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and Media

Degree Project with Specialization in English studies in Education

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How do Teachers use Reading as a Tool of Vocabulary Acquisition, in the ESL Classroom?

*Hur använder lärare läsning som ett verktyg för vokabulärläring i det
engelska klassrummet?*

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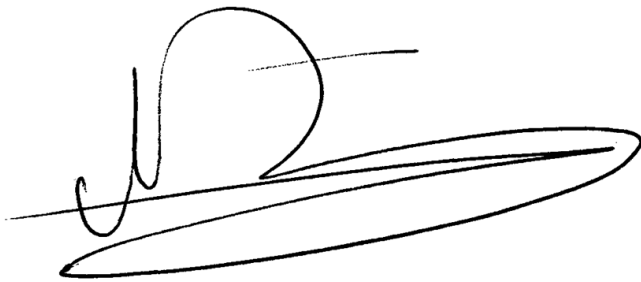
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Contributions

The authors of this synthesis have divided the workload evenly, and thereby state that they both have contributed with an equal amount of work throughout all the stages of this degree project. These stages being:

- Planning
- Forming and selecting the research questions
- Literature searches and decisions regarding the outline of the degree project
- Conducting the research
- Structuring the synthesis
- Presenting and discussing relevant results, and concluding



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Abstract

This degree project aims to investigate which methods five school teachers, in compulsory education, integrate into their practice when teaching ESL learners vocabulary through reading. Moreover, it aims to find out if the reported teacher practices reflect what is currently viewed as effective vocabulary instructions. The research question that guided this study was, what methods or underlying theories do ESL teachers, in South Sweden, find useful when teaching vocabulary through reading? The research used classroom observations, individual interviews, together with a thorough analysis of relevant research on the subject of SLA. Moreover, despite the vast research in this area regarding effective practices of vocabulary acquisition, teachers tend to use old fashioned, and simple methods when teaching and assessing vocabulary acquisition. Underlying reasoning is said to be lack of time, or knowledge of how to incorporate efficient practices in their teaching. To conclude, we believe that teachers would benefit from receiving further education on how to incorporate potent practices, so that they are able to more efficiently integrate them into their current language learning activities.

Keywords: vocabulary acquisition, extensive reading, second language acquisition

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1. Introduction

The importance of vocabulary in second language (L2) teaching has long been recognized as an essential element, this is demonstrated by the extensive amount of attention that vocabulary has been receiving in the past decades. There is an understanding in regards to the significance of vocabulary acquisition in second language (L2) teaching, and learning amongst scholars in the field (Lundahl, 2014b; Hudson, 2007; Schmitt, 2000). Moreover, the close relationship between vocabulary acquisition and reading has also been recognized, and studied. Findings illustrate that reading facilitates vocabulary acquisition to a great extent, with few exceptions (Nation, 2001; Marcella, 2018). In addition, the attempt to determine whether vocabulary is best learned by explicit instruction or extensive reading (ER), further points to ER as a substantial source to acquire vocabulary (Nation, 2001).

Regardless of the fact that scholars have various perspectives on what component is the most significant element in teaching and learning L2, they agree that vocabulary is at the highest priority (Hudson, 2007; Lundahl, 2014b; Nation, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 2008). As a result of ER's importance to vocabulary acquisition, this paper intends to investigate how five practicing teachers develop learners' vocabulary through reading. Additionally, it aims to explore if teachers find support in current studies regarding vocabulary acquisition for L2 learners. Taking into account the vast research in the field, it could be assumed that practicing teachers turn to the tremendous amount of available research in the domain to assist them on various methods, in regards to promoting vocabulary acquisition for their learners, yet this is not the major finding of this paper.

Despite the ample research on different methods in relation to effective vocabulary teaching strategies, it was observed that teachers often use simple and old fashioned vocabulary teaching methods, e.g. one definition translation, or glossary lists. Thus, exploring teachers knowledge and actions regarding their choices, became necessary to bridge the gap between theory and practice. However, three main reasons to why teachers undertake a simple approach to vocabulary teaching is lack of time or knowledge, or its absence in the syllabus. In the Swedish curriculum, for English compulsory education, vocabulary is not explicitly mentioned. Instead it reads that, e.g.

“Through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills involve understanding spoken and written

English, being able to formulate one's thinking and interact with others in spoken and written language, and the ability to adapt use of language to different situations, purposes and recipients“
(Skolverket, 2011, p. 37).

However this does not imply that vocabulary should not be included, rather it indicates the opposite. The most essential part of language use and development are words and phrases, when reading between the lines, one can understand that developing learners' vocabulary is fundamental in order for pupils to develop all-round communicative skills. Further, in the core content it states that teaching should include words with different registers, fixed language expressions pupils will encounter in the language, as well as how connecting words and other expressions are used to create structure and linguistically coherent entities (Skolverket, 2011). On this basis, a wide range of vocabulary has to be taught in order for pupils to achieve the knowledge requirements. In this sense, teachers would greatly benefit from current research in L2 vocabulary teaching, in order not to fall short and settle for simple approaches proven not to be very beneficial in developing students' vocabulary, which ironically is the ultimate goal of the education.

2. Aim and Research Question

In the following section we will account for the purpose of this paper as well as what our research question is.

2.1. Aim

The purpose of this paper is to investigate which methods five school teachers, in compulsory education, integrate into their practice when teaching ESL learners vocabulary, through reading. Moreover, it aims to find out if the reported teacher practices reflect what is currently viewed as effective vocabulary instructions. This will be conducted by observations in a natural teaching environment, interviewing practicing compulsory teachers of English, and reviewing existing research conducted on how to teach and acquire vocabulary through reading, to improve vocabulary acquisition for ESL learners.

2.2. Research Question

What methods or underlying theories do ESL teachers, in South Sweden, find useful when teaching vocabulary through reading?

3. Theoretical Background

In order to understand the theoretical concepts that endorse this study, several key concepts must be unpacked and explained. As a result, the theoretical background consists of five subsections; (1) Krashen's principles for SLA (second language acquisition); (2) What it means to know a word; (3) Vocabulary acquisition through reading; (4) Teacher beliefs concerning how vocabulary can be taught or acquired; and finally, (5) Relevant studies in vocabulary acquisition. For clarification, the two terms ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) are often used interchangeably. Solely the term ESL will be used when referred to in this particular study, when other studies are presented, the terms the researchers chose to use will be presented. The reason ESL will be used is because there has lately been a discussion in Sweden whether to use the term ESL or EFL when referring to English second language learning. The reason for the discussion is based on that English in fact is a foreign language in Sweden, however, Swedish learners are taught English at a very young age, and exposed to an extensive amount of extramural English, thus causing the debate.

3.1. Krashen's Principles for SLA

SLA is a term that aims to describe how L2 is acquired. Ellis (1985), explains that "SLA is the product of many factors pertaining to the learner on the one hand and the learning situation on the other" (p. 4). Recognizing the diversity and complexity that arises from the interaction of these two factors, is important to understand the study of SLA (Ellis, 1985). Regardless, there is no single way in which learners acquire a second language, yet, SLA attempts to identify aspects of how learners acquire knowledge of a second language through finding common ground, if not to all learners, then, at least to a big group of them.

According to researchers in the field, there are numerous factors that determine how L2 is acquired. Many researchers agree that SLA is strongly influenced by the first language (L1), age, the amount of exposure, motivation and culture etc., thus, finding a theory of acquisition that accounts for all, is still unaccounted for (Schmitt, 2000; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Ellis, 1985, Nation, 2001)

However, Krashen (1982), presents a theory of second language acquisition that consist of five hypotheses that takes into account most aspects of SLA and teaching which will be presented in the following order; Acquisition-learning hypothesis; Natural order hypothesis;

Monitor hypothesis; Input hypothesis; and Affective Filter hypothesis. In the first three hypotheses he justifies for how language is acquired. The first hypothesis, and perhaps the most fundamental of all is the acquisition-learning hypothesis. It refines that there are two ways of learning a language, the first one is a subconscious process through acquisition, which can be compared to how babies learn their first language. They do so, by being exposed to words and phrases without explicitly being taught how to use them, rather it comes and is acquired naturally. The *learning* part of the hypothesis refers to the opposite - a conscious process of acquiring knowledge of a language, through learning (p. 10). The second hypothesis, natural-order hypothesis, sets out to prove that learners acquiring English as L2, tend to show a “natural order” for grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language (p. 12). The difference that was found is that the second language order of acquisition differs from the first language, however, different groups of second language learners showed remarkable similarities in the order of acquisition in their L2. Thus, this hypothesis also presents implications of which order to teach, it suggests a natural order to enable learning to come naturally to students, Krashen motivates “I do not recommend teaching ing early and the third person singular /s/ late. We will, in fact, find a reason to reject grammatical sequencing in all cases where our goal is language acquisition” (p. 14).

