



Degree Project with Specialization in English Studies and Education

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Story-based vocabulary teaching in Swedish EFL classrooms: a qualitative study of primary school teachers' perspectives

Berättelsebaserad ordförrådsundervisning i EFL klassrum: en
kvalitativ studie av grundskollärares perspektiv

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Abstract

Vocabulary acquisition is a central part of early language learning and essential for students' ability to communicate in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Previous research shows that vocabulary learning in meaningful contexts, such as through children's literature, can support both language development and student engagement. In the Swedish curriculum, English teaching in the early years is expected to promote communicative competence through interaction, contextualised language use, and multimodal activities.

The aim of this study was to investigate how teachers in four Swedish primary schools use children's literature in the English classroom to support vocabulary acquisition, and how they perceive the possibilities and challenges of this approach in relation to theory, previous research, and the curriculum. The study was conducted as a qualitative interview study with four teachers who teach English in grades F-3. Semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically in relation to social constructivism, Krashen's theory of language acquisition, and the Swedish curriculum.

The results show that teachers use children's literature as a meaningful way to support vocabulary learning by providing contextualised input and increasing student engagement. They describe using scaffolding, repetition, and multimodal activities and highlight both opportunities, such as enhanced communicative learning and challenges, including limited time, differences in proficiency, and unclear curricular guidance. The findings suggest that story-based teaching supports communicative language learning in Swedish EFL classrooms, but requires clearer curricular support and sufficient time.

Keywords: EFL, vocabulary acquisition, children's literature, stories, primary school, teachers' perceptions.

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1. Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the core building blocks of language learning and is therefore a fundamental part in learning a new language (Dakhi & Fitira, 2019; Nation, 2001). Vocabulary knowledge is particularly important as it enables individuals to participate in international communication throughout various areas of life. Since English is such a global language, the curriculum sees strong English proficiency increasingly essential for students' future opportunities (Skolverket, 2022). Therefore, developing a broad English vocabulary is essential for young learners as it sets their foundation for their continued language learning.

For primary school students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), vocabulary knowledge is essential for both producing and understanding language (Mukthar et al., 2023; Nation, 2017). Vocabulary knowledge has been shown to be a strong predictor of students' reading comprehension (Oakhill et al., 2014; Nation, 2019; Fälth et al., 2022). The researchers also highlight its importance for overall language development. Young learners tend to acquire new languages more efficiently than adults, particularly when they are exposed to meaningful and contextualised language use (Pinter, 2017). For this reason research shows that vocabulary learning should start early in students' language learning in order to support long-term language development (Mukthar et al., 2023).

In the Swedish context, English is a compulsory subject already in the early years. The Swedish curriculum emphasises that language learning is connected to identity development and participation in society (Skolverket, 2022). Further the curriculum states that teaching should give students opportunities to develop their ability to express themselves and communicate in English through meaningful interaction. The core content in English for grades 1-3 highlights the importance of learning words and phrases through listening and speaking as vocabulary knowledge is necessary for students to gradually develop their communicative competence. This shows how vocabulary learning in early EFL education is not only a linguistic concern, but it also contributes to students' development as active and meaningful participants in a globalised society.

Despite the importance of vocabulary learning being recognised in research, research also indicates several challenges within vocabulary teaching. Traditional approaches to teaching

vocabulary often rely on repetitive exercises and students' memorisation of the vocabulary, which may limit student engagement as they see it as boring (Richards & Rogers, 2014). A lack of engagement has been identified as a major issue in language learning as students who are not actively involved in their learning are less likely to develop deep and lasting vocabulary knowledge (Hennebry-Leung & Lamb, 2024; Nation, 2013). In addition, Bergström et al. (2022) found that Swedish EFL textbooks most often focus on high-frequency words that students often already know, which offers limited opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning through exposure to a new language in meaningful contexts. The study also revealed that teachers could not explain their pedagogical strategies for vocabulary development, which suggests a lack of explicit didactic reasoning behind vocabulary instruction (Bergström et al., 2022).

One approach for vocabulary acquisition that has received more attention in vocabulary research is the use of children's literature through storytelling. According to Nazara (2019), stories provide a contextualised language input, allowing students to encounter new vocabulary in meaningful situations which can deepen their understanding and retention. From a theoretical point of view, storytelling aligns well with Vygotsky's (Wang, 2022) theory of social constructivism, which emphasises learning through social interaction and scaffolding to place the learning within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In this context the teacher plays a crucial role, particularly for young learners. They do that by guiding interactions, modeling language and by providing support that invites students to engage with vocabulary slightly above their current level. Therefore teachers need to be aware of selecting stories that are appropriate in terms of linguistic difficulty, ensuring that the vocabulary and language levels fall within the learner's ZPD and can be understood with support (Wang, 2022).

A story-based approach can also be connected to Krashen's theory of language acquisition, which highlights the importance of meaningful input and comprehension over formal accuracy (Krashen, 1987). When students engage with stories, their primary focus is often on the meaning of the story rather than the form. This creates opportunities for vocabulary acquisition as a by-product of understanding the narrative of the story. Such approaches may be particularly beneficial for young EFL learners who require both support and motivation in their language learning.

Given the emphasis on early language learning in the Swedish curriculum and the identified challenges in teaching vocabulary, there is a need for further research into meaningful and engaging teaching approaches that support young learners' vocabulary development. Stories could be described as a rich pedagogical resource, yet there is limited research that focuses on how teachers in a Swedish primary school classroom use English stories for vocabulary acquisition. Understanding teachers' views and classroom practices is essential, as teachers play a key role in translating theoretical approaches and curriculum goals into practice.

2. Aim and Research Question

The aim of this study is to explore teachers' views and classroom practices in the Swedish context regarding the use of fictional stories to support vocabulary acquisition in EFL teaching in grades F-3, and to examine the perceived benefits and challenges of working with stories for vocabulary learning.

The study will aim to answer the following research questions:

- How do teachers in grades F-3 perceive the use of English stories in EFL vocabulary teaching, including its benefits and challenges?
- What classroom practices and didactic choices do teachers make when working with English stories to support vocabulary acquisition?

3. Background

This section is structured into four parts. First, key concepts relevant to the study are defined. Second, the theoretical framework relevant to the study is discussed. Third, the English syllabus is examined with focus on its perspective on vocabulary acquisition. Fourth, previous research on the use of English literature in the EFL classroom to support vocabulary acquisition is reviewed.

3.1 Definitions

The following segment will define and explain the following concepts: children's literature, EFL, young learners and language acquisition.

3.1.1 Children's literature

Children's literature is written texts and illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people. Children's literature is a broad term including works such as classics, picture books, fairy tales, fables and lullabies (Fadiman, 2017). For the purposes of this study, children's literature is delimited to fictional stories used as pedagogical resources within the EFL classroom to support language learning.

