being expressed in the literature", which means that students receive information during the reading rather than before. This support can thus help to clarify certain points and to aid the students in understanding the content.

To conclude, the pre-reading tasks outlined above focus on reader engagement and motivation, the development of cultural and historical knowledge, and literary skills, but there are also cases where pre-reading tasks are not in focus, which applies mainly to individual reading projects. These examples suggest that teachers prioritize different kinds of preknowledge when it comes to reading projects involving literary texts. However, it is possible that other reading tasks and assignments may be in focus in addition to the ones described during the interviews, and that additional elements may be covered in such instances. It is also possible that these examples might be especially relevant to the project and literary text they have chosen to describe but not necessarily an indication of what they do with all literary texts.

7.4 Tasks and Questions During and After the Reading Process

The tasks and assignments that the participants describe help to shed some light on the types of methods they use both while the students are reading and post-reading. The types of questions that are posed during these activities also provide an idea of the focus and scope of discussions and other accompanying tasks.

1SF explains that during the collaborative reading process (in this case focusing on excerpts of *Angela's Ashes*) the students are given study questions which are "very superficial narratology questions, but also deeper questions, discussing things and also going into Irish culture, and so on. So, trying to tie all the things together" (i.e., questions of both a mechanical and an analytical nature). Then she adds that the students are given "study questions, that I [want] them to follow up on to write about after we [work] with the text in the class". As a result, the students can discuss the questions and scaffold each other's learning processes before they have to submit the written assignment. The process outlined by 1SF is an example of an approach and tasks that are both collaborative and individual, and where elements of literary analysis and cultural and societal concerns come into play. There are also suggestions of a focus on both mechanical and analytical questions.

Some participants describe using mechanical questions at first, and then more analytical questions later. 1EF, for example, mentions that she uses a reading process that is divided into four parts. After each section the students are given questions digitally on the learning platform used by the school; they "have to answer these and they have to pass. Because that is for me to know, OK they know who that person is, who this person is, they

know what happened in that part. So, four tests in total". These questions are compiled into what she calls "reading comprehension tests" and are thus of a mechanical nature. They do also appear to be designed in part to ensure that the teacher can ascertain whether the students have done their assigned reading or not. However, during the reading process the students also engage in group discussions on cultural, societal, and political issues where 1EF expects them "to delve deep". They should then either submit a collaborative text or hold a group presentation related to a specific quote that each group of students has chosen from a number of quotes from the book which have been pre-selected by the teacher. Since the students have been provided with background information in the pre-reading stage, as described previously, at this stage she tells them: "you know about [Malala], you know about the political situation, you know about the religious, you know about the cultural, you have to be able to blend this into the analysis of the quote". The discussions and subsequent group presentations or group submissions thus appear to focus on elements of analysis and synthesis, and no longer on mechanical questions.

2EF also uses a mixture of questions, from comprehension questions to more analytical ones. She has opted for book talks each week, and she explains that the students "talk in groups about certain aspects of the book and that could be more abstract things like 'why are there not many adults in this book?'". She adds that there are "comprehension questions as well". She further explains that as the reading process continues, she also gives written assignments; she states that the questions she uses

> progress a little bit, so they get a little bit more difficult. Today we had a book talk, that was the third one of five, and it's slightly more levelled and analytical. I start quite easy with multiple choice questions, more or less only. The next one is more of a short answer questions. The one which we're doing next week will be a short written assignment on a topic I have listed, so they can choose one of the topics.

The questions the students receive are thus comprehension-related to begin with but become more challenging and slightly more analytical as the reading project progresses. Once the reading is done, 2EF always ends with some kind of a written assignment, for example: "what will happen to [the main character] now?" This particular type of writing could be viewed as more creative, with the students' imaginations coming into play, and language use also being at the fore.

Progression is discernible in 2EM's methods as well. These involve asking the students to answer certain study questions during the reading process. These questions center on "what has happened in the pages that they are supposed to have read for each chapter" (my translation).[86] To begin with, the questions are of a rudimentary nature and concern "right" and "wrong" answers; they become progressively more analytical in English 6, but "particularly in English 7 we really delve deep" (my translation).[87] Examples of

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[86] Original quotation: "vad som har hänt i dessa sidorna som de ska ha läst till varje kapitel?".
[87] Original quotation: "men framförallt engelska 7 man går verkligen ner på djupet".

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questions that encourage the students to dig a little deeper and to analyze the texts are: "why do you think he did what he did?" and "why do you think this happened?"(my translation), which are designed to build on the students' empathy for the characters.[88] These questions are of an interpretive nature. 2EM also introduces certain literary devices during the reading process, such as foreshadowing, and "what is a theme, what are symbols, how can we find it, what can we discuss, where can we find it in the text" (my translation), which indicates a literary focus.[89] His methods involve individual work "to reflect on one's own answers", and collaborative work in the form of discussions, first in smaller groups, and finally in the whole class (my translation).[90] 2EM ends the reading project with a written assignment which he bases on some of the questions that have been discussed during the reading. The students must back their ideas up with a minimum of one quote from the novel per question.

It would seem that progression is not as easily incorporated into the individual reading projects that are described by the participants, but other benefits may be gleaned instead. For example, 3EM explains that after his English 5 students have completed their individual reading project, there are written assignments at the end of term. The topics vary, but 3EM provides several examples:

> write a letter to one of the characters where you question them about their behavior; write a newspaper article about the turning point in the novel, or as if you were a local news reporter. I also, for some of them in English 5, you know, 'did you find a certain message in the book?'

Hence, the topics of the written assignment are both of a creative nature, as in the case of participant 2EF, and also of a literary character (message, turning point), as in the case of 2EM. The topics reveal different educational content where some students appear to be given the choice of treating a speculative topic or a comprehension-related topic while some are given topics that are more clearly connected to literary competence.

Another method is that of working with reading strategies, such as in the case of 2SF, who conveys that she focuses a great deal on how to approach different texts, that is, "how should I read this text and so on". During the reading process, she wants the students "to be in groups, focus on different characters and describe them and try to find quotes, and stuff like that. To see if they are following the novel". A post-reading assignment may involve something more personal but it should still be based on the novel they are reading; for example, "write a short text to me about a situation where they might have felt that they didn't fit into the community in which they belonged". However, post-reading assignments vary in 2SF's case; the last assignment she gave her English 6 students involved them

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[88] Original quotation: "Varför tror ni att han gjorde så som han gjorde?" och "Varför tror ni detta hände?"
[89] Original quotation: "vad är tema, vad är symboler, hur kan vi hitta det, vad ska vi diskutera, var kan man hitta det i en text".
[90] Original quotation: "att tänka ut sitt eget svar"

choosing how to show her that they had "understood the novel". In the latter case, there is thus a primary focus on reading comprehension and on reading in what may be described as a "correct way", while in the first example the emphasis is on personal experiences with the novel as a source of inspiration. In both cases it appears that the novel is seen as a resource for non-literary gains rather than as an object of study.

The book circle format is another method used during the reading process. 3EF describes using this format particularly when students are reading the same novel, because then

> it's easier to ask the same questions and also let the students see that they've all gotten to the same conclusions, but maybe via different angles or aspects or interpretations. Also, it helps students sometimes, maybe a few students they didn't really get the part that, OK this person was the murderer, why and what reasons did he have. And if they didn't understand that, the rest of the class can help them.

Using the book circle as a collaborative method to interpret literary texts and to understand them better is highlighted here, and the added advantage of peer support is also pointed out. 3EF further explains that during these sessions, the students focus on different aspects of the novels at each seminar, such as "the setting and the environments and the mood, at one point". She adds: "then we talk about the language a third time, and they look for difficult words". The educational content that the teacher deems to be important is thus divided into separate tasks, a literary task, a language task, and so on. After the students have finished the novel, they are either asked to write a literary analysis or given "a simple book test" with comprehension questions, which suggests that the objectives of the final written assignments may change from one year to another or from one group of students to another. On the other hand, it is also possible that while one assignment on literary texts is devoted to reading comprehension, another assignment may focus on analytical questions.

Some of the participants also describe using multimodal means to approach the novels in focus. 3SM, for instance, uses different methods at different stages of the reading process. First, he may let the students listen to a chapter or two. He explains,

> I have a habit of reading and recording the story myself, letting them listen to it. I think it's useful and meaningful to… of course mostly to students who have problems reading a book or are dyslexic or something like that. But it's quite fun for anybody and I allow them to listen to it sometimes.

This method would be beneficial for students who require additional support and it might also help to encourage students in general to begin reading, as it may help to arouse their interest. Thereafter, 3SM explains that he gives them "a specific assignment to take notes, to pick out quotes, to pick out words, during the process", which suggests a focus on comprehension issues, literary aspects, and language-related concerns. He also mentions that students can learn "grammatical structures" while reading. Seminars are also a method

used by 3SM with the aim "to be able to discuss setting, and characters, and conflicts, and themes and so forth". However, he adds:

> the first time I sit down with them, basically my aim with that seminar is to control their understanding of what they have just read. So, it's a way of helping, assisting them into the book, because… and then we looked for gaps, for things that are unclear, for things that are simply difficult to comprehend and then we discuss that.