Furthermore, the Monitor hypothesis can be seen as an editing or correcting function if three conditions are met, time, focus on form and knowing the rules. However, the hypothesis also suggests that conventional principles, or conscious learning, have only a restricted role in second language learning (Krashen, 1982). These impediments have become even clearer as research has continued to point in this direction over the years (Krashen, 1982, p. 15). Due to research, it is shown that when learners focus on rules and form of the language, the pattern for errors changes, reflecting the contribution of the conscious grammar (Krashen, 1982). The monitor hypothesis implies that acquisition and learning are used in two distinct ways. Generally, acquisition stands for what we can do with the language, in other words, our utterance in L2. Learning, on the other hand, has only one function, and that is as a monitor or editor to make changes in the form. The learning parts plays its role when one wants to make changes in the form of our utterance after it has been attained by the acquired system. This could be before a learner speaks or writes, or after, through self-correction. In other words, we have acquired competence, which we produce, but through the learned competence; the monitor, our output could be changed to favor a correct form of language. Yet, the reason why Krashen (1982), suggests avoiding grammar when the focus is language acquisition, depends on the following assumption. He states that in order for learners to learn the rules of the

language and use them in a correct manner, the three conditions mentioned earlier have to be met. Learners have to be given enough time in order to reflect over and actively use rules, additionally they have to focus on form through taking time to think about correctness, and they need to know the rules, which Krashen claims is a “very formidable requirement” because even the best students do not learn all the rules they are exposed to (Krashen, 1982, p. 16). What he means by this, is that learners seldom get enough time with all three aspects, which is why he implies that it should then be avoided when teaching, rather than simply touched upon and not processed enough. However, since the focus of this paper is vocabulary acquisition through reading, and not grammar learning, the monitor hypothesis will not be accounted for any further, rather its relevance is important to understand the next sequence.

If we move on to the input hypothesis, which is the most relevant hypothesis for this paper, both theoretically and practically, the reason being that this it accounts for how language is acquired. In addition it assumes that, if the monitor hypothesis is accurate, that “acquisition is central and learning more peripheral” (p. 20), then the goal of our pedagogy should be to encourage acquisition. The input hypothesis proposes an approach that runs counter to our usual pedagogical approach. Our previous assumptions have been to teach structure and practice the structure until fluency is attained, yet, it is observed that fluency cannot be learnt directly, instead it occurs over time, as do the structure of the language (p. 21). Through profound evidence from research, the input hypothesis claims that in order for learners to move from where they are in their learning, to the next phase, the input that they are exposed to should build upon their previous competence. However, it should also contain structures such as extra linguistic information that is new to the learner, as a result, acquisition will be provided automatically (p. 22).

The process many teachers adopt when teaching structure as a first step, has long been dominating in the way we teach, yet the input hypothesis conveys that acquisition is more likely to happen when we go for meaning rather than focusing on the learning itself. If communication is successful, and if there is enough input provided which is understood by the learners, it will lead to acquisition. Thus, according to the input hypothesis, the best way to teach speaking is through comprehensible input (p. 20).

The final hypothesis will not be dealt with to a great extent, mainly because it does not relate to this paper in a striking way, however, the affective filter hypothesis talks about how a variety of affective variables relate to the success a learners has in his or her L2 development. The most examined affective filter variables are the following; (1) motivation; (2) self-confidence; (3) anxiety. Students generally perform better when they are motivated, as well as,

when their self-confidence is high and they believe in themselves, further, low-anxiety students are also better performers of English in comparison to high-anxiety students (p. 31). The reason why this could be important to acknowledge, depends on the fact that these affective filters implies that our pedagogical goals should not only include providing learners with comprehensible input, but also create learning situations that encourages motivation, self-confidence and reduced anxiety, to enhance learning.

3.2. What it Means to Know a Word

Firstly, it must be identified that there are many aspects involved in knowing a word, this entails that knowledge of vocabulary is multidimensional. An average person might be under the impression that knowledge of a word involves knowing its meaning, however, according to Schmitt (2000), a whole list of interesting issues appear when studying the meaning of a word in more detail, he asserts, “to describe a word then, one needs to discuss the concept it represents” (p. 23). What he means by this, is that words do not usually have one fixed meaning, rather the surrounding attributes are seen as relevant to describe the word. Consequently, learning a word as a single unique entity is regarded as a not very adequate approach, except for with proper nouns (p. 24).

Similarly Hudson (2007), confirms that there are various stages of knowing a word, which refers to a learner’s depth of knowledge involving different aspects (p. 229). These aspects include knowing and recognizing multiple meanings and functions of a word, knowing the concept behind the meaning of the word, and recognizing and using the word in an original context (p. 233). This entails that, knowing a word in a deeper manner facilitates greater understanding for more words that are associated with the given word. Hudson (2007), means that there is a relationship between words that connects them, for example words can be thematically related such as, (phone-computer-TV), be related phonologically (fold-sold-bold), morphologically (identification-notification-intensification), conceptually (pan-pot-steamer), and/or sociolinguistically (dude-man-chap). Despite this Nation (2001), remarks that working with synonyms in this manner should be conducted with caution, as many words that are similar in meaning, often are presented as synonyms, but can have a different meaning depending on the context. Understanding the richness of these associations represents the depth of information of a particular word (p. 243). Consequently, knowledge about a word involves knowing its form, semantics (what it means) and pragmatics (when and why is it used) (Nation, 2001). Working with vocabulary in this manner, promotes a greater understanding for the

concept that the words represents, which eventually leads to a deeper understanding for vocabulary overall (Hudson, 2007; Schmitt, 2000).

Moreover, another important aspect to bring to the equation is productive and receptive skills, concerning word knowledge. Nation (2001), states that having receptive and productive knowledge about a word are two necessary pieces of the puzzle, to consider a word fully mastered. He affirms that only receptive knowledge is not enough, as receptive skills include the ability to understand spoken and written language, but lacks the ability to produce what has been received. Productive skills, on the other hand, involves being able to produce the word in writing and speech, in other words, using the word fluently (p. 9).

3.3. Vocabulary Acquisition through Reading

Suleiman & Albaya (2006), explain reading as an interactive process between the reader and the text, which leads to reading fluency (p. 65). In this procedure, the reader engages with the content, whereas various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic and/or systemic knowledge as well as schematic knowledge, a pattern of thoughts or behavior that organizes categories of information, in an attempt to elicitate the meaning from the text (Suleiman & Albaya, 2006, p. 65). Moreover, Green (2014), explains that reading ability is the art of being able to switch between quickly reading through something to find what you are looking to browsing the text you found, to finally thorough reading it, and according to Lundahl (2014b), literacy is the art of mastering these three techniques. Now that reading as a term have been unpacked and explained, we can move on to the more relevant part of this study.

It has long been a discussion whether vocabulary is best learned by implicit reading, or explicit instruction. Many researchers today, including Nation (2001) and Chang & Marcella (2018), agree that ER (extensive reading) enhances vocabulary knowledge, thus the more one reads the more vocabulary one acquires (p. 2). However, research also demonstrates that chances are low for incidental vocabulary learning to occur from reading a single text, in other words, reading a text one time might not lead to vocabulary acquisition (p. 2). Researchers are also aligned with the fact that learning a word is gradual, and it therefore has to be exposed to us multiple times, and in various contexts (Nagy *et al.* 1985; Chao & Krashen, 1994; Brown *et al.* 2008). In addition, there is no specific number of encounters that learners have to make with the word to guarantee learning, it is very individual. Chang & Marcella (2018), mean that it depends largely on the context in which the words are encountered, although different researchers suggest various amounts of exposure to grant learning of a word. Horst *et al.* (1998),

suggests eight times; Saragi *et al.* (1978), 10 times; and Waring and Takaki (2003), 20 times. As can be seen, there is no substantial agreement amongst researchers regarding the amount of exposure it takes to learn a word. Webb (2007), implies that different dimensions of word knowledge need varying number of encounters.

Moreover, the result from a study performed by Chao & Krashen (1994), reinforces that the more one reads, the higher rate of vocabulary is acquired (p. 5). The study was performed on four ESL adults, three Korean and one Spanish. Korean and Spanish pupils are in general not exposed to as much intramural or extramural English at an early age as Swedish pupils, thus, from this perspective, it could be comparable to young Swedish ESL students. Nevertheless, the participants read books for pleasure in their free time. They were asked to take notes of unknown words they encountered while reading, without looking the word up. Chao & Krashen (1994), performed tests weekly to see how many words they had acquired based on the participants list. They found that when unfamiliar vocabulary appears, individuals are often able to accurately infer the meaning of the unknown word (Chao & Krashen, 1994).