3.1.2 EFL and young learners

The abbreviation EFL is used throughout this paper. EFL stands for *English as a foreign language*, and refers to the teaching of English to learners whose first language is not English (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). This means that while a native speaker has known English from birth, an EFL student is a non-native learner acquiring English after their first language. In this study, the term is used to describe students within the Swedish school system. Moreover, young learners is a broad term used to describe students from various ages (British Council, n.d.). However, the term will be used throughout this study to describe students in grades F-3.

3.1.3 Vocabulary acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is the process where language learners integrate new words into their mental lexicon. The mental lexicon is a component of the mental representation of language and according to Aguilar García (2024), it encompasses receptive knowledge, meaning the

understanding of words either through listening or reading, and productive knowledge, meaning the ability to use the words in either speech or writing. With vocabulary acquisition the intention is to see the students' development when it comes to vocabulary knowledge, and to not only know the word, but to be able to use it meaningfully and independently.

3.2 Theoretical framework

Social constructivism provides a foundational perspective for understanding how learning occurs through interaction and social context. This theory emphasises that knowledge is not simply transmitted from teacher to learner but actively constructed through engagement with others and the surrounding environment. In an educational setting, social constructivism thrives as it fosters collaborative learning experiences where students engage in meaningful interactions, share perspectives, and negotiate meanings (Margetts et al., 2022). A central concept within social constructivism is the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*, which suggests that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding with guidance from a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, learning progresses from a learner's current level to a more advanced level through such support. In the EFL classroom, this theory suggests that literature-based activities such as read-aloud or choral reading can provide scaffolding by offering linguistic support and contextual clues, enabling students to comprehend, acquire, and confidently use new vocabulary.

In addition to social interaction, exposure to meaningful language input is essential for vocabulary development, as emphasised in Krashen's theory of language acquisition. The theory highlights the importance of meaningful input and comprehension over formal accuracy. Krashen (1987) argues that language learning primarily occurs through acquisition, an unconscious process driven by comprehensible input, while learning functions as a conscious monitor. In the EFL classroom, children's literature can provide comprehensible input, exposing students to new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. By using literature, teachers can create a motivating environment that supports language acquisition, offers contextual clues for understanding and strengthens the young learner's ability to both use and comprehend the new vocabulary.

Together, social constructivism and Krashen's theory of language acquisition provide complementary perspectives on vocabulary learning, as they explain how vocabulary is acquired and how this process can be supported through the use of children's literature in the

classroom. Krashen's theory emphasises the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, suggesting that learners develop vocabulary when exposed to meaningful and context-rich language, which in this case would be children's literature. Moreover, social constructivism highlights the significance of interaction, collaboration and scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development. Through teacher support and collaborative activities, young learners can better understand and use new vocabulary. To conclude, the theories used together explain vocabulary learning both as a process of meaningful exposure and socially supported development in the EFL classroom.

3.3 The Swedish curriculum

The Swedish curriculum and syllabus for English states that "language is the primary tool human beings use for thinking, communicating and learning" (Skolverket, 2022, p. 43). Furthermore, it states that "knowing more than one language can provide new perspectives on the world, greater opportunities for interaction, and a better understanding of different ways of living" (Skolverket, 2022, p. 43). According to the curriculum, the English language surrounds our everyday lives and is crucial for us to learn, due to the fact that English language skills will increase the individual's ability to be a part of the society. Moreover, the syllabus for English states that students in the Swedish school system should be given the opportunity to develop a communicative ability. An ability that involves understanding both spoken and written English, being able to express themselves and interact with others (Skolverket, 2022). Moving on to the core content, students in grades 1-3 are expected to listen, speak and communicate through simple conversations, requiring them to know and use vocabulary independently. The curriculum also highlights the importance of multimodal learning, including songs, rhymes, poems and fairy tales, as part of students' English language development (Skolverket, 2022).

3.4 Previous research

In the following section, previous research regarding the use of children's literature for EFL students vocabulary acquisition will be presented. Research also shows teachers and students' positive views on literature based education, however there are some challenges to the method.

3.4.1 The effects of working with children's literature

Working with children's literature in the EFL classroom has shown to be effective for developing vocabulary acquisition (Nazara, 2019; Uchiyama, 2011; Gutierrez Arvizu, 2020; Lin, 2014). One study was conducted by Uchiyama (2011) who tested students before and after working with stories. Students in the study were introduced to the stories in two different ways, through a storyteller reading the book aloud, and through a storyteller reading the book aloud at the same time as they dressed up and embodied the role of the protagonist. The test concluded that the students' vocabulary knowledge was improved, showing that working with children's literature does affect EFL students' vocabulary. Moreover, a study conducted by Gutierrez Arvizu (2020) also found that the tests showed an increase in the participating students' vocabulary knowledge from pre-tests to post-tests. Lin (2014), conducted another study on the subject where students test results showed that working with stories in the classroom provided opportunities for the students to develop language skills and improve their vocabulary acquisition.

3.4.2 Teachers views on literature based vocabulary acquisition

According to a study conducted by Calafato (2023) teachers have a positive view on the use of literature in teaching. Teachers believe that literature can be beneficial for critical thinking skills, as well as act as a supporting tool in enhancing students' language proficiency. Bist and Kandel (2025) conducted another study in Nepal regarding teachers' views on literature in the EFL classroom. Through a mixed method approach including both a survey and semi-structured interviews the study concludes that teachers generally perceive the use of literary texts as beneficial in the EFL classroom. The study shows that teachers believe that literature supports a broader language development and can be used to foster student's linguistic competencies and enhance active participation in class activities. However, teachers also acknowledged certain challenges regarding literature based practices, noting that students often struggle with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex language, which can reduce engagement and make them hesitant to engage with literary texts. Moreover, a study conducted by Lin (2014) implies that working with children's literature in the form of stories is an enjoyable activity, and that "stories provide linguistic, paralinguistic, discourse, and cultural information for children to develop their language skills in a meaningful context" (p. 68).

3.4.3 Classroom practices and didactic choices

Previous studies show that children's literature is used in early EFL classrooms through structured approaches where read-alouds, storytelling and visual support are central. Teachers commonly read stories aloud, sometimes combining the reading with picture support or dramatisation. Uchiyama (2011) describes how teachers' classroom practices consist of both reading aloud and more expressive storytelling approaches where the teacher embodies the main character through gestures, voices or costumes. Similarly, Larraguete and Ceballos-Viro (2018) highlight teachers reading aloud with visual support, such as picture books, as an effective way to provide multimodal input and support vocabulary learning. Another classroom practice of children's literature consists of pre-teaching vocabulary by using visuals or by presenting the story in the students first language before reading the story in English (Gutierrez Arvizu, 2020). Post-reading activities such as drawing, writing or oral discussions to reinforce vocabulary learning is also a popular classroom practice (Atay & Kurt, 2006).