To support the students in their reading processes and to guide them therefore seems to be of the essence in 3SM's case. However, the controlling element may be construed as a way of ascertaining that "correct" conclusions are drawn. While 3SM explains that he encourages critical thinking, he also stresses that he needs to "check that they have read the actual book in the first place, so control questions will be there as well". The main focus thus appears to be on comprehension.

Multimodal means and reading logs are employed by 4EF during the reading process, a process that appears to be based on the students' unrestricted reflections. She explains: "I help them quite a bit at the beginning so we start listening together, so we listen to the first chapter, and then we stop, and we see, then we discuss and talk about the questions". Then she always asks her students to keep a reading log with reflections that they have during their reading. She conveys that she is interested in: "their reaction, their questions, their comments to what happens, how people behave, what they say, why they do as they do". At the end of the reading process, the students are asked to bring up some of their reflections during a final seminar. Everyone should share something they found particularly "interesting and/or something that they still haven't figured out or want to hear the others' opinions about or how they interpret it". Since the teacher does not supply study questions, the students are free to focus on whatever they want, which means that the content of the discussions is not controlled and that there are no preconceived ideas of right or wrong answers.

1EM likewise makes use of reading logs, but these are connected to individually chosen books: "I usually ask the students to do these reading logs two or three times in a book". To guide them, 1EM provides some instructions and "some things to think about […] such as the setting, such as themes, such as the plot". Literary devices are thus introduced by the teacher and learnt by the students, who subsequently apply these devices to their selected novels. During the reading process, 1EM also asks certain questions, such as "What do you think will happen next in the book?" Despite focusing on different novels, 1EM's students do interact with one another, but this interaction generally involves reacting to what someone else has said about their books. 1EM provides examples of these reactions: "Oh, wow, that sounds interesting!" or "Why do you think that?", which he describes as a "nice discussion". Post-reading, the students "go back and use these literary devices to describe the book or the novel" in the form of an essay. 1EM says that the students may also "compare [the novel] to any of the other short stories that we have read in the [course]

book". He explains that he likes to use "a short story so everybody has some common ground that we can discuss together", which points to collaborative reading projects as well. Lastly, after finishing the individually chosen novels, there are "book presentations" which focus on presenting "what has happened in the different stories with literary terms, like this is what my book is about". These procedures thus involve both comprehension-related concerns and the acquisition of certain literary skills, based on both mechanical and analytical questions.

To work with themes where literary texts are chosen to represent a selected topical area is also a guiding principle behind the choice of method, as described by some of the participants. 4SF's project in English 6 illustrates such a focus. She explains that the students are currently working with a theme, "the concept of love". The starting point is to introduce the students to this concept by means of various articles, then through a short story where "close reading" is used to analyze the content, after which the students choose a novel each on the same theme. 4SF adds that the analytical tools that the students have been introduced to through the close reading session can now be applied to their selected novels. At the end of this process, the students present and debate their analytical findings on both the short story, additional short stories, and their selected novels at a seminar that functions somewhat like a "round-table discussion" (my translation).[91] Moreover, a written report should be submitted before the seminar takes place. The students thus work both together and individually, and there appears to be a considerable focus on analysis. 4SF expounds on why she has elected to use this method:

> I don't like to let [the students] completely free to read because then many of them won't read, instead they will watch a film, but I think that you sometimes need to introduce [the idea] that now you can choose because it works right now, but in that case you need to bring them back at regular intervals to discuss [the material].[92] (my translation)

This line of reasoning highlights a balancing act where students are both controlled and free in their work with an aim to aid them in the learning process and to ensure that they stay on task. Overall, 4SF's statements also show that theme-based teaching affords the opportunity to cover different types of materials, both non-literary and literary texts. At the end of the project described above, 4SF's students appear to be relatively free to express their own take on the topics at hand. The focus of the activities and the written assignment appear to be of both a literary and a cultural/societal nature.

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[91] Original quotation: "Rundabordssamtal".

[92] Original quotation: "Jag gillar inte att släppa dem helt fria och läsa för många av dem läser inte då utan då ser de en film, men jag tror att man ibland måste stoppa in att nu får ni välja för nu passar det, men man måste hela tiden få tillbaka dem i så fall… och diskutera".

Racism and civil rights are recurring themes in the participants' descriptions of theme-based teaching, but the approaches and rationales tend to differ. 3EF, for instance, explains how a theme might be approached in her classroom:

> We usually include some sort of literature that is fitting for the purpose. And I think that is because otherwise it becomes isolated things. I think it's a good thing for students to be able to realize, so OK so right now we're talking about the civil rights movement, how can that be seen in music, how can that be seen in literature, how could that be seen in theater and in newspaper articles from the time.

In this case the use of themes functions as a way of illuminating a complex issue, both from historical and present-day perspectives, where different multimodal literary texts provide glimpses of the problem, along with non-literary sources. 1SM, on the other hand, uses post-colonial theory "to work with racism, as part of how India developed" in connection to the novel *The God of Small Things*. In this case, the method is partly aimed at literary texts as objects of study and partly to develop cultural competence.

To summarize, the methods illustrated by the participants' descriptions include different kinds of oral activities such as discussions, seminars, book talks, round-table discussions, and student presentations. Multimodal means are used by some of the teachers for motivational purposes, to cover themes such as civil rights, and to aid low proficiency students in the learning process. The participants describe posing both mechanical and analytical study questions to varying degrees, but some also allow the students free rein to reflect and discuss what they find important both within and outside the realm of the literary texts in focus. It is clear that several participants find it important to provide the students with some form of controlled guidance to ensure that students are not lost or to prevent them from choosing an easy alternative, as illustrated by the use of controlled seminar questions on set texts and by the switch between more unsupervised tasks and more controlled tasks. Mechanical questions appear to be more common when students focus on individually chosen books but are also more frequently utilized at the beginning of projects. Writing activities reportedly include reading logs, some of which are more controlled while others are less restricted, as well as post-reading assignments of a creative, analytical, or comprehension-related nature. Methods relating to grammar instruction are rarely mentioned. Some of the participants describe focusing on vocabulary training, such as finding new words, but such work appears to be treated in the context of the reading process rather than as separate vocabulary exercises, at least when it comes to working with literary texts.

7.5 Literary Periods: Attitudes and Methods

In general, the processes and methods described by the participants appear to center on the students and their active participation in tasks that require them to, for example, discuss topics in groups, write reading logs, or present their findings in the form of seminars. However, there are instances where more teacher-centered approaches are opted for. As demonstrated by the results in phase I of the study, this is a particularly common occurrence when authors and literary periods are treated. This is a course objective that has been rephrased in the English syllabus since the survey was carried out. Previously, it was specified that "authors and literary periods" were to be treated in English 6 (Skolverket, 2011b). The new stipulation reads: "authors in relation to [their] literary periods" (2021c, my translation).[93] What are the participants' attitudes to teaching authors and literary periods? How and why do they approach such matters?

1SM refers to stipulations in the syllabus as the main reason why he focuses on literary periods. He adds: "sometimes I have a presentation myself, about each [literary period], and I present a book, maybe this is one of the books and how this changed the literary world. And then I choose one period and discuss that". Here the focus is on introducing the students to a particular literary period, as well as on placing works in a historical context. This is a common reason for giving a lecture, as is the idea of highlighting a certain important author and his/her time period in an efficient way (e.g., by means of a PowerPoint presentation), as well as providing biographical information in this regard. Participant 3EM also ties this reason to the stipulations in the syllabus. He adds that "[the students] have to have some grounding in different time periods and authors and things like that, so I do a number of formal presentations where I try and draw out the characteristics of certain periods". There is consequently a joint reason of general education and knowledge about particular eras behind his focus and choice of method.

Some participants also state that they view lectures about literary periods as an opportunity to broaden the students' horizons. Participant 4EM, for example, remarks that by exposing the students to various epochs by means of lectures, "they would understand all these computer games they're playing. They would understand films, they would understand why we think what we think, different societies. And they would be aware of it". There is thus a desire to develop the students' cultural, societal, and historical awareness at play, which is also expressed in the syllabus under the aims of the subject of English (Skolverket, 2021c).[94] 4EM also explains that he focuses on literary periods in part because the syllabus requires it.