Contrary, Garza and Harris (2017), sheds light on this, and mean that letting students inferring the meaning of a word through context can be somewhat venturesome. They assert that

“For full comprehension to take place, it is necessary for the reader to construct situational models to understand the underlying message which is being transmitted and not merely to understand individual units, as proposed by the surface level of representation”

(Garza and Harris, 2017, p. 397).

This implies that despite perhaps understanding the word in a specific context, is not equal to fully mastering the word in all possible contexts, which entails that learners have to be presented to the same word in various contexts. Likewise, Schmitt (2000), Nation (2001) and Lundahl (2014a), agree that for an understanding of a full context, 95-98% of the surrounding words need to be understood, which concludes that guessing a word through context depends on learners comprehension of the surrounding words.

Moreover, another study of the consequences of ER was carried out by Chang, Pang and Chang (2011), with 82 EFL young adults, and strengthens Schmitt (2000), Nation (2001), and Lundahl's (2014a), point, as it reveals that higher proficiency leveled students may comprehend a text better, as they have a larger vocabulary than the lower proficiency leveled

students (Chang, Pang & Chang, 2011, p. 11). Moreover, Brown *et al.* (2008), examines the rate that vocabulary was acquired through implicit reading, by ESL learners. They had three levels of reading; silent reading; reading while listening; and listening to stories. They performed vocabulary tests on the students on three occasions; once immediately after performing their reading or listening; one time after one week; and the last time after three months (p. 131). The result proved that words can be learned in all three aspects of reading, although, words occurring more frequently were more likely to be learnt. In addition, it was found that an in-depth understanding of the word took place with words occurring more frequently (p. 136). Furthermore, the result confirms that reading and listening at the same time enhanced vocabulary learning rates and retention to a greater extent (Brown *et al.*, 2008).

Hence, from the examined research, there is no doubt that ER promotes vocabulary acquisition, regardless of the levels of reading. However, when adopting ER, as a tool for SLA, it is essential to take into account factors such as a first language (L1), age, the amount of exposure, motivation and culture etc. Amongst others, Krashen (1982), stresses that SLA is obtained by meaningful input, and that the input being transmitted must be understood. This entails that the material the learners are reading should be at the correct level of understanding, as well as that they should be provided time to reflect and analyze respecting what was communicated. However, it is still uncertain to what extent ER facilitates fully mastering a word. Factors such as the individual learning rate, the amount of vocabulary, the purpose of reading, the frequency of the word, and other elements may have fundamental roles in the learner's absorption and understanding of the word.

3.4. Teacher Perspectives and Beliefs

How and what teachers choose to teach in the English classroom is highly individual. According to Borg (2003), it is the relationship between what teachers think, know and believe, in other words, teacher cognition, that determines what and how they teach (p. 81). He continues, teachers way of educating is influenced by the following factors; the way themselves were taught; education; cultural or contextual factors; and classroom practices (p. 82). Similarly, Lundahl (2014a), contends that strong traditions tend to govern the way in which teachers teach. Rossiter *et al.* (2016), argue that teacher beliefs, the standing curricula, their roles and techniques affect what and how teachers act in the classroom. Consequently, it seems that teacher cognition and traditions tend to regulate teaching practices. To demonstrate a greater understanding of teacher perspectives and beliefs in terms of promoting vocabulary acquisition

in the ESL classroom, studies have been examined and will be presented in the following section.

Rossiter *et al.* (2016), performed a study on 250 ESL teachers, and found that the five most common ways to teach new vocabulary was through guessing from context, giving a simple definition, saying the word out loud, showing a picture of it, or looking it up in a dictionary. Regardless of the fact that these practices facilitate positive factors such as pronunciation, spelling, grammatical aspects, word parts, etc., Rossiter *et al.* (2016), considers these practices not to be the most efficient ways of learning a word for further productive skills. In addition, they found that teachers are uncertain of how to incorporate the best practices in their education (Rossiter *et al.*, 2016, p. 5).

Further, rather similar results are found in a study conducted in Sweden with four ESL teachers. The study reveals the most common way to teach vocabulary is through standard glossary lists, translating to or from the L1, and guessing the word through context (Lundström & Siedlecki, 2017, p. 19). According to one of the participants who graduated 1997, glossary lists were already then seen as something “distasteful”, and that teaching words through context was seen as a method that facilitated learning to a greater extent, yet glossary lists was still the most common method (p. 23). Moreover, three out of four participants strongly believed in using various ways of teaching vocabulary to accommodate students’ different learning styles, though this was necessarily not incorporated in their practices. Moreover, despite the fact that most teachers in their study primarily used glossary lists and guessing through context, as means of teaching vocabulary, they all seem aware of that research points to teaching vocabulary in a different manner (p. 23).

To conclude, based on the analysis above, one can draw the conclusion that teachers tend to have strong beliefs in regards to teaching vocabulary, yet their beliefs are not always reflected in their practices, resulting in simple vocabulary teaching techniques such as glossary lists or guessing the word through context. There is no transparent justification to why teacher knowingly integrate less efficient practices of acquiring vocabulary, however traditions and time seem to be two crucial factors in a teachers choice.

3.5. Current Studies in Vocabulary Acquisition

In this final section, it will be delved deeper into what effective vocabulary instruction means, as well as which different practices are viewed as beneficial, in the question of how one best acquires vocabulary.

Firstly, as previously mentioned, most researchers today (Lundahl, 2014a; Nation, 2001; Ellis *et al.*, 1985; Rossiter *et al.*, 2016), agrees that extensive reading develops vocabulary to a great extent, as it brings meaningful input. According to Amiryousefi & Ketabi (2011), learners need to have knowledge about a particular words form and meaning, why it is used and in which contexts, to fully master the word. This is confirmed by Lundahl (2014a), who argues that when one reads extensively, they frequently come across the same word, but in various contexts, which leads to a greater and deeper understanding of the words meaning. Further, Lundahl (2014a), asserts that meaningful input needs to be combined with communication and writing, meaningful output, as well as actually studying the words or phrases chosen, for the purpose of learning them. More importantly, research agree (Schmitt, 2000; Lundahl, 2014a; Nation, 2001, Duan & Da, 2015), that the most important factors of vocabulary acquisition are said to be repetition, and to use the newly acquired words, in various contexts, together with commitment and motivation. Lundahl (2014a), argues the reason for this, is that most words, if not repeated, will be forgotten after one week (p. 345).

Secondly, studying, together with communication and writing are needed principles for effective vocabulary acquisition to occur, yet how should this be conducted? According to researchers such as, Siriganjanavong (2013), and Amiryousefi & Ketabi (2011), one fruitful and effective tool for development of vocabulary, is the keyword method. According to Siriganjanavong (2013), the method involves associating the novel L2 word with an L1 keyword that is acoustically or orthographically similar, and then connecting the L1 keyword with the L1 translation of the L2 word, which could be further enhanced by adding an illustration of the keyword. The latter is confirmed by Lundahl (2014a) and Amiryousefi & Ketabi (2011), who argues that images of words intended on learning, are beneficial for retention, as well as for overall development of vocabulary.

Moreover, Lundahl (2014a), argues that vocabulary learning is promoted when learners notice the word, and then reuse and integrate that word in various contexts. He asserts that if these variables are not combined, a deep understanding of the word is not likely to occur (Lundahl, 2014a). For example, say a student encounters the sentence “the bark is worse than the bite”, and then later on the sentence “the bark is from my tree”, the pupil might in the latter example believe that the tree is actually barking, unless the teachers has not allowed for an understanding of the several meanings of a word. This could lead to confusion when reading, further it means that the pupils will have to reconsider and extend the understanding of the word, which leads to development (Lundahl, 2014a). In addition, as stated in earlier passages, in many English classrooms today, teachers let students acquire new vocabulary by guessing

through context, which according to Lundahl (2014a), is only a valuable strategy for high frequent words. For these reasons, he strongly advise against using a simple one definition translation into L1 when teaching vocabulary, as well as guessing by context, and instead shines light on the example of using semantic fields, as a method when teaching vocabulary.

Working with semantic fields, means that you work with words that are presented in a context, and then add new information that relates to it, and combines with prior knowledge and experiences (Lundahl, 2014a). He asserts that this method can be easily worked with using semantic maps, which is similarly to a mind map. Further, Lundahl (2014a), provides an example (see appendix 2) of working with the word fear, and argues that word families connected to that word, can be discussed and worked with amongst the pupils, for a greater and wider understanding of the words various functions. The value of the method is also confirmed by Duan & Da (2015), who adds that this approach also allows for the teacher to check whether the learners have mastered the semantic features of the targeted word. Finally, what these two approaches to teach vocabulary have in common, is that the words are thoroughly worked with, and that the pupils are allowed to practice and reuse the words in various contexts, which is argued to be important factors of vocabulary development (Lundahl, 2014a; Nation, 2001).

4. Methodology

In the following section the choice of method will be discussed and accounted for. For clarity, this section is divided into six subsections; methods; schools & participants; observations; interviews; procedure and analysis of the data; and ethical considerations.