Bergström et al. (2022) argues that learning vocabulary is a central and complex aspect of learning a language. Therefore it is important to teach vocabulary through a structured approach to target words and create space for recycling. However, in a study made in a Swedish school setting using corpus-based methods, it was shown that while literature included an appropriate amount of unfamiliar and mid-frequency vocabulary, they were not sufficiently recycled. This means that the literature used mainly used vocabulary in a way that students were already likely to know (Bergström et al., 2022). The study also states that many EFL teachers do not consider vocabulary as its own distinct learning objective, which means that teachers do not plan their teaching with vocabulary in mind. The result of this is that although literature is a suitable input for vocabulary development, it must be used and chosen in a way where it has a purpose and leads to the most efficient vocabulary acquisition.

3.4.4 Research gap

Previous research has demonstrated that children's literature can support vocabulary acquisition in EFL context. However, much of this research has primarily focused on measuring the effects of story-based instruction on learners' vocabulary development, rather than exploring how teachers themselves perceive and implement such approaches in practice. There is therefore a need for studies that examine teachers' perceptions and classroom

practices when using English stories for vocabulary teaching, particularly in lower primary school. This is especially relevant in the Swedish context, where research focusing on grades F-3 is limited. By focusing on teachers' own descriptions of their didactic choices and experiences, this study aims to complement existing research on measured outcomes and provide insight into how story-based vocabulary instruction is understood and emaciated in the classroom.

4. Method

In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative research approach was chosen, using semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as the aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of teacher's attitudes, experiences and didactic choices. The semi-structured interviews were selected as a method of data-collection since they allow participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words while still providing a clear structure aligned with the research questions. This interview form allows the researchers to ask follow-up questions and ask for further clarification during the interview. This method therefore offers both structure and flexibility and is well suited to the qualitative and interpretive approach of this study (Alvehus, 2013).

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of four teachers from four different Swedish schools, currently working and teaching English in grades F-3. A purposeful sampling strategy was used, meaning that participants were selected based on their relevance to the aim of the study (Alvehus, 2019). Inclusion criteria were that participants were qualified teachers and had experience of teaching English to younger learners. The participants were recruited through personal contacts. This strategy was chosen due to accessibility and the limited timeframe of this study, as it allowed for efficient data collection within the given time period. To ensure anonymity, all participants were anonymised. No identifying information such as names, school or geographical information is presented in the study. Instead each participant was assigned a code, where the teachers are referred to as Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and so on, these codes are used consistently throughout the results section. An overview of participants, including relevant background information such as teaching experience and grade level taught, is presented below in table 1.

Table 1*Participating Teachers in the Study*

Teacher	Years of experience	Grade currently teaching	Minutes teaching English/week
1	3	2	40
2	5	3	60
3	5	Preschool (F-class)	60
4	7	2	30

4.2 Materials

The material used in this study consisted of a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers (see Appendix 1). The questions were designed based on the study's aim and research questions, as well as key concepts from the theoretical background, such as vocabulary learning, storytelling, and student engagement. The interview guide included both open-ended and more specific questions, allowing participants to describe their experiences while ensuring that relevant topics were covered (Alvehus, 2019). The questions were organised into thematic sections, including teachers' backgrounds, their understanding of vocabulary, their use of stories in the classroom, and their perceptions of student engagement, benefits, and challenges. The questions were chosen to capture both general perspectives and concrete teaching practices, such as how teachers introduce stories, work with vocabulary, and adapt teaching to different student levels. The semi-structured format also allowed for follow-up questions to gain deeper insights when needed. Overall, the interview guide was developed to ensure that the material collected was relevant to the study's aim and suitable for analysing teachers' perspectives on story-based vocabulary teaching.

4.2.1 Data analysis

After the interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were transcribed. The transcription process included converting the spoken language during the interview into written text, as well as translating the interviews from Swedish to English. During this process longer pauses and filler words such as "um" and "eh" were excluded. The transcription was done by the researchers themselves, and in close proximity to the conducted interviews. This ensured that the translation and transcription is preserving contextual details such as tone, emphasis and situational nuances, which might have otherwise been forgotten over time. This process also

strengthened the researchers familiarity with the data and supported a deeper engagement with the material prior to the analysis.

The transcribed interview material was analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis inspired by Braun and Clarke (2013). This method was chosen as it provides a systematic yet flexible approach to identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data. The analysis followed several steps: initial familiarisation with data, generation of initial codes, searching for potential themes, reviewing and refining themes and finally defining and naming the themes. The coding process was data driven, meaning that codes and themes emerged from the interview material rather than predetermined. This approach aligns with the exploratory nature of the study and allows teachers' perspective to be represented as authentically as possible.

4.3 Procedure

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with participating teachers. An interview sheet with questions was developed based on the aim of the study and the research questions. The interview guide included open-ended questions focusing on teachers' views on vocabulary learning, use of children's stories and challenges in the EFL classroom. The semi-structured format allowed follow-up questions to be asked when clarification was needed.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot interview was conducted. The purpose of the pilot interview was to evaluate the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the interview questions. It also served to determine whether the questions generated responses aligned with the aim of the study and the research questions. Based on the pilot interview, minor adjustments were made to the wording of the interview questions to improve clarity and flow during the interviews. Once the interview questions were finalised, the interviews were conducted either digitally via zoom or in person, depending on the preference of the participating teacher. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Prior to each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the interview procedure. With the informed consent of participants, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate documentation of data.

4.4 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines for good research practice established by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Ethical considerations were addressed throughout all stages of the research process. All participants received written information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or negative consequences (see Appendix 2). Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. To protect participants' identities, all data was anonymised and any potentially identifying information was excluded from the transcript and results. Confidentiality was ensured by storing audio recordings and transcripts securely and restricting access to material to researchers only.

4.5 Limitations

A limitation of this study is the small number of participants, which means the findings cannot be generalised to all English teachers in Swedish primary schools. Instead results should illustrate the experience and perspective of participants. Another limitation for this study is the selection of participants, which were selected through personal contacts. This personal contact may have influenced participants' responses during the interviews. Additionally the interpretive nature of the qualitative analysis means that the researchers' pre-understandings may have influenced the finished analysis, despite efforts to remain reflective and systematic throughout the process.

5. Results

The thematic analysis of the data resulted in five main themes related to the study's research questions: teachers' views on using stories for vocabulary learning, teachers' perceptions of students' engagement, teachers' didactic choices, perceived benefits and perceived challenges. These themes structure the presentation of the results in the following sections.

5.1 Teachers' views on using stories for vocabulary learning

All participating teachers expressed a positive attitude toward using stories for vocabulary learning. They described stories as a meaningful way to introduce and practice vocabulary in context. Below, their views are presented through different aspects.

5.1.1 Stories as context for vocabulary learning

Teacher 1 explained that stories are effective because students learn words more naturally when they hear them as part of a narrative in a story rather than as isolated vocabulary. Similarly, Teacher 2 highlighted that vocabulary becomes more understandable when words are connected to different characters and events. Furthermore, both teachers explained that students acquire more incidental vocabulary through context than through isolated glossaries, and they noted that this vocabulary learning stems from the contextual understanding of words within a story. Moreover, Teacher 3 described English stories as an effective tool to put vocabulary in context and for students to develop their English vocabulary in a meaningful and engaging way that working with English language textbooks do not.