Another approach is to allow the students to give "lectures" (or presentations) in place of the teacher. Participant 2EF, for example, reports that last year she asked the

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[93] Original quotation: "Författarskap i relation till litterär epok".
[94] Original quotation: "Förståelse av kulturella och sociala förhållanden i olika sammanhang och områden där engelska används".

students to "choose an author from a list and then they presented the author and the literary period that the author belonged to" by means of a presentation, which means that focus is directed towards the students rather than the teacher. 2EF adds that she views literary history as important:

> It's good that they know that literature and style have progressed through the years. That there are different types of literature. I think it's a little bit, you know, like the common knowledge that they should know who Shakespeare and Dickens, and all the big authors, who they are. Then again, and I mean, there are different authors that might be more important for them nowadays.

The idea that knowledge of a cultural heritage is of some significance is thus brought to light, but at the same time 2EF seems to be in two minds as to whether such a concern is more important than focusing on what is important for the students. She adds: "It's part of the syllabus so I touch upon it". There thus appears to be a slight conflict between what she deems as important for the students and what is written in the syllabus. However, since the wording has been changed in S21, a focus on literary periods is no longer a requirement.

In contrast, several participants do not broach the subject of literary periods per se, but instead elect to focus on the author whose work the students are going to read, such as participant 1EF, who says: "I must admit, I do not have a lot of lectures about the Romantic period, etc. I really don't. I mostly delve right into the fiction or the poems at once. And at the same time, I give them a background information". A similar method is to approach the relevant context of a particular author. Participant 3SM, for example, explains: "when I have used something by Shakespeare, we have worked a little with 'he was active in this context', not so that they get to explore the literary period that the Renaissance involved, but rather the setting and culture in that case" (my translation).[95] The relevance of the task at hand appears to be of the utmost importance in these two cases.

The approaches to literary periods thus vary from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. Some participants direct considerable focus toward the topic of literary periods while others only touch upon it briefly. The main reason why literary periods are covered in the first place appears to be because it is stipulated in the syllabus. The participants' own rationales behind these decisions vary from viewing knowledge about literary history as part of an important cultural heritage, making links to present-day problems as in the case of 3EM's reasoning about teaching *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde, 1890), or broadening the students' horizons, to viewing literary periods as background information of secondary importance that may help to set the scene.

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[95] Original quotation: "de gånger jag har använt någonting av Shakespeare så har vi jobbat en del med "han var verksam i den här kontexten". Inte så att de får undersöka den litterära epok som renässansen innebar, utan snarare miljö och kultur i så fall".

7.6 Analysis and Discussion

The results will be analyzed by means of Goodlad et al.'s (1979) term *ideological curriculum* at an initial stage to highlight a central curriculum code that guides educational policy on an overarching level. The main analysis will be conducted through the lens of Applebee's (1996) concepts of *knowledge-in-action* (student-centered teaching and learning), *knowledge-out-of-context* (teaching and learning out of context) and *instructional scaffolding* (teacher and peer based support).

From a general perspective, the results show that activities involving literary texts are grounded in *knowledge-in-action* intentions, that is, teaching methods which involve "gradual immersion in new conversations" where students' are afforded an active role in their own education (Applebee, 1996, p. 123). These findings are clearly linked to the communicative ideal of the *ideological curriculum* (Goodlad et al., 1979) that permeates both the English syllabus and the curriculum as a whole. *Knowledge-in-action* activities are visible through the predominant focus on collaborative work where a reader response approach is central, as illustrated by book talks (2EF), smaller group discussions with both control questions and deeper questions (1EF, 3SM), and whole-class investigative work (4EF). They are further revealed in some of the student-centered activities that the participants describe where students are actively engaged in their own learning processes, such as writing a creative text to a character in a novel (3SM) or creating their own reading logs (1EM).

Moreover, when language-related methods are mentioned directly, it is never in relation to traditional grammar instruction, but rather in connection to activities conducive to *knowledge-in-action*. For example, the only reference to grammar is made in conjunction with learning grammatical structures while reading, as stated briefly by 3SM. This approach to grammar is therefore not a disconnected, exclusively form-focused learning task, but rather a case of teaching and learning grammar through reading, a form of grammar-in-action. In terms of the acquisition of vocabulary, there is also evidence of *knowledge-in-action*-related activities. The concrete examples include sessions on a set novel, where one session is devoted to looking at language use and difficult words that the students have found while reading (3EF), as well as encouragement to search for words and phrases that the students are not familiar with and which they can use in future essays (4SM). These approaches to vocabulary learning are clearly *knowledge-in-action*-oriented based on holistic principles rather than on idea of traditional vocabulary learning where lists of disconnected words might be the object of study. There is also a reference to the idea that students can acquire new vocabulary and pick out words while reading and discussing the texts (3SM), which points to a similar approach. Hence, when it comes to language-related concerns in relation to literary texts, the aim of learning through *knowledge-in-action*, in Applebee's (1996) terms, is the predominant guiding principle. The mention of creative writing assignments such as letters to a character could also be viewed as indirect allusions to aims which involve a holistic approach to language development.

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It is not only when language-related concerns are at the fore that *knowledge-in-action* activities are visible, however, but in many of the activities that the participants describe, regardless of educational content. This is demonstrated by invitations to active participation by means of collaboration and *creative learning* activities (cf. Grimm & Hammer, 2015) around meaningful questions with both affective and deeper or more analytical content. Specific examples include pre-reading discussions on the concept of "family" (2EF), discussions and analyses of narrative stories, such as fairytales, from the students' own cultures to allow them to learn about narratological concepts (1SF), and an emphasis on the students' own reflections, analysis, and questions during book talks (4EF).

The individual reading processes which are described by some participants where the students all read different novels (as in the case of 3EM's English 5 students), appear to leave less room for collaboration and text-based discussions, but may instead facilitate language development. The combination of first reading individually chosen literary texts and then discussing these in groups, as in the case of 1EM's selected reading method, could also result in language learning based on *knowledge-in-action* and CLT principles as the students present their individually chosen texts to one another orally and react to one another's contributions. Nevertheless, this approach is less conducive to collaborative *knowledge-in-action* activities with an aim to develop literary skills or cultural competence with analytical content since the students do not share a common story to discuss. The focus on collaborative interpretation tasks when working with song lyrics and literary texts other than novels, as described by 3EM, and on using short stories as common ground for discussions, as in 1EM's case, on the other hand, indicate *knowledge-in-action* approaches with respect to literary skills.

Instructional scaffolding, that is, support provided by other students or by the teachers in accomplishing new or difficult tasks (Applebee, 1996), is discernible in many of the descriptions supplied by the participants. It may be detected in the use of multimodal formats such as audial texts. In this instance, it concerns parts of audiobooks or the teacher's own recordings of a few chapters, combined with reading other parts of the novels, as in the case of 3SM and 4EF. The controlled questions that are depicted in some of the participants' descriptions, usually during the earlier stages of the reading process, may also be deemed crucial in an EFL context, where the language proficiency of the students often varies. Such questions appear to be designed to ensure that the students understand what they are reading. From this perspective, controlled questions also imply an *instructional scaffolding* rationale, designed to help the students in their progression.

Instructional scaffolding is also clearly visible in the different oral activities in focus; an example is 4EF's whole-class discussions while reading, where students can help each other and receive help from the teacher; another is 3EF's descriptions of peer support during collaborative reading projects. It is, moreover, discernible in the reference to the necessity of working on set novels so that the students may be guided in their initial analyses of more complex matters such as the message of a story and how to analyze a novel in general, as described by 2SF. Supplying information on cultural codes while the

students are reading their individually chosen novels is also an *instructional scaffolding* method, as demonstrated by 3EM's approach. However, on the whole, the prevalence of *instructional scaffolding* is more clearly visible in the descriptions where the students work on set novels, since they then interact, discuss, and help each other with difficult content while also receiving help from the teachers. The individually chosen novels are also used for discussions, but the content of these discussions cannot focus on specific details since the students have read different novels, and the teachers may not have read every single novel either. This seems to suggest that *instructional scaffolding* is not as easily achieved when different novels are in focus. This may not be an issue for some students but could be more problematic when it comes to students with dyslexia, for example, as alluded to by 3SM. Furthermore, the added motivational factor of working on the same novel, as suggested by 2EM, may be deemed to be positive for students in general.

Despite a general observance of communicative ideals and student-centered teaching and learning, there are instances when *knowledge-out-of-context* is discernible. This concerns the treatment of authors and literary periods in English 6. For instance, the results show that some of the participants consider that major literary periods must be covered, as suggested by 1SM, 3EM, 4EM, and 2EF, usually by means of lectures or presentations, seemingly to cover extensive material which may be partly but not exclusively related to the literary texts that the students are reading. These decisions are likely to be connected to the former syllabus (S11), where the stipulation reads "authors and literary periods" (Skolverket, 2011b), which implies a *knowledge-out-context* focus, since it may be inferred that literary periods are to be studied for their own sake and more extensively, and thus as disconnected background knowledge (cf. Applebee, 1996, p. 123).[96] However, to provide such background knowledge may also constitute a first step in a process that will become *knowledge-in-action* oriented. Since the stipulations about literary periods as a separate focus area are no longer in effect, such lesson content is based on a *protracted curriculum* that may fade with time.