4.1. Methods

To provide an answer to the research question: What methods or underlying theories do ESL teachers, in South Sweden, find useful when teaching vocabulary through reading, it was imperative to observe teachers in the field, working with vocabulary through reading, to gain an insight on how practicing teacher attain new vocabulary for pupils. Since qualitative methods are increasingly being recognized in the field of L2 research, and as it allows for the study of individuals and events in their natural setting, this method was adopted (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 162). The conducted research contained classroom observations along with semi-structured interviews, as well as a thorough review of existing research. The interviews were seen as a compliment to the observations, to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable in a classroom context, and further to elicit additional data. This combination of methods is according to Mackey & Gass (2005), called triangulation, which entails using multiple techniques to gather data (p. 181). The qualitative semi-structured interviews were performed with five teachers from two compulsory schools, along with observations, which will be illustrated for in upcoming parts.

4.1.1. Schools and Participants

The observations and interviews were conducted with five ESL teachers from two schools. The first school is located in a smaller suburban area in the south of Sweden. It has a total of 950 students, ranging from year one to nine. The teachers teach a minimum of ten English lessons per week, containing between 25-30 pupils per class. The school has many students with language difficulties, yet often only one teacher per class. These factors could alter the way the teachers at this school choose to teach. The second school is a smaller school located in a bigger city in southern Sweden. The school has 550 students, ranging from preschool to year nine. A

couple of years back, the school was one of the highest performing elementary schools in the city, however, at present, the performing standards are decreasing each year.

As mentioned, the interviews were conducted with five teachers, teaching in years seven to nine. The participants will be referred to as Anna, Linda and Jenny from the first school, and Mona and Maria from the second school. Further, Anna has the least experience of all, only three months of working in the field. She teaches the subjects history and English. Maria has one year of experience, and teaches English. Linda has four years of experience and teaches P.E. (physical education and health), as well as English. Further, Mona has seven years of experience and teaches English and social science. Finally, Jenny is the teacher with the greatest experience, she has taught Spanish and English for 20 years.

4.1.2. Observations

The observations were performed on both schools, on all five teachers. Three observations per teacher were conducted. As specified by Mackey & Gass (2005), repeating observations over time, permits the researcher to generate an understanding of the participants in various levels or layers. Flick (2009), presents many dimensions of observational methods, based on this, an overt, non-participant observation in a natural environment was implemented. He asserts that this means that the observer is not taking an active role in the observed field, as well as not interfering with the natural dynamics in the classroom (Flick, 2009). During the observations, and despite them being recorded, notes were taken of matters seen as important to the research.

4.1.3. Interviews

When the interviews were conducted, a qualitative, semi-structured approach was used. According to Kvale (2007), such an approach consists of open questions, creating room for open discussions based on the interviewee's answers (p. 112). This allows for the participants to speak openly and freely, as well as for the interviewer to possibly attain more information. Also, The participants expressed a desire to perform the interviews in their mother tongue, as this would allow them to speak without hesitation, for this reason, the interviews were conducted in Swedish.

In order to address the research question, the interview questions were divided into four different themes, connected to the aim of this paper (see appendix 3). As a result, the first them; (1) regards the participants teaching background, where they graduated and what types of theoretical framework that was included in their education. This, for an insight into their

pedagogical background, and years of experience. The second theme; (2) involves questions regarding their inclusion of vocabulary acquisition through reading, in the communicative classroom. This, to emphasize whether or not the inclusion of vocabulary in their teaching is implicit or explicit, and to collect further information about how it was carried out. The third theme; (3) include questions concerning task and activities regarding the newly acquired vocabulary, to gain a deeper understanding of if and how the teachers work to further develop learners' vocabulary knowledge and acquisition. Finally, the fourth theme; (4) consists of participants' awareness regarding learning theories or methods connected to vocabulary acquisition, and their reasoning behind the tasks/activities to facilitate vocabulary acquisition for learners.

4.1.4 Procedure and Analysis of the Data

The reason the observations were combined with interviews, was to increase the expressiveness of the data gathered by the observations. Mackey & Gass (2005), claim that observations are useful since they provide researchers with the opportunity to gather extensive amounts of rich data, of the participants' behavior and actions within a particular context (p.175). Further, combining interviews allowed for eliciting additional data if initial answers are vague, incomplete, off-topic, or not specific enough (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173).

When collecting data, several contexts and situations were taken into consideration, e.g. that our presence might have had some impact on how teachers choose to teach or behave, this is suggested by Mackey & Gass (2005), to make certain that the picture provided in the research is as full and complete as it can be (p. 179). Therefore, when analyzing the data it was taken into account that, despite performing observations in a natural situation, the researcher's presence might alter teachers' choice. Consequently, it cannot be disregarded that the gathered data might not be the whole truth of the participants' way of working with vocabulary, simply an indication of reality. As is the case with qualitative research, it makes it difficult to come to any overall general conclusions, yet it brings an insight of an individual's perception of his or her world (Alvehus, 2013).

Moreover, the data is analyzed and coded with the help of Microsoft Excel. Further, when gathering the empirical data, methodological triangulation was, as mentioned earlier, applied. The data was gathered through observations, followed by interviews with the participants, for further confirmation of what was found during the observations. In addition, relevant literature regarding the subjects observed was turned to, to obtain credibility. Finally,

the result relevant to the research questions, was divided into sections, where the answers were coded and analyzed based on the amount of participants' answers to attain possible patterns in the result.

4.2. Ethical Considerations

Firstly, with consideration to the confidentiality requirement, fictional names are used to refer to the participants. As mentioned earlier, the participants are therefore referred to as Anna, Linda, Jenny, Mona, and Maria. Moreover, for every observation, an introduction of the researchers was performed to the class, where learners were informed about their presence. This was conducted for three reasons; (1) to remove all curiosity from the learners' of the newcomers; (2) to clarify that the learners were not being studied; (3) to immediately give the focus back to the teacher. In addition, the observations were recorded, which according to Bryman (2011), is essential to improving the quality of the analysis.

Prior to the interviews, participants were informed that the interview would be recorded with their consent, following the advice given from Vetenskapsrådet (2002), concerning interview performance, as well as the guidelines concerning GDPR. Further, permission was given from both teachers and the principal from each school, to conduct the study. They were informed what the study would research, also, that their participation was optional and that they could choose to terminate their participation at any time. The participating teachers signed a form of consent permitting their contributions in the study (see appendix 1). Although, students would be present during the classroom observations, they were not observed in any way, which allowed for continuance without their legal guardians consent. Both the interviews and observations were recorded for the purpose of analyzing the material in a qualitative manner.

4.3. Limitations

Due to the matter of time, this research study has several limitations. The first limitation concerns the fact of few participants. The result found in the research is based on observations and interviews of five teachers. Although, the five teachers examined has various amounts of experience, they cannot stand for the result of all teachers in South Sweden. Further, a second limitation regards the limited amount of schools researched. Despite that five teachers were researched, they belong to two schools in South Sweden. Therefore, it is likely that the way they teach could be affected by each other, and for that reason their result cannot be applicable

to all teachers. In addition, the study does not include students' perspectives. Inclusion of pupils' perspectives, could lead to more well-grounded result, and provide a wider range of knowledge regarding the researched area. Moreover, a fourth limitation is the number of observations that were conducted. As a result, the outcome could be altered, if the number of observations would be increased. Finally, the way the study was carried out can have had an effect on the result, as the presence of researchers could modify the way in which teachers choose to teach, and by interviewees answering questions in a prejudicial manner.

5. Result

5.1. Result

In the following part the findings resulted through the research will be presented. For clarity, this section will be divided into five parts; (1) How is the reading conducted; (2) How important is inclusion of new vocabulary; (3) Which methods are used to introduce new vocabulary; (4) How is the vocabulary pedagogically implemented; (5) What kind of assessment was performed.

The first part will entail in what manner the reading was performed. The second section includes teachers' perception of the importance of vocabulary acquisition, amongst pupils. Further, the third passage consists of how teachers choose to present the new vocabulary to the students. Moreover, the fourth division clarifies how the new vocabulary just presented, was taught. In addition, it also brings up which contexts the newly acquired vocabulary was raised. Finally, the fifth and final part sheds light on how the assessment respecting the newly captured vocabulary took place.

5.1.1. How is the Reading Conducted

In respect to the question as to what manner the reading is performed, Jenny and Anna have pupils in class who performs silent reading, and some who listen and read. Mona and Maria's students listen, whilst Linda reads aloud to her pupils. Jenny and Anna both claim that they have got pupils with dyslexia or other reading difficulties, therefore it is up to the pupils own ability to decide, as they progress in their reading while listening.