“We read stories together, worked with them and picked out themes, like if the story was about body parts, clothes or something like that. I think it becomes very enjoyable when you work with books. I have tried both books and textbooks [...] and it was not the same at all. I feel that working with books is more enjoyable. You are freer and can be more creative.” (Teacher 3, translation ours)

Teacher 3 explained that in textbooks words are more random and isolated, where one chapter can be about one subject and the next can be about something completely different.

This, the teacher meant, feels less connected and meaningful. Furthermore, Teacher 3 continued to explain that it is their experience that young learners recognise things better when they come from children's literature, especially if they have already read it in Swedish beforehand. Moving on, Teacher 4 highlighted the importance of vocabulary learning in the EFL classroom and states that working with children's literature, such as stories, is an effective way to support this, as it places vocabulary in a meaningful context where students show willingness and a want to learn new words.

5.1.2 Variation in teaching

The teachers described using stories as a way to introduce variety into lessons. Teacher 2 emphasised that stories can capture students' interest, particularly when the content is relatable. Further, Teacher 2 explained that English is their favourite subject to teach, which influences their enthusiasm in the classroom and in the lesson plans. The teacher expressed that this enthusiasm becomes visible foremost in the lesson plans as there is a big variation in how they work. Teacher 1 also highlighted the importance of variation in teaching and explained that stories create a different dynamic compared to traditional vocabulary exercises. Moreover, Teacher 4 explained that working with stories in the English classroom segues into other methods, such as theater, songs and creative writing. Similarly, Teacher 3 highlighted the importance of multimodal learning, stating that working with stories opens up for more engaging and captivating learning that the students enjoy. Working with stories expands the approach to teaching in English, leading to work with dramatisation and listening to songs around the story, which Teacher 3 stated further develops students' vocabulary and engagement in the classroom.

5.2 Teachers' perception of students engagement

The findings in this section concern how the participating teachers describe students' engagement when working with stories in English lessons. The teachers reflect on how students respond to storytelling, how they participate in related activities, and how engagement may vary depending on language proficiency.

5.2.1 Engagement with storytelling

The interviewed teachers described that students are generally engaged while working with stories. Teacher 4 expressed the general impression that students find working with stories

both enjoyable and engaging. Moreover, Teacher 1 felt that in their experience that students listen more attentively during their read-aloud sessions with a story, than during other types of work in English class. Similarly, Teacher 2 stated that during storytelling, students show more curiosity and involvement in the classroom and appear more willing to use English orally.

“They want to understand what words mean, how they are spelled and they like to speak English.” (Teacher 2, translation ours)

Furthermore, Teacher 2 explained that students’ engagement increases even more when storytelling is combined with other interactive activities, such as pair-work or drama, which encourages students to use the intended vocabulary while talking to each other. Furthermore, Teacher 3 explained that their students show more engagement when they work with stories compared to other learning materials such as textbooks. Teacher 3 also stated that the students show more enjoyment and a deeper want to develop and learn.

5.2.2 Differences in engagement and possible cause

Although the interviewed teachers viewed student engagement with stories positively, they noted that it also depends on the students’ language proficiency. Teacher 1 explained that some students become frustrated and lack engagement when they can not understand all the words in a story due to their language proficiency. Similarly, Teacher 2 explained that students with strong language proficiency, who understand all or most of the words, participate more actively. Both agreed that stories and storytelling is a great way to teach vocabulary to young EFL learners, but the engagement by students also depends on their ability to understand the story.

Additionally, Teacher 3 stated that some students may lose motivation if they get stuck on words that they do not understand. The teacher explained that it often is the same students who struggle with listening or reading comprehension in general, both in English but also Swedish. According to Teacher 3, there are students who find it hard to follow a story, especially if they are not used to reading books or listening actively to stories, which can lead them to perceive the activity as boring or question why they have to do it. Moving on, Teacher 4 explained that working with stories may lead to more engagement in the

classroom. However, Teacher 4 argued that it depends on which story they are working with. The teacher found that it is mostly successful if it is a story that the students recognise or can relate to in some way, that is when the teacher notices a shift in motivation and engagement. If the story instead is too hard to comprehend or consists of too much text, the teacher found that students can lose motivation right away.

5.3 Teachers' didactic choices

The findings show that the participating teachers use stories in different ways when teaching vocabulary. While teachers described storytelling as a central activity, their approaches differ in terms of structure, variation, and vocabulary focus. The following subsections present these differences.

5.3.1 Textbook-based and structured approach

Teacher 1 mainly follows the textbook and works with the stories provided in the teaching material. The lessons often begin with the teacher reading the story aloud while the students listen and follow along. During reading, key words are explained or translated to ensure comprehension. Further, Teacher 1 explained that vocabulary is often practised through follow-up tasks connected to the textbook, such as worksheets or glossary exercises. Stories may also be reread during later lessons to reinforce vocabulary learning. This is used to ensure that students encounter the same words multiple times and in familiar formats.

5.3.2 Varied and interactive approach

Teacher 2 described a varied way of working with stories. Although reading aloud is also central, storytelling is often combined with interactive activities such as drama, songs, and collaborative tasks. Teacher 2 explained that vocabulary is selected intentionally from the story-based on relevance, usefulness, and level of difficulty. Instead of working only with the words presented in the textbook, certain words are highlighted and revisited through different types of activities. For example, students may act out scenes from the story or practise vocabulary in pairs. Teacher 2 uses this approach for student participation and oral language use to reinforce vocabulary learning.

Teacher 3 described their way of working with stories similarly to Teacher 2. Teacher 3 often chooses a story to work with that also exists in Swedish. Before reading the story out loud in

the classroom, they usually start with preparatory work. This can consist of reading the book in Swedish beforehand so the students are familiar with the story in their native language and going through some of the main vocabulary. Teacher 3 said that it is impossible to translate everything word for word, but it is important that the students have enough understanding of the vocabulary and the story beforehand so that they understand the overall meaning.

Teacher 4 explained that when working with stories, they usually begin with looking at the front cover, discussing what the students can see and what they think might happen. Then they usually look at pictures from the book and go through some of the words that the teacher knows will be recurrent or extra hard for the students. The story can then be read either by the teacher reading aloud or by students reading in pairs.

5.3.3 Repetition

All teachers saw repetition as essential for vocabulary acquisition. Repetition occurred in several ways: through rereading stories, revisiting key words, practising glossaries, or engaging in interactive follow-up activities. Teacher 1 highlighted rereading and structured practice as important strategies noting that repetition makes words easier to retain, and that students develop their vocabulary not just by memorising vocabulary, but through active use.