The stipulation in the newly revised syllabus (S21) has been altered to "authors in relation to [their] literary periods" (2021c, my translation), which may result in a greater *knowledge-in-action*-oriented teaching and learning focus. Some of the participants have already incorporated this new focus into their teaching practices, either due to the new stipulation or based on their own view of the importance of extensive background knowledge about authors and literary periods (thus involving *teacher literary repertoires*). There are several examples of *knowledge-in-action* approaches related to this topic, such as letting the students delve into the reading while the teacher fills them in on background information on the setting and the author (1EF) or guiding the students through elements of setting and culture while reading Shakespeare (2SM). These decisions seem to be more in line with the present syllabus (S21) and the aim of focusing on authors in relation to their literary periods. This amended stipulation seems to imply that it is only the literary periods

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[96] Original quotation: "Författarskap i relation till litterär epok".

of the authors which have been selected for reading that should be explored, not literary periods in general. The new wording can thus be understood as an indication of teaching strategies that have the potential to include Applebee's theory of *knowledge-in-action*, since the students would presumably be expected to learn about the author and his/her time period in a collaborative context as they focus on a selected text, as in the two examples above. These differences in approaches reveal opposing views not only as regards methods but also in terms of educational content.

The key findings concerned with strategies, approaches, and methods of working with literary texts can also be linked to the concept of teachers' beliefs, literary studies, and empirical studies focusing on reader response approaches to literary texts in the EFL context. To begin with, explicit statements about *enjoyment* associated with the reading experience are scarce in the present study. Such comments, when they have been noted, represent teachers' explicit beliefs (cf. Fives & Buehl, 2016; Pajares, 1992) that are consciously voiced when the functions of literary texts are described. However, as suggested by the findings in phase I of the study, teachers also have implicit beliefs (beliefs that are not consciously expressed) about aspects concerning reader response (Delanoy, 2015; Matz & Stieger, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1995) and the reading experience which become more clearly visible by means of the results related to methods in phase II of the study. For instance, the many student-centered activities focusing on reader response as well as themes that the students can relate to their own experiences demonstrate that student involvement and textual engagement are the main priority (as illustrated by the discussions about "family" or "affective" responses to the reading). Findings from Clapp et al.'s (2021) study show that reader response in the form of online social annotation can help students engage with literary texts more effectively by showing them how to move toward an aesthetic mode of reading.[97] From the student perspective, such approaches, which involve affective response, seem to contribute to a positive learning environment, as suggested by results from the study by Thyberg (2016) into the upper secondary EFL context. The findings of Thyberg's study show that the dynamics of the student groups were more positive when affective discussions were allowed to take place. Hence, the dominant reader response approaches visible in the results of phase II of the present study do carry certain benefits, as supported by these examples.

Apart from opportunities for working on reader response matters, the results show that there are additional *motivational concerns* (cf. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) that lie behind the prevalent focus on collaborative learning around literary texts. This is supported by findings in phase I of the study where it is shown that the participants clearly favor *Motivation for the students to read more through reading and discussing together*; that is, the idea that students may feel encouraged to read due to the subsequent discussions,

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[97] While Clapp et al.´s (2021) study concerns the L1 context, the arguments concerning the benefits of reader response approaches seem applicable to an L2 context as well.

creative collaboration, and being allowed to analyze what they have read in collaboration with their peers. From the student perspective, collaborative work focusing on literary texts is clearly viewed as positive by EFL students, as shown by the findings of Shelton-Strong's (2012) study. Students reported on greater motivation for both the subject of English and for reading due to the introduction of collaborative literature circles and opportunities for peer support.

A key finding also reveals that pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities are commonly occurring in these upper secondary EFL teachers' descriptions of their classroom practices. Many of these activities are furthermore based on holistic and innovative approaches, as outlined by Grimm and Hammer (2015), which seem to allow students of different proficiency levels to participate. Such activities may thus function as a form of scaffolding for the learning process, as suggested by Matz and Stieger (2015). Since the majority of the activities described seem to be student-centered and interactive, they support an explorative approach to literary texts that can help students to grasp the essence of literary studies (p. 134). Opportunities for collaborative attention work are also clearly visible in the while-reading and post-reading stage as the students talk the stories into being (cf. Sert & Amri, 2021), as illustrated by 4EF's group discussions and 3EF's book circle focus. Another important aspect of while-reading activities is the use of multimodal means to scaffold the students' learning processes, which is visible in connection to the use of audial texts at the onset of a reading project (4EF) and recordings of the teacher's voice reading a chapter of the novel (3SM). Such activities are likely to facilitate the learning process, according to Thyberg (2022), and may also serve as motivation to begin reading. Multimodal scaffolding is also visible in the use of films, as described in chapter 5, both in the pre-reading stage to help students to understand a novel they are about to read (2SF), and as post-reading scaffolding to provide visual clues to what the students have already read (3SM and 3EM). Relying on such methods taps into a form of media that the students are likely to be more comfortable with since they consume more audio-visual input than typographic input (cf. Svensson, 2014), and which further highlights the potential of high-interest vehicles as described by Thyberg (2022), not only as scaffolding material, but also as objects of study in their own right.

Additional results of Thyberg's 2016 study can also be linked to the present study, particularly the suggestion that the longer process of novel reading within the subject of English contributes to revealing the progression of the students, as their responses change and mature during the course of the project. Such evidence is visible in the participants' descriptions of a progression from scaffolding exercises and controlled questions and answers to more independent analytical discussions as the students grow more confident.

While the *knowledge* which is being prioritized by the participants concerns reading comprehension, literary competence, analytical skills, and cultural competence, the participants generally do not mention methods which relate directly to language acquisition or grammar development. However, the focus of the many activities depicted, both oral tasks and written assignments, reveals teachers' implicit beliefs about the acquisition of

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communicative skills, as well as personal development by means of the students' own articulations of the topics at hand and their creative, reflective, or personal responses. Such approaches reflect a holistic view of language learning, a central tenet in communicative language teaching (CLT), as described by Hall (2015), whereby learners are "negotiating meaning for themselves, learning by doing things in authentic contexts" (p. 116). The various tasks described are also reminiscent of Van Gorp and Bogaert's (2006) definition of task-based language teaching (TBLT), whereby learners "acquire complex skills by actively tackling holistic tasks" in collaboration with peers and teachers (pp. 101-102). The results of the present study further support Schurz et al.'s (2022) findings, which suggest that Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers rely on CLT teaching methods to approach the teaching of grammar when literary texts are in focus (implying that grammar is taught implicitly).

In conclusion, while the perceived functions of literary texts tend to differ more, the prevalence of *knowledge-in-action*-oriented methods, CLT concerns, considerations of student engagement, and the many examples of scaffolding, point to a primary focus on interactive, collaborative reading projects containing elements of both teacher and peer support to facilitate the learning process (Applebee, 1996; Matz & Stieger, 2015). Furthermore, due to the prevalence of holistic and innovative approaches, students of different proficiency levels are afforded a variety of opportunities to participate based on their abilities (cf. Grimm & Hammer, 2015). The developmental benefits of collaborative reading projects, as outlined by, for example, Delanoy (2015) and Volkmann (2015) and as demonstrated by Shelton-Strong's (2012) study (e.g., motivation and scaffolding), thus seem to be taken into account by many of the participants. Additionally, the reading projects described by the participants appear to include the kind of affective factors which, according to Guariento and Morley (2001), authentic texts can contribute with, and which are central to the ideas of task authenticity and learner engagement (p. 347), factors that are also highlighted in Thyberg's (2016) EFL study. The findings of phase II of the study concerning methods thus help to reveal both teachers' explicit and implicit beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2016; Pajares, 1992) pointing to the importance of the reading experience and reader response among the majority of the participants. Nonetheless, it is clear that there are also differences in the use of methods, and not only in terms of the views of the functions of literary texts.

8 FINAL DISCUSSION

8.1 Central Findings and New Constructs

The present study has sought to chart and exemplify upper secondary EFL teachers' views of the functions of literary texts, their rationales behind text selection, and their approaches to literary texts in the Swedish EFL context, in order to discuss the relationship between curricular stipulations and the teachers' beliefs, decisions and approaches. During this process, the participants' beliefs and assumptions about text selection and perceived functions of literary texts have come to light. Three out of the four questions that Martinsson (2018) describes as central to research within the field of literature education have thus been investigated: *why, what,* and *how?* Overall, the study has contributed valuable knowledge about the role of literary texts in the Swedish EFL context from the point of view of upper secondary EFL teachers and concerning how *teacher literary repertoires* seem to be more prevalent when curricular stipulations are not explicit and teachers use the *free space* where *perceived curricula* come into being. The study has also provided insights into the possible effects of diverging and clashing repertoires, both in terms of *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires*. An additional contribution concerns the new construct *protracted curriculum* which has been used to define situations where an expired curriculum appears to still have an influence on decisions and teaching practices, such as when it comes to previous stipulations about literary texts and also as regards a cultural heritage. Hopefully, the new constructs as well as the results of the study will serve as a baseline for future studies into the role of literary texts in the Swedish EFL school setting. To summarize, the three new constructs are:

- *Teacher literary repertoires:* the assumptions and beliefs that teachers harbor about literary studies, literary skills, and aesthetic reading in the EFL context which cannot be firmly linked to stipulations in the English syllabus

- *EFL repertoires:* teachers' assumptions and beliefs about literary texts in the EFL context which can be connected to stipulations in the English syllabus, such as objectives related to language development and culture

- *Protracted Curriculum*: the ways in which an expired curriculum may continue to influence teaching practices

A model has been designed to highlight the relationships between curricular domains and the new constructs. Figure 16 depicts this model and its central components.