“We have pupils with dyslexia or other reading difficulties, which is one reason I let them choose. Another one is that I want them to feel that they can be a part of their own education, and a third one is that I have seen that they still develop their reading ability when they listen, as long as they read along while listening”

(Jenny, 2019-10-15).

Mona and Maria's pupils get to choose whether they want to read or listen to the audiobook. And according to Mona (2019), listening to an audiobook has the same outcome when it comes to developing reading skills, as reading itself, “it makes no difference if they read or listen, it will bring the same outcome regarding their development of reading in the end” (2019-10-11).

Moreover, during the observations it was examined if any reading strategies was taught, or brought up. In addition, it was also explored whether the pupils were provided with methods when encountering an unknown word, whilst reading. Not one of the five teachers added strategies regarding reading, or which actions to be taken when encountering an unfamiliar word. Contradictory, four of the teachers asserted in their interviews that they taught strategies respecting both matters. Regarding strategies for unfamiliar vocabulary all four had similar answers, which entailed that understanding the word by context was their most common approach,

“Sometimes we go through a text and then I discuss with them that if they don't understand a word, keep reading and see if you understand the context. If they do - great. If they don't, then look the word up. They normally don't have to look the word up after”
(Jenny, 2019-10-15).

Guessing a meaning through context as a method of approaching unknown word, is consistent with the result from Rossiter *et al.* (2016), research, that indicated that this was the most common approach. As much as 90% of teachers in their research were convinced that this was the most beneficial way of acquiring vocabulary (Rossiter *et al.*, 2016).

Respecting the strategies for reading, two teachers informed that they do not teach explicit strategies, yet they have tasks such as summaries or reflection of texts the pupils have read, “It's not necessarily said it is a strategy, but my tasks often mean that students need to summarize, or reflect over what they just read” (Anna, 2019-10-18). One teacher who revealed that she does not teach any strategies, had not thought about the matter, and therefore excluded it in her education “I just did not think about it” (Maria, 2019-10-16).

5.1.2. How Important is the Inclusion of New Vocabulary

Without an exception, all teachers observed and interviewed stress the importance of vocabulary and mean that it is an essential part of language learning, and should therefore be a part of pupils' education, regardless of its explicit lack in the curriculum. Mona teaches vocabulary because it is expected that pupils can express themselves using varied language, "In the curriculum it is stated that students for example need to be able to express themselves in various ways, and if we expect them to reach those goals, a wide range of vocabulary suddenly becomes crucial" (Mona, 2019-10-11). And according to Jenny, "vocabulary is the key to communication, and if you read between the lines, it is clear that vocabulary in fact is part of the curriculum" (Jenny, 2019-10-15).

5.1.3. Which Methods are Used to Introduce New Vocabulary

How the new vocabulary is presented to the pupils differ between the teachers. Two out of five teachers let the students pick out words they either find difficult, or are unfamiliar with. Three of the teachers pick the words themselves they believe are obscure to the pupils, and therefore should learn. Mona and Linda are the ones who lets the pupils pick the unknown vocabulary. Although, their methods vary. Linda reads the chapter, and keeps an eye out for a hand in the air that indicates pupils' lack of understanding of a word, or she pauses her reading to verify students' comprehension of a specific word. Her words usually adds up to 5-10. Mona on the other hand, lets her students write unknown words in a notebook as they read, that she later collects. Her new vocabulary list lies between 10-12 words per week.

Mona's reasoning for letting her pupils pick the new vocabulary to be taught is, "since we are being introduced to a numerous amount of new words through the book, it would be stupid not to seize the moment and work with the new words that students find difficult" (Mona, 2019-10-11). Contrary to Mona's reasoning, Anna believes it is best to pick new words herself as "if I were to let pupils pick words for a homework, I think it would only end up being words they mostly already know, and not many new ones would come into their knowledge" (Anna, 2019-10-18). The teachers were asked regarding strategies for which words they chose, and their strategies were simply to find unknown words that facilitated understanding of the context, "I find words in the text, that the pupils probably don't know, but should, to understand the books content" (Jenny, 2019-10-15). In Anna's and Jenny's interviews they claimed to be

having approximately ten new words per week for the students to practice, however, it was observed that the list exceeded 30 new words.

5.1.4. How is the Vocabulary Pedagogically Implemented

The following section includes the results of how the new vocabulary is taught, followed by how many times it is practiced and in which contexts it is raised. When it comes to how the new vocabulary is taught, most of the teachers present the words before the text is read, followed by a translation of the word into their L1. Two of the five (40%) teachers take no more educational action than to provide this simple one translation definition, whereas one teacher (20%) provides pupils with synonyms after a translation into their L1. The last two teachers (40%), Jenny and Anna, provides the pupils with images portraying the meaning of the word, either prior or after they let them guess the meaning, before they finally provided an answer. They provide a list with words on a projector. Anna shows the words then allows a moment of discussion amongst pairs in the class, before she shows an image portraying the word. She then gives the pupils one more moment for discussion, before she asks the class what the word could mean. Jenny also uses images, however, contrary to Anna, she presents the word on the projector then proceeds by asking the class immediately what it means, and pupils supply their answers, without allowing couple discussion. After she has been provided with the answer, she shows the picture. Both Anna and Jenny ends the presentation of the new words by having the pupils mimic the words for practice of pronunciation.

Maria, one of the teachers that offers a simple definition to L1, argues that “the reason I teach them vocabulary this way, is for two main reasons, the first one is I have seen that it works from the past, and the second one is that it is the most time efficient way, there is simply not enough time to do much else” (Maria, 2019-10-16). One teacher find synonyms more useful as a technique, “I teach vocabulary using synonyms, as I often have seen that they know another word connected to the targeted word. That way they remember more often” (Mona, 2019-10-11). Anna asserts that attaching images to words enhances the factor of remembrance, as it is more pedagogical “I have noticed that students remember words more often, if they have seen an image of what it portrays” (Anna, 2019-10-18).

How many times the vocabulary taught, is practiced and in which context it is presented, is the same amongst all teachers. All five teachers present the vocabulary one time, and allows one week extramurally to practice it. They do not use the vocabulary in any other context beside the task at hand. Linda expresses that they sometimes get more opportunities to practice the

words, but that it is the pupils own responsibility to practice words additionally if needed, “It depends on the word. Sometimes the word comes more than one time in the book, and then they understand it by the context the next time. If they do not, I expect them to google it, as they are in year 9” (Linda, 2019-10-18). According to Jenny and Anna, lack of time is the main issue for only presenting the words one time, in one context, “We only have time to do each glossary one time, therefore we only do the glossaries one week. But they are brought up in the book all the time, so they get to practice them that way” (Jenny, 2019-10-15). Maria agrees that time is a main issue, and argues that matters explicitly mentioned in the syllabi, needs to be given more time than vocabulary “I wish there was time for more vocabulary, but since it is not even mentioned in the curriculum, I need to focus on matters that are” (Maria, 2019-10-16). Anna states that pupils do get to practice the word in other contexts, as “they can use the words while writing in their diaries of what the chapters are about, that way they use them in other contexts” (Anna, 2019-10-18).

5.1.5. What kind of Assessment was Performed

Regarding the matter of how the newly acquired vocabulary is formatively assessed, the teachers either use the classical glossary list (translation to, or from L1), or “fill in the gap” exercises. Two teachers uses the classical glossary test as their primary means of assessing the knowledge. Two uses “fill in the gap” exercises, and one of the teachers does not assess the newly taught vocabulary at all.

The two teachers that uses glossary tests, find this way to be the most efficient way, but also reasons that it is the way they have been taught by their colleagues, “Everyone does it, it's easy, time efficient, and it works. You have to make it as homework, and test in order for students to take it seriously” (Maria, 2019-10-16).

Two of the teachers uses fill in gap exercises where an English sentence is provided, including two or three gaps where the words from their homework list should fit in. On the right hand side of the paper the pupils are provided with a list of the words in Swedish, for help. They reason that words should always be assessed in context, therefore they do not use glossary lists anymore, “I never use simple glossary tests, as students should know how to use the word in a context” (Jenny, 2019-10-15).

Linda is the only teacher who does not assess the pupils explicitly regarding the newly obtained vocabulary. She argues that, since her pupils are attending year 9, it is their own responsibility to gain a wider knowledge of vocabulary. She believes that she can see their

development of vocabulary through their overall writing, and therefore do not need to test them solely on that, “I do not necessarily test them of those specific words, but I can see who has more varied language in their final task or in their overall writing” (Linda, 2019-10-22).

6. Discussion

6.1. Discussion

The following parts includes a discussion regarding the result, with strong connections to research. For clarity, the discussion part will be divided in the same manner as the result section, as follows; (1) How is the reading conducted; (2) How important is inclusion of new vocabulary; (3) Which methods are used to introduce new vocabulary; (4) How is the vocabulary pedagogically implemented; (5) What kind of assessment, for learning, was performed. For clarification, Krashen's five hypotheses are brought up and explained in the theoretical background, however, the acquisition-learning hypothesis and the natural order hypothesis are not further addressed. The reason is that they are not directly relevant to this research, yet they are crucial for a thorough understanding of the hypothesis that follows.