“We follow the textbook, where each chapter contains approximately ten words that the students practice and use in different ways. I place greater emphasis on students daring to speak and use the words, and I believe that they develop their vocabulary during the process.” (Teacher 1, translation ours)

Moreover, Teacher 2 stressed repeated use of vocabulary in communicative activities to help students actively reinforce and use new vocabulary meaningfully. Furthermore, Teacher 3 works with repetition through different types of media, such as looking at pictures, making short films, or listening to audiobooks. The teacher gave an example from when the class worked with *The Gruffalo* which has a song connected to the story. The teacher chose to incorporate that and sing together in the classroom, providing another way for students to encounter and process the vocabulary. Teacher 3 also described how stories can be extended through dramatisation and creative activities. The teacher viewed it as natural to work with dramatisation after working with a story. The class would also work with open questions such

as “*What would have happened if the character had acted differently?*” This, Teacher 3 argued, encourages the students to continue the story or give it a different ending. Moreover, Teacher 4 preferred to work with picture support and reading comprehension tasks. The teacher also explained that they sometimes work with creative writing, where the students are encouraged to create their own stories using vocabulary from the story they have read. Sometimes the class also works with songs relevant to the story or with dramatisation in the form of theater to recycle targeted vocabulary.

5.4 Perceived benefits

The findings show that all teachers associated several benefits with using stories in vocabulary teaching. Stories are described as supporting vocabulary development in multiple ways, particularly by providing context, encouraging repetition, and increasing student motivation. Although the teachers emphasised slightly different aspects, they all present stories as a valuable tool in early EFL teaching.

5.4.1 Vocabulary in context

All teachers in this study emphasised that stories provide a meaningful context for vocabulary learning. Instead of learning isolated words, students encounter vocabulary embedded in a narrative with characters, events, and visual support. According to the teachers, this makes it easier for students to understand the meaning of new words. Teacher 1 highlighted that hearing words repeatedly within the same story supports long-term retention. When stories are reread, students are exposed to the same vocabulary several times, which strengthens memory. Similarly, Teacher 2 explained that context helps students make connections between words and situations, which contributes to deeper understanding of the words meaning. Furthermore, both teachers described how stories allow students to infer meaning from pictures, tone of voice, and storyline.

Moreover, Teacher 3 explained that stories help students remember vocabulary because the words appear naturally in a meaningful context, and are not seen as isolated. Teacher 3 also emphasises that vocabulary becomes easier to remember when it is connected to the children’s experiences, noting that many students enjoy listening to stories and therefore have something to “hang” the new words on. Furthermore, Teacher 4 described vocabulary learning as something that occurs naturally when students engage with stories. The teacher

explained that when vocabulary is presented in context through stories, students are able to build their vocabulary in a natural way. Stories provide rich language input and contain many words for students to encounter and work with, which supports vocabulary development.

5.4.2 Motivation and participation

Another benefit identified by all teachers is increased motivation. Stories are described as more engaging than traditional vocabulary exercises, such as working with isolated vocabulary words. Teacher 1 explained that storytelling creates variation in teaching, which helps maintain students' interest. Additionally, Teacher 2 emphasised that story-based activities encourage active participation. When students act out scenes, work in pairs, or discuss the story, they are more willing to use English orally. According to Teacher 2, this creates a more dynamic learning environment where vocabulary is practised in meaningful interaction. The teachers associate stories with positive emotional engagement. Students are described as curious about the storyline and eager to find out what happens next.

Furthermore, Teacher 4 stated that they see motivation from the students when working with stories. The teacher explained that the students often want to read, and that it leads to them wanting to learn more words. Similarly, Teacher 3 highlighted the motivational aspects of storytelling, explaining that it is more enjoyable, accessible and also freer, since the teaching is not as strictly controlled by a predefined structure. This enables the students to have a more present and meaningful place in their education, since the teacher is open to their views and interests and gladly adapts the lessons to their needs and wants. Furthermore, according to Teacher 3, a single story can also lead to discussions about many different themes, such as friendship, colours and describing characters, and feelings, all of which enables interests and curiosity and more learning opportunities.

5.5 Perceived challenges

Although teachers express positive views on using stories in vocabulary teaching, they all also identify several challenges. The findings show that practical constraints and differences in students' language proficiency influence how stories can be implemented in the classroom.

5.5.1 Limited teaching time

One challenge, if not by all the biggest one according to the teachers, concerns the limited lesson time they have for English in F-3. All teachers interviewed only teach English once a week, which restricts opportunities to work in depth with stories and related vocabulary activities. Teacher 2 explained that storytelling, follow-up discussions, and interactive tasks require time in order to be meaningful. However, when lessons are short or infrequent, there is limited space for extended repetition and reflection. Similarly, Teacher 1 noted that time constraints sometimes lead to prioritising textbook tasks rather than more creative story-based activities. The teachers say that the use of stories and storytelling can not be used to its full potential due to the limitations with the timetable.

Moreover, Teacher 3 stated that limited time for English is one of the biggest challenges due to the fixed timetable. Currently, teacher 3 teaches a preschool class, which does not follow a strict timetable. According to the teacher, this is the only reason they are able to work with English for 60 minutes per week. However, starting in grade 1, the fixed timetable will only allow around 15 minutes of English per week. Teacher 3 explained that this limited time makes it difficult and nearly impossible to work with stories and repetition over a longer period of time. Furthermore, Teacher 4 described time as a challenge since working with stories often takes more time than they have. This leads to the work around stories being limited and not possible to work with at the extent that the teacher might want to.

5.5.2 Differences in students' language proficiency

Another challenge identified by the teachers concerns variation in students' English proficiency. Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 described large differences within the classroom, where some students are confident in speaking and writing, while others struggle with basic vocabulary. Furthermore, Teacher 2 explained that it can be difficult to find stories that suit all learners and Teacher 3 stated that it can be a challenge to find a book at the right level for the students. Moreover, Teacher 2 also stated that if the vocabulary level is too advanced, some students feel insecure or disengaged. At the same time, stories that are too simple may not challenge students with stronger language skills. Additionally, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 both described differentiation as necessary but demanding. Adapting stories, explaining additional words, or providing extra support requires preparation and flexibility according to

them. Moving on, Teacher 4 described how they approach differentiation when working with stories and other text-based materials in the classroom.

“I usually choose a text at a level most students can handle. The strongest students just work with the same text as everyone else. Once I tried making the same text at different levels, but it was a lot of work. [...] Sometimes I have found materials where the same text exists in different levels, and then I pared students according to level. [...] I give support like pictures with the vocabulary so they can use them while reading, or we work more with pre-understanding beforehand. Sometimes the weaker students also get more adult support when reading.” (Teacher 4, translation ours)

5.5.3 Selection and use of materials

An additional challenge concerns the teaching materials for English in F-3. Teacher 1 mainly follows the textbook due to teaching time per week, which the teacher also feels limits flexibility for vocabulary selection. Teacher 2, who selects vocabulary more independently, explained that adapting materials requires time and preparation. Choosing appropriate stories and designing interactive tasks can therefore be demanding. The findings thus indicate that the successful use of stories depends not only on pedagogical intentions but also on available resources, the teacher’s planning time and timetable. Additionally, Teacher 3 finds that a challenge is to find stories that also are translated to Swedish at their school. Stating that the school has a limited availability of books at their school.