Figure 16

*The **English syllabus** (the formal curriculum) in relation to **the Swedish curriculum** (the ideological curriculum), **EFL repertoires**, **teacher literary repertoires** and **protracted curriculum** (Wolcott, 2023)*
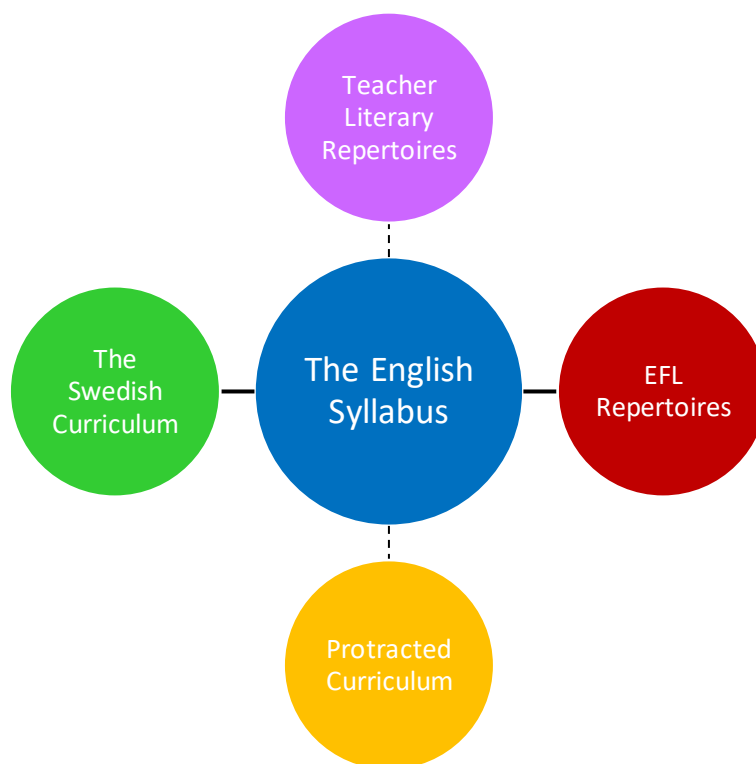
The model in figure 16 represents five parameters that seem to have an effect on EFL teachers' decision-making processes as regards literary texts in the upper secondary EFL context. At the center, the blue circle represents the English syllabus (the *formal curriculum*) which is comprised of the concrete stipulations that EFL teachers must take into account in their teaching practices. The Swedish curriculum (the green circle) also affects EFL teachers since it constitutes the *ideological* base of Swedish education, regardless of subject area (e.g., the requirement to teach democratic values and to focus on sociocultural learning principles). When specifications in the English syllabus are more explicit and can be linked to EFL teachers' decisions and to the descriptions of their practices, such as when they are used for language development and for teaching cultural knowledge, the resulting repertoire is conceived as an *EFL repertoire* (the red circle). Whereas when stipulations are ambivalent and an operational *free space* is created, the teachers' own beliefs about the role of literary texts are discernible as different *perceived curricula* come into being. It is when EFL teachers use the *free space* that *teacher literary repertoires* (the purple circle) become visible. The idea of a *protracted curriculum* (the orange circle) can also influence EFL

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teachers' decisions and teaching practices. The solid lines between the English syllabus and the Swedish curriculum as well as between the English syllabus and *EFL repertoires* represent relationships with stronger links. On the other hand, the dotted lines between the English syllabus and *teacher literary repertoires* as well as between the English syllabus and the concept of a *protracted curriculum* represent relationships with weaker connections. The new constructs that concern repertoires provide a conceptual picture of the influence of explicit and non-explicit stipulations on teachers' decisions and teaching practices as well as the potential influence of a *protracted curriculum*. These new constructs are based on concepts and theories primarily introduced by Goodlad et al. (1979) and McCormick (1994).

Key findings of the study concern the position of literary texts in the EFL context from the upper secondary EFL teacher's perspective; equivalence in terms of educational content and equity in education; the importance of the role of the individual upper secondary EFL teacher; the effect of measurability; literary skills; scaffolding to reach educational goals; collaborative learning; student motivation and engagement; and communicative language teaching (CLT). These topics will be discussed below.

8.1.1 Attitudes Toward Literary Texts in the English Syllabus

In response to the first research question regarding the participants' attitudes to the English syllabus, the results of phase I of the study show that upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden actively use and interpret the English syllabus and that local guidelines which treat the approach to literary texts have been created. 33% of the survey participants report that there are such local guidelines. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes to being allowed to select suitable texts based on, for example, student-driven and text-driven criteria are generally very positive, as expressed by the majority of the participants in phase II of the study. However, when it comes to stipulations regarding the functions and methods of teaching literary texts, the participants are more ambivalent, and some are uncertain as to the role of literature in the EFL context, at least as far as curricular intentions are concerned.

As a consequence of the operational free space that the syllabus affords, teachers have to rely on their professional knowledge and training in their use of and approach to literary texts. The demands on upper secondary EFL teachers in this regard highlight the need for a *deliberative curriculum*, as suggested by Englund (2015), entailing that teachers must have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on "the consequences of different choices of content and ways of teaching for different groups of students – that they are able to deliberate (with each other) and make discerning and optimal choices regarding how and what to teach and communicate to their students" (p.52). However, Johansson's (2003) allusion to the idea that by transferring the majority of the decisions to each individual teacher and/or school, there is a risk that the intended goals may not be attained. This highlights a possible vulnerability of a system where teachers are forced to make the majority of the decisions about a particular course stipulation, in this case literary texts, and

where differences in the teachers' foci may result in a lack of equivalence in terms of educational content. These points will be explored further in relation to the *why-what-how* questions that constitute three of the four central concerns in pedagogical science and in any subject being taught.[98]

8.1.2 Text Selection

As regards the second research question focusing on text selection, there are some results that deserve special attention. Firstly, there is the clear preference for narrative fiction (novels and short stories) across levels, which is evidenced by the results of both phase I and phase II of the study. Secondly, there is also the focus on YA literature, particularly in English 5, as well as on autobiographies or memoirs across all levels. Narrative texts appear to be regarded as more accessible than, for example, poetry, as it treats character development and personal stories that are viewed as relevant to the students' own learning and personal development, as outlined by several participants in phase II of the study. YA literature focuses on themes and characters that students can relate to, and they are written with the students' age groups and interests in mind, which some participants mention specifically. The arguments behind using autobiographical novels are also connected to creating an interest through stories focusing on people and events that students have heard about and which they therefore find to be appealing. These findings thus reveal both *general repertoires* and *EFL repertoires* concerned with teen relevance, student motivation and personal engagement (cf. Bland, 2023; Matz & Stieger, 2015), connected to the Swedish curriculum and to the syllabus of English respectively. However, since some participants instead select unabridged classics by for example Dickens and Wilde in English 5, it is clearly possible to interpret the syllabus differently. This *teacher literary repertoire* indicates a concern with teaching a *cultural heritage* to highlight social issues and how such elements have changed over time (4EM) but also to focus on universal issues that remain the same (3EM) (cf. Alexander, 2000). While a focus on a "Western cultural heritage" is mentioned in the overarching Swedish curriculum (Skolverket, 2011a), it is no longer a focal point in the English syllabus, and there never has been such a focus in the English 5 section of the syllabus. The conclusion is thus that the decision to include such a focus at this level of English is not based on an *EFL repertoire* but either on a *teacher literary repertoire* or on the idea of a *protracted curriculum*. Moreover, since the English 6 and the English 7 sections of the syllabus only stipulates that older literary texts should be included but not why and to what extent, it seems to result in considerable differences in the participants' reported focus at this level based on different *teacher literary repertoires*. The significance of these findings is that there is a clear difference in focus and in educational content among the

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[98] The fourth question, *whom* is being taught, is touched upon indirectly in this study, but it does not constitute a major focus.

teachers across the three levels of English. The point of this part of the discussion is not to criticize the participants' rationales, but to bring into relief the question of what role older literary texts play or *could* play in the EFL context and whether a deeper, shared focus on older literary texts between the subject of Swedish and the subject of English is warranted based on the idea of the generally high English proficiency level of upper secondary students in Sweden and on the argument that such texts, more than ever, contribute to global education, as suggested by Persson and Sundmark (2022).