6.1.1. How is the Reading Conducted

The results regarding how the reading was conducted in class was conflicting to what was anticipated. It was foreseen that the majority of teachers would have their pupils read the book themselves, or read along whilst listening. Contrary, the majority of the teachers (60%) either read the book out loud for the pupils, or had them solely listen to an audiobook. The teachers reasoning respecting the issue was that some pupils had reading disadvantages, that they wanted to make pupils part of their own education, by letting them participate in the choosing, or that listening still facilitates reading skills. Despite the fact that all teachers argued that vocabulary is highly important, and must be taught in spite of its explicit lack in the curriculum, none of them mentioned vocabulary in their arguments, regarding reading choices of how the reading was conducted.

Further, the form that some of the teachers chose to take, reading along whilst listening to an audiobook, has recently received more attention. Lundahl (2014a), asserts that listening and reading along adds benefits for vocabulary acquisition, and according to Brown *et al.* (2008), the benefits include an increase in overall language proficiency, listening

comprehension, vocabulary growth, as well as the ability to acquire a greater sense of the rhythm of the language (p.138). Similarly, Hu and Chang (2018), agrees that vocabulary enhancement does occur by listening while reading along in a text. Regarding the teachers who let the pupils solely listening to an audiobook was according to Brown *et al.* (2008), also accompanied by vocabulary acquisition. Further, they asserted that incidental vocabulary obtained from this type of reading were relatively permanent (Brown *et al.*, 2008, p. 140). That teachers allow for various reading methods in class, is according to Amiryousefi & Ketabi (2011), the right approach. This, as pupils have various learning styles, which entails that teachers need to take their individual learning preferences into consideration. However, in the observed teachers' cases, the pupils were not part of the decision of how the reading were to be conducted. This is not to say, that the teachers had consulted with the pupils regarding the choice, prior to our observations. Yet, if this was the case, it is still unlikely that all pupils were to choose the same approach when conducting reading. Thus, instead, allowing the pupils to be part of the decision making, could as Krashen (1982) states, affect the affective filters in a favorable manner, as students generally perform better when they are motivated.

Finally, regards to the contradictory result respecting if strategies were taught for what to do when encountering an unfamiliar word. During the observations it was not detected that teachers taught strategies regarding the matter, however (80 %) claimed to be teaching them. The method claimed to be used, corresponds to the result found in Rossiter *et al.* (2016), where the most common approach was to let the pupil guess the words meaning, by the context. Guessing a word by context can be an uncertain approach for several reasons; firstly, as stated previously, for an understanding of a full context, 95-98% of the surrounding words need to be understood, which means that guessing a word through context depends on the students comprehension of the surrounding words (Nation, 2001; Lundahl, 2014a; Schmitt 2000); secondly, Lundahl (2014a), argues that if you can understand as much as 95-98%, and therefore are able to guess the meaning, then guessing is in fact unnecessary, and can therefore be excluded; moreover, Lundahl (2014a), also asserts that for productive knowledge to be mastered, the word needs to be used in communication or writing; Further, he asserts that guessing by context can be valuable, but only regarding high frequent words, as low frequent words will not be mastered through guessing by context (p. 339). Lundahl (2014a), instead implies that it is the amount of reading that develops vocabulary, not the guessing itself.

6.1.2. How Important is Inclusion of New Vocabulary

The result of teachers' perception regarding the importance of new vocabulary was, as previously stated, unanimous. They were all in agreement that vocabulary acquisition is highly important for language development to occur. Interestingly, when the teachers were asked questions regarding their various ways of teaching and assessing vocabulary, they all asserted that vocabulary is an essential part of language acquisition, and therefore needs to be taught despite its explicit lack in the curriculum. Yet, the reason they only allow one opportunity for practice, as well as treating the words in a single context, can be summarized by that very same fact. Most teachers argued that because its lack of explicit mentioning in the curriculum, they cannot spend more time on vocabulary, than one time in a single context, as the other explicit subject matters in fact are mentioned, and therefore needs to be given more attention.

This result is aligned with previously presented research that contents that teacher beliefs, the standing curricula, their roles and techniques affect what and how teachers act in the classroom (Rossiter *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, the danger of allowing only one opportunity to practice the set of vocabulary, does not adhere to the provided guidelines for vocabulary acquisition, which states that the most important factors of vocabulary acquisition are repetition, and to use the newly acquired words in various contexts, together with commitment and motivation (Schmitt, 2000; Lundahl, 2014a; Nation, 2001, Duan & Da, 2015). Finally, a single opportunity for practice is highly unlikely to provide enough time to identify the many aspects involved in knowing a word, and could therefore lead to pupils forgetting the words intended on learning, resulting in valuable learning time wasted.

6.1.3. Which Methods are Used to Introduce New Vocabulary

The new vocabulary is presented in two ways amongst the five teachers observed and interviewed. The two consist of either pre-choosing words for the pupils, or letting the students themselves choose the vocabulary to be learnt. According to Lundahl (2014a), teachers tend to focus on teaching words that facilitates an understanding of the context they will be reading. He clarifies, the ten most commonly used words in English, stands for 25 % of all words used in writing and conversation, and that the 100 most frequently used words constitutes as high as 50 % of all spoken and written English (Lundahl, 2014a, p. 349). Therefore, Lundahl (2014a), asserts that teachers should instead focus on building a large basic vocabulary that occurs often.

Looking at vocabulary this particular way, might mean more pre planning for teachers, which could be a reason they choose to teach vocabulary that fits the specific content instead.

Mona lets her pupils pick their own vocabulary as she holds the opinion that not working with vocabulary the pupils find difficult would be foolish. It is obvious that teachers should point to unknown vocabulary when teaching, however, according to Lundahl (2014a), choosing words solely for this reason can mean that the focus lies on low frequent words, which in turn creates the risk of spending valuable learning time on teaching words that occur seldom (p. 348). Jenny's strategies for choosing the vocabulary to be learned, was for pupils to be able to understand the context. This reasoning is align with how most teachers approach the matter, according to Lundahl (2014a), but should be avoided if possible.

Contrary to Mona's reasoning, Anna believes it is best to pick new words herself, as she does not rely on the students' capability of selecting relevant words. As mentioned in previous passages, commitment and motivation are essential parts for vocabulary acquisition to occur. Therefore, Krashen (1982), argues that it can, in fact, be beneficial for the development of vocabulary, if pupils occasionally are provided the opportunity to take part in the words to be learnt. Letting pupils always choose vocabulary, as Mona's pupils do, can on the other hand lead to them either choosing words they are already familiar with, or selecting low frequent words. Consequently, learning low frequent words, means that pupils are not exposed to them often, thus resulting in a high risk of forgetting the word that was supposed to be learnt (Lundahl, 2014a). In addition, teaching words already known does not necessarily develop pupils' language ability, unless it is taught in various contexts, and valuable learning time is, yet again, at risk of being lost.

6.1.4. How is the Vocabulary Pedagogically Implemented

The result of how the vocabulary was raised, indicated that most teachers presented the vocabulary, intended for the pupils to learn, before they had read the text it was connected to. Further, the second step of all teachers was to translate the word to their L1. However, what was conducted subsequently, varied some amongst the teachers examined. Two of the teachers did nothing more beside the simple one definition translation into L1, two used images and or group discussions as means, together with saying the words out loud, while one teaches vocabulary using synonyms.

Firstly, Lundahl (2014a), contends that showing your ability to speak English, does not mean you need to show your ability to speak your L1 (in this case Swedish). In addition,

Swedish schools are attended by multiple nationalities, which of many are refugees. This means that in a Swedish classroom, it cannot be assumed that pupils L1 is Swedish. Hence, to force pupils to learn English through Swedish, could therefore mean you are compelling them to translate from their L1, to Swedish, and then finally to the intended targeted language.

Moreover, to combine teaching of words with clarification of pronunciation, which is conducted by two of the teachers, is promoted by several researchers (Nation, 2001; Lundahl, 2014a). Further, according to Lundahl (2014a), vocabulary teaching that is brought up to pupils prior to them reading a text, have been overemphasized, and is still something very usual in many classrooms. He argues that selecting words before reading a text should be conducted with caution for two reasons; (1) it does not enhance the understanding significantly in relation to the contextual understanding; (2) it can limit the vocabulary development, since words in a text can mean different things depending on the context (Lundahl, 2014a, p. 347). Therefore, he advises that the words should be taught in a context, for enhancement of the meaning, instead of presenting single entities without immediate connection to context (Lundahl, 2014a). As words do not usually have one fixed meaning, learning a word as a single unique entity could in fact obstruct the understanding of the words meaning and function.