5.5.4 The curriculum and the need for more clear framework

One perceived challenge that was brought up during one of the interviews regarded the curriculum. Teacher 2 highlighted the importance of aligning story-based vocabulary teaching with the curriculum. While stories are perceived as engaging and meaningful, they must also correspond to the central content and knowledge requirements outlined in the syllabus. According to Teacher 2, vocabulary work should support the development of communicative abilities, such as listening comprehension, oral interaction, and production. The choice of stories and vocabulary focus is therefore influenced not only by students’ interests but also by curricular goals.

At the same time, Teacher 2 expresses a desire for a clearer framework regarding expected vocabulary progression in early EFL teaching. The teacher explained that the absence of clearly defined benchmarks makes vocabulary teaching largely dependent on individual teacher interpretation. As a result, what students learn, how much vocabulary they are exposed to, and how stories are used may vary significantly depending on which teacher a class has. This may lead to differences in progression between classes and year groups. Teacher 2 therefore described a need for clearer structures to ensure continuity and equivalence in vocabulary development, while still maintaining flexibility to adapt teaching to students' needs. This reflects a balancing act between curricular alignment, progression, and pedagogical autonomy.

5.5.5 Planning and collegial work

Another perceived challenge that also was only mentioned by one teacher regarded planning and collegial work. During the interview Teacher 3 described a certain challenge when working with stories in the English classroom. According to the teacher, this approach requires a considerable amount of planning and reflection beforehand. The teacher explained that another challenge can arise when collaborating with colleagues who prefer a more fixed and structured approach to teaching, where specific activities are planned for each lesson in advance. In contrast, the teacher means that working with stories can lead the lessons in different directions depending on the students' responses and interests, which may require the teacher to adapt the lessons as they go. Teacher 3 therefore emphasises that this method requires flexibility and can be difficult to implement if collaborating teachers do not share the same pedagogical approach.

5.6 Summary of the results

In summary, the findings show that the participating teachers view stories as a valuable method for vocabulary acquisition in the EFL classroom. Stories are described as a tool for vocabulary teaching through meaningful context, increasing student engagement and enabling varied teaching approaches. Furthermore, the results highlight challenges affecting their use in practice, including limited teaching time, differences in students' language proficiency and restrictions related to materials and planning. Overall, the findings indicate that while stories support the students' vocabulary acquisition, their implementation depends on both teachers' didactic choices and practical classroom conditions.

6. Discussion

This study aimed to explore how teachers in grades F-3 perceive the use of English stories in EFL vocabulary teaching, both benefits and challenges, and how they describe their classroom practices and didactic choices. This section will therefore be structured into four main parts to relate the findings to previous research, theoretical perspectives, the Swedish curriculum and lastly the communicative classroom.

6.1 Results in relation to previous research

This section discusses the results in relation to previous research, with a focus on the study's research questions. First, teachers' precautions of using stories for vocabulary teaching are examined in relation to earlier studies. Second, teachers' described classroom practices and didactic choices are discussed. Finally, the perceived benefits and challenges associated with story-based vocabulary teaching are analysed in relation to existing research.

6.1.1 Teachers' perceptions of story-based vocabulary teaching

The findings of this study show that participating teachers generally perceive the use of children's literature as a meaningful and effective approach to vocabulary teaching. Teachers emphasised that stories provide contextualised language input and increase student engagement, which they associate with improved vocabulary learning. These perceptions are consistent with previous research indicating that teachers tend to hold positive views towards literature-based instruction (Calafato, 2023; Bist & Kandel, 2025)

Furthermore, the teachers in this study described that students appear more engaged and motivated when working with stories compared to traditional vocabulary exercises. This aligns with previous findings suggesting that literature can foster student participation and support broader language development (Bist & Kandel, 2025). For example, teachers in this study highlighted how storytelling often leads to increased curiosity and willingness to use English orally, particularly when combined with interactive activities such as drama or pair work.

At the same time, it is important to distinguish between teacher's perceptions and empirically measured learning outcomes. While previous experimental studies (Uchiyama, 2011;

Gutierrez Arvizu, 2020; Lin, 2014) have demonstrated that story-based instruction can lead to measurable improvements in vocabulary acquisition, this study is based on teachers' perceptions of effectiveness rather than direct assessment of students' learning. The findings therefore indicate that teachers perceive stories as beneficial for vocabulary development, rather than providing evidence of actual learning gains.

The findings also highlight several perceived benefits and challenges associated with using stories for vocabulary acquisition. One of the main perceived benefits is that stories provide a meaningful context for vocabulary learning. Teachers described how students encounter words within narratives, supported by visual and situational cues, which they believe facilitates understanding and retention. In addition, stories were associated with increased student motivation and participation, particularly when combined with interactive and multimodal activities. These perceptions align with previous research emphasising the role of meaningful context and engagement in language learning (Lin, 2014; Pinter, 2017).

In addition, teachers in this study identified challenges related to students' comprehension of unfamiliar vocabulary, which may affect engagement. This corresponds with previous research highlighting that complex language in literary texts can create barriers for learners (Bist & Kandel, 2025). To address this, teachers described using scaffolding strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary or introducing the story in the students' first language. This suggests that while teachers perceive stories as beneficial, their effectiveness in practice depends on how they are implemented and adapted to learners' needs.

However, vocabulary is not the only challenge influencing the use of stories in practice. Teachers also highlighted a range of practical and contextual challenges that influence the use of stories in practice. Limited teaching time was described as a major constraint, restricting opportunities for repetition and deeper engagement with the material. Differences in students' language proficiency were also highlighted as a challenge, as teachers must balance the needs of both stronger and weaker learners when selecting and adapting stories. Furthermore, teachers pointed to challenges related to materials, planning and curricular guidance. The availability of suitable texts and the time required to design story-based activities were described as demanding. In addition, one teacher highlighted the lack of clear guidance regarding vocabulary progression in the Swedish curriculum, which places greater responsibility on individual teachers to determine appropriate content and progression. These

findings suggest that while teachers perceive story-based teaching as beneficial, its implementation is shaped by a range of practical and contextual factors. The effectiveness of this approach therefore depends not only on pedagogical intentions but also on structural conditions within the educational context.

6.1.2 Classroom practices and didactic choices

The results also show that teachers describe a range of classroom practices when working vocabulary acquisition through stories. These practices range from more structured textbook-based approaches to more flexible and interactive methods. In line with previous research (Larraguete & Ceballos-Viro, 2018; Uchiyama, 2011), storytelling is often combined with visual support, read-aloud activities and dramatisation. Some teachers described a more structured approach, where stories are used in line with textbook materials and followed by vocabulary exercises. Others reported a more varied approach, incorporating activities such as drama, songs and collaborative tasks to reinforce vocabulary learning.