8.1.3 Functions of Literary Texts

Concerning the third research question focusing on the participants' views of the functions of literary texts, there are several noteworthy results. Key findings of phase I of the study show that *reading comprehension,* based on an *EFL repertoire,* ranks the highest when it comes to the desired effects that the participants prioritize. However, reader concerns are also perceived to be central functions of literary texts, emanating from a *teacher literary repertoire* which favors reader response and critical thinking skills in relation to literary texts, highlighting the significance of literary competence. Moreover, a focus on literary competence becomes increasingly important as the students progress through the English levels, despite the absence of references to such concerns under "Content of Communication" in English 7. This view of the importance of an increased focus on literary skills on the part of the participants can thus also be attributed to *teacher literary repertoires*, which deem knowledge of literary texts and literary devices to be pivotal, in spite of an absence of a legitimization of such functions in the steering document. These findings are further supported by results from phase II of the study.

The findings from phase I of the study further reveal some conflicts which can be connected to the absence of references to literary texts under "Knowledge Requirements" in the English syllabus. For example, the results show that linguistic competence and reading comprehension (functional literacy) are central functions of literary texts, as previously concluded, representing *EFL repertoires* across the levels. However, since a *reader focus* is considered slightly more important than a *language focus* by the participants in general, *teacher literary repertoires* tend to take precedence over *EFL repertoires*. Nevertheless, when it comes to goals (knowledge requirements), it is clear that *reading comprehension* is prioritized, that is, a skill that can be measured on a scale based on level of performance. Clashes or overlaps between *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires* thereby become evident, which appear to be connected to the instrumental rationalization factor in the English syllabus (cf. Dodou, 2021b). Since reading comprehension skills could involve non-literary texts too, curricular stipulations do not specify whether literary texts are assumed to have a unique purpose in the EFL context, while the findings of the present study show that many upper secondary EFL teachers have identified such purposes.

The results of phase II of the study shed additional light on the question of the perceived functions of literary texts. Six main areas of focus have crystallized in the results: reading comprehension, democratic values, literary competence, reader response, cultural competence, and language skills. As a consequence, both *EFL repertoires* and *teacher literary repertoires* come to the fore, sometimes as separate, exclusive concerns, sometimes in symbiosis, and sometimes as conflicting repertoires. Additionally, it is clear that both similarities and differences exist in terms of the participants' views of the main functions of literary texts. The results show that a combination of the six areas of focus outlined above come into play for several of the participants, pointing to a *comprehensive approach* to literary texts, as outlined by Bloemert et al.´s (2016), while some participants focus more specifically on one or two these areas, at least as illustrated by the projects that they elected to describe. This finding suggests that there are differences in the perceived functions of literary texts and also as regards educational content.

The results of both phases of the study concerning the prevalent focus on literary skills, as well as the gradual increase of such skills from English 5 to English 6, and on to English 7 (progression), is particularly noteworthy considering that such references are absent in the English 7 section of the syllabus. Since such a focus also appears to be unrelated to whether these teachers teach literature in the subject of Swedish in addition to in the subject of English, this line of reasoning cannot be linked to differences in pre-service training in the subject of Swedish and the subject of English (cf. Dodou, 2020). *Teacher literary repertoires* thus guide these teachers in terms of the chosen focus and as regards rationales behind the functions of literary texts. It is notable that the findings connected to a focus on progression in terms of literary analysis, visible in the results of both phases of the study, share common elements with two of the recently added descriptors involving literature in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

- Expressing a personal response to creative texts (less intellectual, lower levels)

- Analysis and criticism of creative texts (more intellectual, higher levels). (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 25)

Such descriptors have been added due to calls for clarifications on the part of educators (see Kaowiwattanakul, 2021), and as such may provide support for teachers to justify the focus on literature to their students. In Sweden, it would seem that many EFL teachers have relied on their *teacher literary repertoires* and their teacher professionalism in arriving at similar conclusions to those expressed in the CEFR.

Another key finding regarding the functions of literary texts is that direct references to *enjoyment* (the reading experience) are absent in 14 out 16 of the interview participants' descriptions, which may be linked to the absence of such references in the syllabus and in the curriculum as a whole (cf. Fatheddine, 2018; Sigvardson, 2021; Widhe, 2016). However, these findings are primarily based on teachers' explicit beliefs (see Fives & Buehl, 2016;

Pajares, 1992), that is, consciously voiced rationales about the functions of literary texts. Teachers' implicit beliefs about the significance of the reading experience, on the other hand, were revealed in connection to the description of the strategies and approaches that are used when literary texts are in focus.

8.1.4 Approaches to Literary Texts

In terms of the fourth research question dealing with the reported methods and approaches associated with literary texts, key findings point to student-centered teaching practices. The results of both phases of the study provide examples of elements of *knowledge-in-action* in the teachers' approaches to literary texts. There is a primary focus on collaborative work with an aim to teach literary skills through reader response strategies (see, for example, Delanoy, 2015; Volkmann, 2015). and performative approaches (see Grimm & Hammer, 2015). The types of activities that are featured include group discussions, close reading activities, reenactments of passages, and role-playing but also student-centered individual work involving creative writing assignments and reading logs. A major finding concerning the entire study is thus that in the Swedish EFL context, the functions and methods of literary texts do not seem to center primarily on the reader's individual (singular) experience. Instead, the emphasis seems to be on the readers' collective (plural) experience. A salient aim for upper secondary EFL teachers thus seems to be to encourage and motivate the students by means of collaboration (cf. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) to experience and become engaged with literary texts, both typographic and non-typographic texts.

The findings further show that collaborative work is viewed as positive in the EFL context due to the instructional scaffolding opportunities they afford, by teachers and peers alike (cf. Applebee, 1996; Grimm & Hammer, 2015). The results also suggest that the aim of such activities is to allow the students to support each other in the learning process towards what appears to involve literary competence (cf. Torell, 2002) linguistic competence and interpretive competence (cf. Volkmann, 2015). Hence, the processes described by the participants also contribute to revealing *teacher literary repertoires*. This argument is based on the idea that while elements such as student collaboration and meaningful learning experiences are clearly visible in the English syllabus under "Core Content", the focus in the "Knowledge Requirements" is centered on language competencies that can be quantifiably tested (cf. Borsgård, 2020) as well as on other instrumental goals (cf. Dodou, 2021b), not on *literary competence* involving *reader response theories* and *critical thinking* (cf. Delanoy, 2015; Freese, 2015; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Torell, 2002; Volkmann, 2015). The conclusion is therefore that *teacher literary repertoires* appear to guide many Swedish upper secondary EFL teachers to strategies that are conducive to *literary competence* because they view such learning as valuable and enriching for the students.

An exception to the otherwise consistent focus on activities that encourage *knowledge-in-action* processes appears to be certain teacher-led lectures focusing on facts

and figures related to literary periods. Since the stipulation that focused on literary periods as an object of study in and of itself has been omitted as of S21 and replaced with a focus on authors in relation to their literary periods, such approaches may diminish in importance over time. However, the idea of a prolonged effect of *protracted curriculum* may have an impact on teaching practices for some time to come, as alluded to by Lyngstad (2019). Studying older texts does not necessarily have to involve teaching literary history per se or focusing on a culture heritage, however. Strategies focusing cultural competence and a global education rationale (cf. Persson & Sundmark, 2022) would be another way of approaching older texts, which is visible in the results when it comes to the treatment of past and present social problems in this regard.

In terms of methods related to language acquisition, the results of both phase I and phase II of the study show unequivocally that a holistic view of language teaching is at the fore, which emphasizes central tenets of CLT with a focus on student-centered, communicative tasks and assignments (see Hall, 2015; Wesche & Skehan, 2002), which are prominent features in the English syllabus and the curriculum as a whole. This finding supports the results of Schurz et al.'s (2022) study, which revealed a widespread use of CLT in the Swedish EFL context. It further highlights the effect of explicit syllabus instructions in creating a consensus as regards student-centered approaches.

8.2 Effects of Curricular Interpretations

The concept of literary competence (Torell, 2002), aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and the central tenets of Reader Response Theory (Delanoy, 2015; Matz & Stieger, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1995) are areas that are not represented in Swedish educational policy concerned with EFL today (cf. Persson & Sundmark, 2022; Sigvardson, 2021). In Van Leeuwen's (2018) terms, this means that such concerns are *delegitimized*. The gradual displacement of aesthetic elements in Swedish curricula from a central position to a peripheral role, as described by Widhe (2016) and Fatheddine (2018), also contributes to the ambiguous role of literary texts in the EFL context. As Persson and Sundmark (2022) have noted, the role of literary texts in upper secondary EFL education is marginalized compared to their role in the subject of Swedish, but as they argue there are good reasons for a literary focus in EFL too. Additionally, there are compelling arguments for a literary focus with an aim to foster narrative competence in EFL as described by, for example, Freese (2015) and Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000).