Secondly, the given results are consistent with Lundström and Siedlecki's (2017), which revealed that the most common way to teach vocabulary was through standard glossary lists, translating to or from the L1. Lundahl (2014a), asserts that glossary's that are chosen and given as homework, generally means pupils practice the words by altering between covering one language side and practicing the other, and that the following glossary tests are often conducted in the same order as the homework. Consequently, the combination of presenting words prior to reading a text, and using glossary lists in the same order as the homework given, does not promote retention (Lundahl, 2014a, p. 347).

Further, using illustrations when teaching a word is advised by several researchers, for the purpose of retention (Lundahl, 2014a; Amiryousefi & Ketabi, 2011). However, one of the teachers uses the illustration after she has provided pupils with a translation to L1, which we perceived as means for confirmation, whereas the other teachers seem to use the image as aid for pupils' retention. She allows several steps to be taken for the pupils before she confirms the meaning of each word. During these steps, explained in the result section, she uses the illustration in the background, so that when pupils discuss the possible meanings, they are given the opportunity to use the image as aid.

Moreover, Mona uses synonyms when teaching new vocabulary to pupils. According to Nation (2001), this should be avoided. As many words that are similar in meaning, often are

presented as synonyms, it can lead to confusion rather than clarification. As mentioned previously, teaching vocabulary using semantic maps are fruitful for vocabulary development (Lundahl, 2014a; Duan & Da, 2015). Using this approach, when words are presented in a context, and where that new information relates to, and combines with prior knowledge and experiences, facilitates learning (Lundahl, 2014a; Duan & Da, 2015). By adjusting Mona's way of teaching vocabulary, using synonyms, to working with semantic maps, she could potentially gain a higher rate of retention, and therefore create possibilities for a greater vocabulary development amongst her pupils.

Finally, several researchers in the field (Lundahl, 2014a; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2008; Ellis, 1985, Nagy *et al.*, 1985), state that some of the most important factors of vocabulary development, is commitment, repetition, motivation, and frequent use of the newly acquired vocabulary in various contexts. Despite the great knowledge of these factors, all teachers observed and interviewed for this research, only allow one opportunity for practice, and for the words to occur in a single context. Schmitt (2000), states that for a pupil to fully master a word, they are required to obtain knowledge regarding the words form, semantic, and pragmatics. For this to be possible, the words must be processed and practiced multiple times, which is not the case for the teachers investigated. Lundahl (2014a), concludes that the use of language together with activity does not necessarily lead to automatically learning of words. He therefore asserts that commitment, processing and active word use, together with motivation, are essential conditions for vocabulary acquisition to take place (p. 344).

6.1.5. What kind of Assessment was Performed

Before a discussion regarding the result of the assessment of vocabulary can begin, a brief explanation of the term is needed for clarification. According to Lundahl (2014a), assessment is the ways in which teachers' document pupils' language abilities, in relation to the goals (p. 484). He continues to inform that there are two various forms of assessment, one that stands for assessment for learning (formative assessment), and one of learning (summative assessment) (Lundahl, 2014a). In other words, summative assessment means some sort of grade is connected to the student's ability, or accomplishment in relation to the set goals. As vocabulary is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, it would not be correct to summatively assess it, therefore we will only refer to formative assessment when discussing.

The teachers examined, assess the acquisition of vocabulary either through standard glossary test, where a simple definition from L2/L1 to L1/L2, or by filling in the gap exercises.

As mentioned previously, using standard one definition glossary lists, does not promote retention. In addition, nor does the glossary lists allow for the vocabulary to be used in context, which are agreed to be the most beneficial area for vocabulary development. The teachers who use fill in the gap exercises as means of assessment, argued that they did so because pupils should be able to use the words in a context. Filling in an empty gap, using one of the words in a list of examples, is not the same as using the word by your own capability in a context. Teachers should instead develop this exercise and assessment, by for example providing the pupils with a list of words of which they themselves could create sentences from. This reasoning is attested by Krashen (1982), who argues that pupils' knowledge about language is not the most important matter, rather what they can do with the language acquired.

Although, Lundahl (2014a), asserts that fill in the gap exercises is not the most beneficial area of acquiring or assessing vocabulary acquisition, he refers to research conducted by Laufer & Hulstijn (2001), who argues that more words were still obtained by filling in gaps in reading tasks, than to solely read one definitions in margins. Further, Lundahl (2014a), insist that the most important part of assessment is for it to support the pupils learning, and should include feedback and reflection. The focus of the researched teachers assessment, seem to lie more on whether or not the pupils had completed their homework, rather than as a support for learning.

Finally, all the teachers were observed to assess in the same manner, every week, despite them arguing different. According to Lundahl, (2014a) this does not follow the guidelines for the principles of assessment, as he contends that the assessment should be versatile and wide. In addition, he argues that as the curriculum stresses all-round communicative skills, the assessment must focus on what the pupils can do with the language, and to what extent that is accomplished, as well as that an all-round communicative ability must be followed by an all-round and wide assessment (Lundahl, 2014a, p. 479).

7. Conclusion

7.1. Conclusion

The conducted research had the purpose to investigate which methods five school teacher, in compulsory education, found useful when teaching ESL learners vocabulary through reading. Moreover, it aimed to find out if the reported teacher practices reflect what is currently viewed as effective vocabulary instructions. The empirical data contained classroom observations along with semi-structured interviews, as well as a thorough review of existing research. In the following section, the main conclusions drawn from this paper, will be presented. Subsequently, the limitations will be put forward, along with future research in the domain.

SLA is a diverse and complex matter that still, to this day, lacks one single way to describe how learners acquire language. Knowledge about a word involves knowing the words form, semantics, and pragmatics, and the interactive process of reading enhances the understanding of that required word knowledge. Research all points to that learning a word is a gradual process, which means the words needs to be exposed to the learner multiple times, in various contexts, to facilitate a greater understanding. As there is a need for an interactive process between the reader and the text, this entails that the more one reads, the more vocabulary one acquires.

Furthermore, based on the research, four conclusions can be drawn. The first conclusion concerns the fact that teachers, despite vast research in the field, often turn to simple and old fashioned practices in regards to vocabulary teaching. Secondly, the results indicate lack of knowledge as a reason for exclusion of methods that are anchored on theoretical basis. Additionally, the question of time is seen as a primary obstacle to incorporate other methods that would benefit vocabulary development. Moreover, all teachers agree regarding the importance of vocabulary inclusion for acquisition to occur, yet their practices does not reflect that vision.

The researched teachers all used simple and old fashioned methods to both teach and assess vocabulary. They turn to simple one definitions, to or from L1, together with standard weekly glossary tests. They reason, that these methods are efficient, together with the fact that it is a matter of tradition and habit. The teachers often argue that lack of knowledge regarding the implementations of methods that are seen as more efficient for development of vocabulary acquisition, are factors that prevents their work of improving or altering their current teaching

approaches. Additionally, teachers reason that as other matters are explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, it hinders vocabulary to gain as much valuable teaching time.

Finally, despite the vast research in the field regarding effective methods, as well as the relation between the methods and teacher practices, it is observed that strong traditions influences teacher practices. As these practices are formed by teacher cognition (what they think, know, and believe), the inquiry is based on which of the factors of cognition is allowed to consume more attention.

7.3. Implications for Future Research

We would propose that further qualitative research on this topic would take advantage of more perspectives from both teachers and students. Adding a student perspective could provide a greater understanding of different learning styles preferred by students to acquiring vocabulary, as well as to support a possible vision regarding the outcome of the used methods. Furthermore, performing a study where a focus group and a control group are included, would be profitable for the results of the study. The study group could continue their education as normal, whilst the focus group would conduct their education of vocabulary in accordance with recent theories regarding vocabulary acquisition. The outcome would be examined, and as a result, lead to a more thorough outcome regarding teacher practices in relation to research, as well as preferred actions to be taken, to prohibit the use of inefficient approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Finally, a future research project that focuses on the underlying factors that cause teachers to teach in a manner they often recognize as not the being efficient, would be valuable to expand the understanding of the relationship between the two.

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9. Appendix

9.1. Form of Consent



LÄRANDE OCH SAMHÄLLE
INSTITUTION

Datum

På lärarutbildningen vid Malmö universitet skriver studenterna ett examensarbete på avancerad nivå. I detta arbete ingår att göra en egen vetenskaplig studie, utifrån en fråga som kommit att engagera studenterna under utbildningens gång. Till studien samlas ofta material in vid skolor, i form av t.ex. intervjuer och observationer. Examensarbetet motsvarar 15 högskolepoäng, och utförs under totalt 10 veckor. När examensarbetet blivit godkänt publiceras det i Malmö universitets databas MUEP (<http://dspace.mah.se/handle/2043/599>).