The findings also show that teachers actively make didactic choices regarding vocabulary selection and repetition. While previous research suggests that vocabulary is not always treated as a distinct learning objective in EFL classrooms (Bergström et al., 2022), the teachers in this study described deliberate efforts to support vocabulary acquisition through repetition and recycling. For example, teachers reported rereading stories, revisiting key vocabulary and engaging students in communicative activities to reinforce word learning.

However, the extent to which these practices are implemented appears to be influenced by contextual factors such as time constraints and access to materials. Teachers noted that limited lesson time often restricts opportunities for repetition and in-depth work with stories. This suggests that although teachers are aware of effective strategies for vocabulary teaching, their didactic choices are shaped by practical conditions within the classroom.

6.2 Results in relation theoretical perspectives

The results can be understood through both social constructivist theory and Krashen's theory of language acquisition. One of the main findings from this study is that the teachers interviewed perceive stories as a natural way for students to develop their vocabulary. Krashen's theory (1987) emphasises the importance of comprehensible input in language

acquisition, students who encounter vocabulary within meaningful contexts such as stories are more likely to understand and acquire new words. Stories that provide meaningful information related to the plot may therefore support students in interpreting the meaning of unfamiliar words. In this way, stories can function as a source of comprehensible input that supports vocabulary development in the EFL classroom. However, three out of four teachers mention that students may lose motivation if the story is too difficult. This can also be understood through Krashen's theory, which states that language input needs to be comprehensible in order to support acquisition (Krashen, 1987).

Furthermore, the results show that working with stories in the classroom can be combined with other activities such as pair work, drama and making of short films. This can be understood through a social constructivist perspective, which emphasises learning through meaningful interaction with others (Margetts et. al., 2022). Through collaborative work, students can negotiate meaning and develop their understanding of new vocabulary together. The social constructivism theory also highlights the importance of support to achieve learning through the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). The teachers in this study described how they work with scaffolding through different ways such as working with some words beforehand, having picture support and reading the story in Swedish. This is a way for the teachers to work with scaffolding within the ZPD, which in turn helps support students' understanding of vocabulary they might not be able to process independently.

6.3 Results in relation to the steering documents

The results of this study show that using stories in the EFL classroom for vocabulary teaching align with the Swedish curriculum. The interviewed teachers described stories as a meaningful way to work with vocabulary through context, supporting students' communicative abilities in English, which is one ability stated in the syllabus for English (Skolverket, 2022). The results also show that teachers highlight the benefits of multimodal learning, integrating stories with activities such as songs, drama and creative writing, which increases engagement and motivates students to participate actively in English communication. This also aligns with the curriculum, which emphasises the importance of multimodal learning as part of students' English language development (Skolverket, 2022). Lastly, the teachers described that stories also help broaden student's vocabulary and support their ability to understand both spoken and written English, as well as the ability to express

themselves and interact with others, which are other key criterias in the syllabus (Skolverket, 2022).

However, Teacher 2 highlighted that the curriculum's guidance on expected vocabulary progression in early English teaching is not always clear. While story-based teaching aligns with the overall goals of the curriculum, the lack of definition can make planning and implementing vocabulary focused activities more challenging. This illustrates that alignment with curricular goals does not automatically resolve practical uncertainties, which teachers must navigate when designing story-based lessons.

6.4 The communicative English classroom in Sweden

The findings of this study are highly relevant to the communicative EFL classroom in Sweden, where teaching according to the curriculum (Skolverket, 2022), aims to encourage meaningful interaction, active participation and authentic use of language. All teachers described story-based activities as a way to engage students in listening and speaking, which aligns with the Swedish curriculum. For example, when students act out scenes, discuss story events or create their own stories, they are given opportunities to use vocabulary in meaningful contexts, negotiate meaning and develop their oral skills. This is supported by claims that vocabulary learning in context strengthens communicative competence (Dakhi & Fitira, 2019; Mukthar et al., 2023). This also aligns with the Swedish teacher education, where communicative competence, multimodal learning, and active language use are emphasised. The results therefore support the view presented in teacher training programs that vocabulary learning should take place through meaningful communication rather than isolated exercises.

The results also highlight challenges in implementing communicative methods and story-based activities. Limited lesson time, varying English proficiency and lack of suitable materials constrain their use. This creates a gap between ideal communicative teaching and the reality of early English education, requiring flexible didactic choices in relation to unclear curriculum goals and classroom conditions. Findings also show that scaffolding and differentiation is used by participating teachers to maintain students' engagement and so that all students benefit from the story-based learning. The teachers use different strategies such as pre teaching vocabulary, using visual support and by providing the stories translated to

Swedish beforehand. This reflects the principles of social constructivism according to Vygotsky (1978) and Wang (2022) by demonstrating how communicative teaching can be adapted to meet individual learners' needs.

Finally, story-based approaches support vocabulary acquisition as well as motivation and creativity, which are central to the communicative language teaching (Mukthar et al., 2023). Through multimodal activities such as drama, songs and creative writing, students are given varied opportunities to use English, helping bridge theory and practice (Krashen, 1987; Pinter, 2017). However, the study also suggests that additional support for teachers is needed. Clearer curricular guidance on vocabulary progression and time allocation for the English subject, could further the implementation of story-based learning and more communicative learning.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how teachers in Swedish primary schools use children's literature in the EFL classroom to support vocabulary acquisition, and how they perceive the possibilities and challenges of this approach. This study also examined how these practices relate to previous research, theoretical perspectives and the Swedish curriculum. The results show that all participating teachers view stories as a meaningful and effective way to support vocabulary development, with the main point being that stories present vocabulary in a natural and contextualised way. Participating teachers described working with stories as a way of increasing student engagement, which motivates student participation. This according to them increases student engagement, motivates participation and allows vocabulary to be learnt through interaction, repetition and through multimodal and creative ways such as drama and songs.

Results also show that teachers use different forms of scaffolding when working with stories to differentiate and make sure all students can participate in the lesson. For example, pre teaching vocabulary, using visual support, rereading texts and sometimes introducing the same text in Swedish beforehand. These strategies can be understood through both the theory of social constructivism and Krashen's theory of comprehensible input, as they help place learning within the students' zone of proximal development and make language input understandable. Furthermore, findings indicate that story based teaching aligns with the goals of the Swedish curriculum which emphasises communicative competence, meaningful interaction and multimodal learning. At the same time results show that teachers experience practical challenges when trying to implement story based and communicative teaching methods. Limited lesson time, differences in students' proficiency levels and unclear curricular guidance regarding vocabulary progression were described as factors that influence how much teachers are able to work with stories in the classroom.

These findings have implications for teaching in the communicative classroom in Sweden. Story based approaches appear to support both vocabulary acquisition and student motivation, but they require careful planning, scaffolding and sufficient time in order to be effective to its fullest potential. Results suggest that clearer curricular support for more time for the English subject in the early years could help teachers use story based methods more consistently. Some limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The number of

participants was small which means that the results cannot be generalised across all Swedish primary schools.