In the current curriculum at the upper secondary level, GY11, it is clear that instrumental goals linked to literary texts are of primary concern, which is further illustrated by the syllabi of both the subject of Swedish and the subject of English, according to Sigvardson (2021). A similar conclusion is drawn by Delanoy (2015) about the role of literary texts in European EFL education overall, which he connects to the narrow European standardized *language competencies* that can be quantitatively tested. This means that

literary texts are primarily justified by means of *instrumental rationalization* (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2008) in educational policy documents, and consequently that legitimization is lacking in terms of a focus on literary elements.

In spite of the limited references to literary elements in the curriculum overall and in the English syllabus in particular, it would appear that many upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden are in part guided by *teacher literary repertoires* in the interpretation of less explicit curricular stipulations but also by *EFL repertoires* when such stipulations are more explicit, resulting in a focus on a combination of literary analysis, reader response, and elements of measurability. This suggests that they are in fact relying on their teacher professionalism and that they are engaged in the process of a *deliberative curriculum* (cf. Englund, 2015).[99] However, there are also clear differences in this regard, which is particularly noticeable in the results of phase II of the study, highlighting the risks of a lack of equivalence with respect to educational content. For example, there is the risk of relying on diverging repertoires as regards the role and significance of older literary texts in the EFL context, concerning whether to use such texts for the purpose of teaching a cultural heritage, cultural competence, literary competence, and/or language differences. There is also the risk of interpreting syllabus stipulations differently regarding a focus on "older texts", given the rather loose definition of the Swedish National Agency for Education which states that such texts should pre-date 1950 (Skolverket, 2021b), thereby incorporating works by, for example, Shakespeare and Tolkien (e.g., *The Hobbit*, 1937). These examples demonstrate that the learning outcomes of reading "older texts" as defined by S21 are met, but that the educational content is different. Consequently, as a result of the free space, differences in educational content seem to be more common when syllabus stipulations are ambiguous, which, in turn, signals a potential risk of inequivalence in terms of literary EFL education.

The prevalent focus on student-centered, communicative concerns in both the English syllabus and in the curriculum as a whole, where socio-cultural learning principles come into play, seem to result in similar methods, for example CLT and TBLT, being used by a majority of upper secondary EFL teachers. The described methods also incorporate elements of instructional scaffolding where students at all proficiency levels are afforded opportunities to reach the goals while supported by their peers in group work situations and also through the teacher's guidance. In conclusion, when it comes to methods and

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[99] According to a new proposition regarding upper secondary education in Sweden (Skolverket, 2023), the literary component of the subject of Swedish will be extracted and will subsequently become a separate specialization course with a focus on reading and analyzing literary texts. Moreover, works from different time periods will be covered (pp. 128-129). Since this is a specialization course, it would seem that it is not a course that will be studied by everyone. *Bildung*-related concerns are, however, given more space in the new curriculum and subject grades will also replace course grades, that is, grades are awarded after the completion of all of the courses studied within a particular subject. This is meant to ensure that greater focus is aimed at *bildung* and that the previous predominant emphasis on goals and measurability is reduced (pp. 13-14). There appear to be no specific changes as regards literary texts in the subject of English, however, but a new course with a focus on creative writing in English has been proposed (pp. 121-122).

approaches, the explicitness in the steering documents appears to contribute to a widespread focus on prioritizing equity in education, that is, providing students with the support they need to reach the learning objectives.

8.3 Conclusions and Implications of the Study

To conclude, while many upper secondary EFL teachers appear to appreciate the freedom that the free space affords, a few are also frustrated over the absence of explicit references as to *why* they should focus on literary texts, *what* they should focus on, and *how* they should teach literary texts. Yet many upper secondary EFL teachers clearly have their own ways of justifying and approaching literary texts. Despite differences in teaching practices as regards literary texts, key findings point to certain trends. For instance, one central finding indicates that a prominent aspiration is to captivate and encourage the students by means of collaborative work and reader response approaches with a focus not only on communicative concerns but also on two of the three central components of *literary competence.* One such component is *performance competence,* which can be discerned in tasks involving literary analysis, literary devices, and close reading. The second component that is visible is *literary transfer competence,* where activities focusing on, for example, affective response and the students' own experiences come into play. Moreover, these collaborative approaches involve opportunities for *instructional scaffolding* where concerns over equity in education are evident, such as through group discussions where students provide support to each other and where the teacher is on standby to explain and guide the students towards *knowledge-in-action*. References to meaningful and communicative work are found in the English syllabus which means that the decisions on the part of the teachers to focus on such methods are based on *EFL repertoires*. However, the prevalent goal of developing the students' literary skills, which the majority of the participating teachers mention, is grounded in *teacher literary repertoires* since syllabus stipulations do not focus on literary skills other than themes and ideas.

A view of the importance of the collective reading experience and the significance of literary competence thus seems to be what unites many upper secondary EFL teachers in Sweden when it comes to the perceived main functions of literary texts in the EFL context, in spite of curricular stipulations where a literary focus is delegitimized (cf. Persson & Sundmark, 2022; Sigvardson, 2021). Hence, this key finding contradicts the idea that due to the focus on instrumental rationalizations involving worldly knowledge and language development in the steering documents (see Dodou 2021b), and their focus on measurability (see Borsgård, 2020), literary competence would consequently be afforded low priority by upper secondary EFL teachers. This contradiction is in part also based on another central finding which reveals that the focus on worldly knowledge is rarely described from a purely anthropological view (cf. Fornäs, 2017), but rather from a perspective where narrative imagination is central. Nevertheless, a key finding also shows

that while several of the participating teachers do focus on literary skills, there are also those who are more clearly guided by *EFL repertoires*, as evidenced by results from phase II of the study in the form of a major focus on language development when literary texts are in focus or on reading comprehension with a primary focus on control questions. This result suggests that there are also differences in educational content when literary texts are in focus. Moreover, an additional noteworthy finding is that differences in terms of educational content for different national upper secondary programs sometimes occur where, for example, some students in vocational programs do not appear to have access to the same reading opportunities as so-called "high achievers" do, as suggested by examples from both phases of the study. These central findings all point to the importance of a continued debate on the role of literary texts in the EFL context.

8.4 Contributions and Limitations of the Study

The findings of phase I of the study may be viewed as reliable and generalizable in that the data represent 404 participants and thus 10.74% of all English teachers at the upper secondary EFL level in Sweden at the time of the survey (academic year of 2018/2019). However, since it is suggested that it is generally those who are the most interested in a particular research topic who ultimately agree to participate, there is a risk that the answers to some of the questions have received a higher rating on the Likert scale than they would if the participants had been randomly selected (Stukát, 2011, pp. 72-73). Nevertheless, the findings do provide valuable indications of certain trends as regards, for example, pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities, as well as in terms of differences and similarities in foci which contribute to revealing how a substantial portion of EFL teachers tend to approach literary texts.

The results of phase II of the study help to explain and clarify why EFL teachers make certain choices regarding the selection of materials and the different functions associated with literary texts, thereby highlighting multiple views and repertoires. The mixed method of a quantitative and a qualitative approach has thus facilitated the examination of the issues on both a macro level and a micro level. However, it is also important to note that the results are based on what these EFL teachers say that they do rather than on observations of their teaching practices.

Lastly, as described at the beginning of this final chapter, the study contributes with three new constructs, which may be used for future analysis of results concerning the use of literary texts in the EFL context: *teacher literary repertoires*, *EFL repertoires*, and *protracted curriculum.*

8.5 Future Concerns and Potential Areas of Research

In terms of future avenues to explore, since few studies have been conducted on the attitudes of EFL teachers regarding the role of literary texts in the Swedish upper secondary EFL context, research into what advantages and disadvantages EFL teachers discern in using non-fiction compared to focusing on literary texts would be one possible line of inquiry. These topics were touched upon very briefly in the present study but warrant further examination. Another relevant aspect is teacher education and in what ways it might affect teachers' beliefs about literary texts. It would also be of value to conduct a large-scale study focusing on all of the Nordic countries with an aim to explore teachers' beliefs about literary texts in the EFL context to highlight trends, differences, and implications. Another line of inquiry worth pursuing is to explore Swedish EFL students' perspectives on the use of literary texts further. An observational study could also focus on following both individual reading projects and collaborative reading projects in action to discuss differences, advantages, and disadvantages. These examples of pertinent areas of future research would contribute further to pinpointing possible unique qualities and uses of literary texts in the EFL context. On a final note, hopefully the present study has contributed to illuminating and elucidating the teacher perspective on literary texts in the Swedish upper secondary EFL context, as well as to future research to come into the role of literary texts in EFL education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire - Literature in EFL

This questionnaire aims to investigate high school EFL teachers' treatment of literature (fiction and poetry) in the classroom. It will take about 20 minutes to complete it. Participation is completely voluntary and participants may refuse to complete the questionnaire at any time or refuse to answer any of the questions for any reason. All responses will be kept confidential. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at catharina.wolcott@sprak.gu.se. Thank you for participating in this study.