Samtycke till medverkan i studentprojekt

Inled med att presentera dig själv, berätta att du är student på lärarutbildningen, på vilken termin du studerar samt när du kommer att ta din examen. Berätta att du har inhämtat skolans godkännande till att genomföra studien.

Beskriv att det handlar om ett examensarbete, och vad för typ av studie det är du ska göra. Beskriv vad du kommer att fokusera vid materialinsamlingen (t.ex. elevers kunskaper, samspel, kommunikation) samt i vilka situationer du kommer att följa deltagarna (t.ex. i klassrummet, i korridorerna).

Beskriv på vilket sätt deltagarna kommer att involveras i studien, samt vilka personuppgifter som är tänkta att samlas in (t.ex. namn, ålder, foto, filmning eller ljudupptagning av personer).

Beskriv hur dokumentationen kommer att gå till (t.ex. via ljudinspelning, fotografering eller fältanteckningar), och med vilken utrustning det sker. Understryk att privata mobiltelefoner aldrig används. Beskriv vem/vilka som kommer att ha tillgång till det insamlade materialet.

Påtala att allt insamlat material och personuppgifter lagras på Malmö universitets server under arbetet med examensarbetet, samt att samtyckesblanketterna förvaras oåtkomligt på Malmö universitet.

Hänvisa, gärna med länk, till Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer, och förklara att ditt projekt utgår från dessa principer i bl.a. följande avseenden:

- Medverkan baseras på samtycke och detta samtycke kan när som helst återkallas. Alla som

tillfrågas har alltså rätt att tacka nej till att delta, eller (om de först tackar ja) rätt att avbryta sin medverkan när som helst, utan några negativa konsekvenser.

- Deltagarna kommer att avidentifieras i det färdiga arbetet.
- Materialet kommer enbart att användas för aktuell studie och kommer att förstöras när denna är examinerad.

.....
Studentens underskrift och namnförtydligande

Kontaktuppgifter till student (tfn nr, e-mail):

.....

Ansvarig handledare på Malmö universitet:

.....

Kursansvarig på Malmö universitet:

.....

Kontaktuppgifter Malmö universitet:

www.mau.se

040-665 70



Information om Malmö universitets behandling av personuppgifter

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Personuppgiftsansvarig | Malmö universitet |
| Dataskyddsbud | dataskyddsbud@mau.se |
| Typ av personuppgifter | Namn, anteckning av lärandesituation, bild och/eller filmklipp samt ditt samtycke till att Malmö universitet behandlar dessa personuppgifter. |
| Ändamål med behandlingen | För att möjliggöra undervisnings- och examinationssituationer i skolmiljö för studenter vid Malmö universitets lärarutbildning. |
| Rättslig grund för behandling | Ditt samtycke. |
| Mottagare | Personuppgifterna kommer endast användas i utbildningssyfte inom ramen för lärarutbildningen vid Malmö universitet och kommer inte att spridas vidare till någon annan mottagare. |
| Lagringstid | Malmö universitet kommer spara dina personuppgifter så länge de behövs för ovan angivet ändamål eller till dess att du återkallar ditt samtycke. Efter genomförd kurs/program kommer personuppgifterna att raderas. Malmö universitet kan dock i vissa fall bli skyldiga att arkivera och spara personuppgifter enligt Arkivlagen och Riksarkivets föreskrifter. |
| Dina rättigheter | Du har rätt att kontakta Malmö universitet för att 1) få information om vilka uppgifter Malmö universitet har om dig och 2) begära rättelse av dina uppgifter. Vidare, och under de förutsättningar som närmare anges i dataskyddslagstiftningen, har du rätt att 3) begära radering av dina uppgifter, 4) begära en överföring av dina uppgifter (dataportabilitet), eller 5) begära att Malmö universitet begränsar behandlingen av dina uppgifter. När Malmö universitet behandlar personuppgifter med stöd av ditt samtycke, har du rätt att när som helst återkalla ditt samtycke genom skriftligt meddelande till Malmö universitet. Du har rätt att inge klagomål |

om Malmö universitets behandling av dina personuppgifter genom att kontakta Datainspektionen, Box 8114, 104 20 Stockholm.

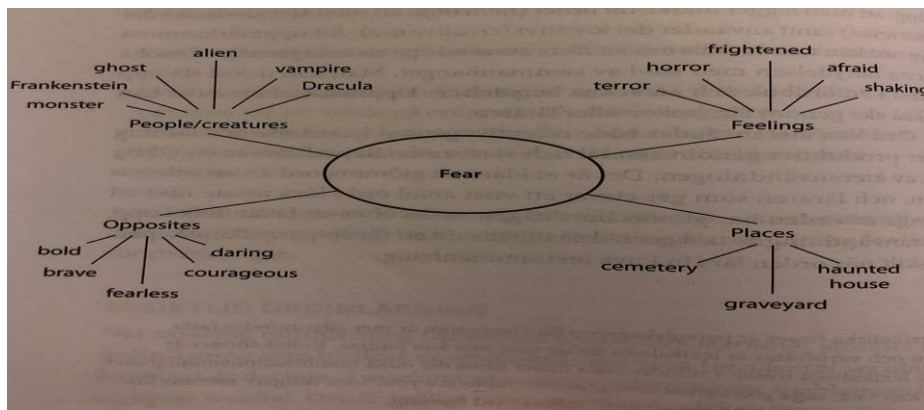


Samtycke

Härmed samtycker jag till att medverka i ovan beskrivna studentprojekt, samt bekräftar att jag har tagit del av informationen om Malmö universitets behandling av personuppgifter, och Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer, som säger att

- medverkan baseras på samtycke och detta samtycke kan när som helst återkallas. Alla som tillfrågas har alltså rätt att tacka nej till att delta, eller (om de först tackar ja) rätt att avbryta sin medverkan när som helst, utan några negativa konsekvenser.
- deltagarna kommer att avidentifieras i det färdiga arbetet.
- materialet kommer enbart att användas för aktuell studie och kommer att förstöras när denna är examinerande.

9.2. Example of Semantic map



(Lundahl, 2012, p. 346)

9.3. Interview Questions

1. Where did you graduate?
2. How long have you been a practicing teacher?
3. Which subjects do you teach?
4. What was the reason for you choosing those subjects?
5. When you plan your lessons, what do you take into consideration? (individual needs, knowledge requirements, learning theories, etc?)
6. You have recently had a project with the pupils regarding reading, correct?
7. How did you plan this reading project from beginning to the end (include thoughts when finding a suitable book (relevant for the learners different level) related to your theme, eventual tasks, discussions, curriculum, etc)?
8. How long was this project in weeks (and how many lessons per week)?
9. Can you describe lesson plan in detail (week one, two, etc)?
10. During the reading project, do learners read themselves, as a group out loud, or listen to the soundbook?
11. What were your reasons for your choice?
12. What was your goal with this reading project?

13. What was your aim as the end task for the pupils?
14. How did you come to the conclusion of this end task?
15. What are your thoughts regarding pupils learning new vocabulary? How important do you believe it is, and why?
16. In the curriculum it does not explicitly say anything regarding vocabulary, despite this, do you teach new vocabulary during your reading project?
17. If yes, why do you teach it? If no, how come?
18. How do you teach new vocabulary in relation to reading in this project?
19. Beside explicit vocabulary teaching, do you in this project teach any other strategies for acquiring new vocabulary through reading?
20. If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
21. What was your reasoning for choosing this particular way of teaching the new vocabulary?
22. How do you test the pupils' knowledge of the newly acquired vocabulary?
23. What was your reasoning for choosing this particular way of testing their knowledge?
24. Do you connect the vocabulary you have taught, in their final task? If so, how? If no, why?
25. How often do you allow for the pupils to practise the newly acquired vocabulary?

26. When you teach the new vocabulary, do you connect it somehow to the curriculum? If so, how?
27. Do you go by any theories when you teach the new vocabulary?
28. If yes, which ones, and why those?
29. If no, what determines your approach to teaching the new vocabulary?
30. Do you create your own material for the students to gain as much as possible from the new vocabulary, or do you use existing ones?
31. When you have taught something do you take time for reflection?
32. If yes, do you make any changes based on your reflections?
33. How do you know that your teaching of the new vocabulary gave results?
34. How do you assess the results?
35. How often do you assess a similar task? (How many times does a student get to practise, before a summative assessment is taken place?)
36. What are your thoughts regarding your choice in assessment, have you got the ideas from someone, theories, etc?
37. How do you ensure that your intent on students learning the new vocabulary became reality?

38. Has it ever happened that you noticed that the wanted or planned result respecting new vocabulary, did not go as planned?

39. If yes, what did you do then?

40. Do you believe that it would benefit pupils if their teacher was continuously updated with recent research, regarding learning theories?

41. If yes, why?

42. Who is responsible for the teachers receiving further education, regarding learning theories, according to you? You, the head of the school, both, other examples?