Future research could include a larger number of teachers from different schools or combine interviews with classroom observations. It would also be valuable to investigate students' perspectives on story based vocabulary learning, as well as how vocabulary development can be followed over a longer period of time. Further studies focusing on how curricular goals for vocabulary progression can be clarified in early EFL teaching would also be relevant, since this was identified as a challenge by the teachers in this study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1, interview questions (original)

1. Hur länge har du jobbat som lärare?
2. Är du behörig att undervisa i engelska på lågstadiet?
3. Vilken / vilka årskurser undervisar du i?
4. Ungefär hur många minuter undervisar du i engelska i veckan?
5. Om du har flera klasser eller årskurser, hur mycket undervisningstid har du för varje?

6. Vad innebär ordförråd för dig? Hur arbetar du generellt med dina elevers ordförråd?
7. Hur ser du på att använda engelska berättelser för att arbeta med ordförråd i F-3?
8. Tycker du att engelska berättelser är ett effektivt sätt att lära elever nya ord? Varför / varför inte?
9. Hur upplever du elevernas engagemang när ni arbetar med engelska berättelser?
10. I vilken utsträckning anpassar du berättelserna till elevernas språknivå?
11. Jämfört med andra arbetssätt, vilken plats har berättelser i din engelskundervisning?

12. Kan du kort beskriva hur du brukar arbeta med en engelsk berättelse i klassrummet?
13. Väljer du ut vilka ord från berättelsen som eleverna ska fokusera på? Hur gör du i så fall det valet?
14. Vilka aktiviteter använder du för att arbeta med ordförrådet i samband med berättelser?
15. Arbetar du med repetition av nya ord från berättelserna? Isåfall på vilket sätt?
16. Använder du bilder, rörelser, drama eller andra stöd när du arbetar med berättelser? I så fall hur och varför?
17. Vilka är de största fördelarna tror du med att använda engelska sagor / berättelser för ordförrådsinläring?

18. Tycker du att det några utmaningar eller svårigheter med att arbeta med berättelser?
19. Upplever du att vissa elever har enklare eller svårare än andra när ni arbetar med berättelser? Hur märks det?
20. Hur hanterar du situationer där språket i berättelsen blir för svårt?
21. Finns det något som begränsar hur ofta eller hur mycket du använder engelska berättelser?
22. Vad känner du saknas och behövs för att du ska använda/utöka ditt användande av berättelser för ordinläring?

23. Är det något ytterligare du skulle vilja lägga till?

Interview questions (translated)

1. How long have you been working as a teacher?
2. Are you qualified to teach English in the lower grades (F-3)?
3. Which grade(s) do you teach?
4. Approximately how many minutes per week do you teach English?
5. If you have multiple classes or grades, how much teaching time do you have for each?

6. What does vocabulary mean to you? How do you generally work with your students' vocabulary?
7. What are your views on using English stories to work with vocabulary in grades F-3?
8. Do you think English stories are an effective way to teach students new words? Why or why not?
9. How do you perceive students' engagement when working with English stories?
10. To what extent do you adapt stories to the students' language level?

11. Compared to other methods, what role do stories have in your English teaching?
12. Can you briefly describe how you usually work with an English story in the classroom?
13. Do you select which words from the story students should focus on? If so, how do you make that selection?
14. Which activities do you use to work on vocabulary in connection with stories?
15. Do you work with repetition of new words from the stories? If so, in what way?
16. Do you use images, gestures, drama, or other support when working with stories? If so, how and why?
17. What do you think are the main advantages of using English stories for vocabulary learning?

18. Do you think there are any challenges or difficulties in working with stories?
19. Do you find that some students have an easier or harder time than others when working with stories? How can you tell?
20. How do you handle situations where the language in the story becomes too difficult?
21. Is there anything that limits how often or how much you use English stories?
22. What do you feel is missing or needed for you to use or expand your use of stories for vocabulary learning?

23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2, letter of information and consent (original)

Samtycke till medverkan i studentprojekt

Vi heter Wilma Sävmark och Ellen Blom och är studenter på grundlärarprogrammet med inriktning F-3 vid Malmö Universitet. Vi studerar vår åttonde och sista termin och tar examen i juni 2026. Inom ramen för vår utbildning genomför vi vårt examensarbete i ämnet engelska, med skolans godkännande.

Examensarbetet är en kvalitativ intervjustudie som syftar till att undersöka hur lärare i årskurserna F-3 uppfattar och arbetar med engelska berättelser för att stödja elevers ordinläring. Studien fokuserar på lärares erfarenheter, didaktiska val samt upplevda fördelar och utmaningar med arbetssättet. Datainsamlingen sker genom semistrukturerade intervjuer.

Deltagandet innebär att du medverkar i en individuell intervju. Intervjun spelas in i form av ljudinspelning för att möjliggöra transkribering och analys. Det inspelade materialet transkriberas och översätts till engelska, varefter materialet anonymiseras. Deltagarna benämns med koder och inga identifierande uppgifter kommer att förekomma i det färdiga arbetet.

Det insamlade materialet och eventuella personuppgifter lagras säkert på Malmö Universitets servrar, och samtyckesblanketter förvaras oåtkomligt på universitetet. Endast vi som genomför studien samt handledare vid Malmö Universitet har tillgång till materialet. När examensarbetet är examinerat raderas allt insamlat material.

Studien följer Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer ([God forskningssed 2017](#)). Medverkan är frivillig och baseras på informerat samtycke. Samtycket kan när som helst återkallas utan negativa konsekvenser. Alla deltagare avidentifieras och materialet används enbart för denna studie.

- 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.

Letter of information and consent (translated)

We are Wilma Sävmark and Ellen Blom, students in the Primary Teacher Education Program (grades F-3) at Malmö University. We are in our eighth and final semester and will graduate in June 2026. As part of our program, we are conducting our thesis in the subject of English, with the school's approval.

The thesis is a qualitative interview study aiming to explore how teachers in grades F-3 perceive and use English stories to support students' vocabulary learning. The study focuses on teachers' experiences, pedagogical choices, and perceived advantages and challenges of this method. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews.

Participation involves taking part in an individual interview. The interview will be audio-recorded to allow transcription and analysis. The recorded material will be transcribed and translated into English, after which it will be anonymized. Participants will be identified by codes, and no identifying information will appear in the final thesis.

All collected data and any personal information will be stored securely on Malmö University servers, and consent forms will be kept inaccessible at the university. Only the researchers and supervisors at Malmö University will have access to the data. Once the thesis is completed and graded, all collected material will be deleted.

The study follows the ethical principles of research outlined by the Swedish Research Council (Good Research Practice, 2017). Participation is voluntary and based on informed consent. Consent may be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences. All participants will be anonymized, and the data will be used solely for this study.

Participation is based on consent, which can be withdrawn at any time. Everyone asked to participate has the right to decline, or if they initially agree, to stop their participation at any time without any negative consequences.

The data will be anonymized in the final thesis. It will only be used for this study and will be destroyed once the thesis has been graded.