1. How is the curriculum for the subject of English interpreted at your school? You can choose several alternatives.

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] individually by each teacher
- [ ] by a team of teachers
- [ ] the curriculum is rarely used
- [ ] the curriculum is rarely discussed

2. Are there local guidelines at your school connected to the national curriculum for English as regards literary focus in the EFL classroom?

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please answer questions 3-5

3. To what extent do you feel that the teachers at your school follow these guidelines?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	To a great extent

4. To what extent do you yourself follow these guidelines?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	To a great extent

5. If your answer to the previous question falls between 1-4, please state your reasons for not always following the guidelines. You can check several alternatives.

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Lack of time
- ☐ feel that I can interpret the national curriculum for English myself
- ☐ The local requirements are too demanding for the students
- ☐ The local requirements are not sufficiently demanding for the students
- ☐ The local requirements are too demanding for the teachers
- ☐ I do not agree with the choices that have been made in the local requirements
- ☐ Other:

6. Where or in what form are the students commonly exposed to literature in your EFL classrooms? Please check the relevant boxes for each level where you teach or have taught. You can check several alternatives.

Tick all that apply.

	In the course book	In the form of novels	In the form of short stories	In the form of individual poems or collections of poetry	In the form of film adaptations
EN5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EN6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EN7	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. How many novels do the students usually read per level? Please check the relevant box for each level where you teach or have taught.

Tick all that apply.

	0	1	2	3 or more
EN5	☐	☐	☐	☐
EN6	☐	☐	☐	☐
EN7	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Who chooses which novels that are to be read? Please check the relevant boxes for each level where you teach or have taught. You can check several alternatives or leave a line blank if it is not applicable to a certain level.

Tick all that apply.

	The students	The teacher	A team of teachers
EN5	☐	☐	☐
EN6	☐	☐	☐
EN7	☐	☐	☐

9. Have the English teachers at your school compiled a local list of acceptable and/or suitable novels to choose from for each of the three levels?

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please answer questions 10-12.

10. Do you believe that the teachers at your school use the local list of novels on a regular basis?

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

11. Do you use the local list of novels on a regular basis?

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. If you do not use the local list of novels on a regular basis, what are your reasons? You can check several alternatives.

Tick all that apply.

☐ The students tend to choose their own novels

☐ I have my own lists

☐ I do not like the novels on the local list of novels

☐ I do not think the novels would work for my students

Other:

☐ _____

13. How common are the following activities when students are to read a novel in your EFL classrooms?

> If the students do not read novels at a particular level, please indicate this below. Then move on to the levels below that apply to you and your teaching as regards question 13.

Tick all that apply.

☐ This question is not applicable to EN5 in my case

☐ This question is not applicable to EN6 in my case

☐ This question is not applicable to EN7 in my case

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN5 - Post-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN6 - Pre-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN6 - While-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN6 - Post-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN7 - Pre-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

EN7 - While-reading Stage

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Writing activities	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Oral presentations held by one or more students	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Group discussion activities	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not common at all	2	3	4	5	Very common 6
Listening activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teacher-led lectures about authors, time periods, cultural contexts etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Oral presentations held by one or more students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion activities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Close reading activities where teacher and students collaborate in order to interpret the text	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please list any other activities that are common in connection with novel-reading at the three levels in your EFL classrooms

14. How do your students generally work with literary texts at the three levels?

Please check the relevant box for each level where you teach or have taught.

Tick all that apply.

	both interactively and individually	mainly individually	mainly interactively
EN5	☐	☐	☐
EN6	☐	☐	☐
EN7	☐	☐	☐

15. How important do you consider the following points to be as regards a focus on literary texts in the EFL classroom?

In EN5

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
A contextual focus (culture, society, historical and biographical data connected to time periods and the lives of the authors)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Text focus (close reading: characterization, literary devices etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reader focus (the readers' interpretations and development of critical thinking)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Language focus (language development: vocabulary/grammar/fluency)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

In EN6

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
A contextual focus (culture, society, historical and biographical data connected to time periods and the lives of the authors)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Text focus (close reading: characterization, literary devices etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reader focus (the readers' interpretations and development of critical thinking)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Language focus (language development: vocabulary/grammar/fluency)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

In EN7

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
A contextual focus (culture, society, historical and biographical data connected to time periods and the lives of the authors)	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Text focus (close reading: characterization, literary devices etc.)	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Reader focus (the readers' interpretations and development of critical thinking)	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Language focus (language development: vocabulary/grammar/fluency)	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

16. How important do you consider the following goals and/or effects to be when literary texts are in focus in the EFL classroom?

EN5

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
Grammar improvement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of vocabulary	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of oral fluency	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of reading comprehension	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of reading speed	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of critical thinking	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' knowledge of culture	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Motivation for students to read more through free choices and individual reading	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Motivation for students to read more through reading and discussing together	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
Grammar improvement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of vocabulary	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of oral fluency	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of reading comprehension	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of reading speed	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of critical thinking	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Development of the students' knowledge of culture	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Motivation for students to read more through free choices and individual reading	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Motivation for students to read more through reading and discussing together	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	1 Not important at all	2	3	4	5	6 Very important
Grammar improvement	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of vocabulary	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of oral fluency	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of reading comprehension	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of reading speed	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of critical thinking	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of the students' understanding of literature and literary devices	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of the students' knowledge of literary periods and authors	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development of the students' knowledge of culture	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motivation for students to read more through free choices and individual reading	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motivation for students to read more through reading and discussing together	○	○	○	○	○	○

Personal Background

Gender

Tick all that apply.

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Prefer to self-describe. Add a comment below.

If you checked the box "prefer to self-describe", you can add a comment below:

_____

How old are you?

Tick all that apply.

☐ 20-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ 61+

How many years teaching experience do you have at the high school level?

Tick all that apply.

☐ 3 years or less
☐ 4-9 years
☐ 10-15 years
☐ More than 15 years

At which levels have you taught/do you teach?

Tick all that apply.

☐ EN5
☐ EN6
☐ EN7
☐ Other:

_____

Name any other subjects you teach or have taught.

_____

Have you taught or do you teach literature within the subject of "Swedish"?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes
◯ No

Your email address (voluntary): _____

Do you agree to being contacted for follow-up questions?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

If you have any additional comments, please type them here. Thank you!

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Qualitative Interviews – Literary Texts in EFL – Autumn 2021

The Syllabi in EN5, EN6 and EN7 (old and new):

- What are your views on the guidelines and requirements in the syllabi as regards literary texts?
- What might be the advantages and disadvantages of having non-explicit guidelines?
- What changes, if any, would you suggest in regard to the guidelines and requirements associated with literary texts in the syllabi?

Teacher pre-service training:

- Do you feel that your pre-service training has prepared you sufficiently for the task of teaching literary texts? How? If no: are there competences you lack or want to acquire?

Selection of Material:

- What text formats do you focus on in relation to teaching literary texts (e.g., short stories, extracts from course books, novels or poetry)? Why?
- Do you focus on novels in your EFL classroom? Why or why not? If you focus on novels, who chooses the novels and how are the novels selected?
- How many novels do your students usually read at each level? Why?
- Do students read individually (one novel each) or together (e.g., one novel per smaller or larger groups)? Why?
- Do you focus on film adaptions (same as novels read or different)? Why or why not? How and when? Associated activities?

The Process:

- Could you talk me through the process of working with a literary text, from beginning to end? What do you do? What do the students do?

Authors and Literary Periods:

- Do you focus on authors and literary periods in your EFL classroom? How? Why?

Culture and Literary Texts:

- How do you approach cultural issues and social features in the subject of English?

Appendix 3: Checklist for the Interviews

Checklist (possible follow-up questions):

- o What are the group discussions like (controlled or free, mechanical vs. analytical content, critical thinking, cultural content)? Why?
- o Close reading and literary devices, such as POV, plot, characterization? How and why?
- o Types of writing activities? When? Why?
- o Oral Presentations by the students? When? Why?
- o Why do you choose to work with literary texts in this way?
- o Do you hold lectures related to literary texts? When? What do you focus on? Why? Are the students meant to show that they have absorbed the knowledge shared during the lectures? Why or why not? How?
- o Do you focus more on culture and society at one level than at another? Explain.
- o What links, if any, do you see between cultural awareness and critical thinking? Examples?
- o Do you work with the above in the subject of English?
- o Do you work with the above in relation to literary texts and EFL?