

University of Groningen

Getting off the fence

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DOI:
[10.33612/diss.101550168](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.101550168)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2019

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bloemert, J. (2019). *Getting off the fence: Exploring the role, position, and relevance of literature education in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Dutch secondary education*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.101550168>

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CHAPTER 7

**Summary, discussion,
and conclusion**

7.1 Introduction

This thesis focused on literature teaching as part of the EFL curriculum in Dutch secondary education. We were especially interested in analysing the current situation from a teacher and student perspective and in using these perspectives to take steps in building a well-structured and sustainable EFL literature curriculum, thereby breaking the justification habit regarding the inclusion of literature in the foreign language curriculum (section 1.4). The three main objectives of this thesis included: the design of a literature teaching model that includes various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text (Paran, 2008); a systematic enquiry into the current position of EFL literature education through the eyes of teachers as well as students; and an in-depth analysis of how teachers experience the relevance and usefulness of a literature teaching model as described in the first objective. This final chapter starts with an integrative overview of the findings by addressing the five main research questions. This leads to a discussion regarding a selection of the results that call for further elaboration. Further, the limitations, directions for future research, and the implications are discussed.

7.2 Integrative overview of the findings and answers to the five main research questions

7.2.1 Research question 1: What does a foreign language literature teaching model look like that includes various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text?

The most recent reform in the field of foreign language literature teaching shows a strong movement towards an integration of literature teaching and language acquisition within the foreign language curriculum. In Chapter 2, we took this recent reform as our starting point. A synthesis of Maley's (1989) distinction between two primary purposes for foreign language literature teaching (the *study* of literature and the *use* of literature as a resource), Paran's (2008) intersection of language focus and literature focus (Figure 2.1), and a selection of previously designed categorizations of foreign language literature teaching approaches (section 2.1.2), led to a first design of a foreign language literature teaching model that we named the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning. The model was further developed and validated with foreign language

teachers and teacher educators (the initial model as presented in Chapter 2) as well as with secondary school students (the adapted model as presented in Chapter 3). During this design process, the primary question we asked ourselves was: in which ways can literary texts be beneficial for foreign language students? In answering this question, two categories emerged, namely a focus on the literary text and a focus on the student.

When the primary focus of the study of literature is the literary text, a distinction can be made between a Text approach and a Context approach. The Text approach is concerned with the formal elements of literature, where students learn, for example, how the use of literary terms can have an effect on the interpretation of the text (Barrette, Paesani, & Vinall, 2010; Picken, 2005). Other aspects of this approach are knowledge of genre, literary styles, and types of text. Understanding a literary text requires insight from the reader into topics such as perspective or theme (Carter & Long, 1991). The Text approach assumes that practicing interpretation skills with linguistically demanding texts is useful for understanding all discourse in the target language (Widdowson, 1975).

Within the Context approach, literature is considered to be a collection of texts that reflect the cultural, historical, and socially rich diversity of our world (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). This diversity, contextualized in a literary work, often represents a foreign world for the student including topics such as identity, political power, ethnicity, and religion (Barrette et al., 2010; Littlewood, 1986; Van, 2009). Studying the context of literary works could contribute to the development of a sense of tolerance and understanding of this *foreign* world (Byram, 2014; Kramsch, 1998; McKay, 1982). In addition, knowledge about literary movements as well as historical and biographical elements of a literary text could further contribute to this contextualization.

When the primary focus of the study of literature is the student, a distinction can be made between the Reader approach and the Language approach. The focus of the Reader approach is the reading experience, reading taste development, and general development of the student (Lao & Krashen, 2000; Lazar, 1993). Literature invites students to step outside their comfort zone, to experiment with a critical look at (un)known situations, and to learn that their position as a reader cannot be disengaged from the meaning of the text (Amer, 2003). The Reader approach encourages students to study literary texts from multiple perspectives, inviting them to analyse how and why, for example, people may differ in their beliefs or desires.

The Language approach focuses on the use of language in literary works, the student's own language development, and the student's awareness of the development of the foreign language. Literary texts in a foreign language are a potentially rich source of linguistic input for students: it offers students a wide variety of authentic and contextualized language (Krashen, 1981; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Nance, 2010) that can facilitate the development of student's language skills (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Grabe, 2009). The focus on specific language use in literary texts, such as connotation, figurative language use, or word order, could lead to the development of a sense of textual coherence and cohesion among students (Warford & White, 2012).

As Figure 7.1 shows, each of the four approaches is operationalized in several underlying elements, which could offer distinct benefits to foreign language students and could be regarded as conceptually separate. However, we assume that there is a reciprocal relationship between the approaches and suggest that a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning in which all four approaches are integrated could enrich the foreign language literature lessons and enhance student learning.

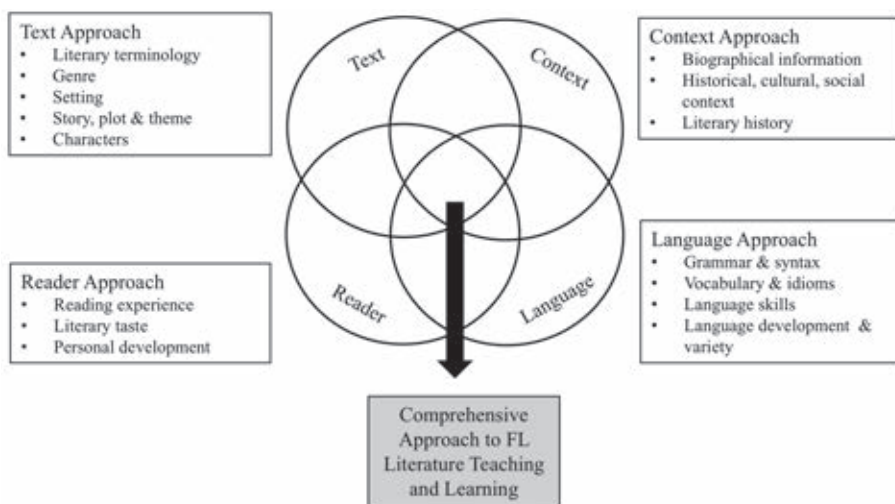


Figure 7.1. The Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning

7.2.2 Research question 2: What can the contribution of students to the collaborative and co-constructive process of validating such a foreign language literature teaching model be?

In Chapter 3 we explored different perspectives in which we could constructively involve secondary school students in the development of the Comprehensive Approach. An analysis of student voice research revealed that (1) student voice is routinely excluded in foreign language research, (2) students are primarily involved as objects of study in foreign language teaching research (Pinter, 2014; Pinter & Zandian, 2014), and (3) when student voice plays a role in research, it is mainly as a data source, which other researchers (e.g. Hart, 1992; Holdsworth, 2000; Fielding, 2001; Lodge, 2005) consider to be a passive role (Pinter, Mathew, & Smith, 2016). In Chapter 3 we proposed that existing frameworks involving the inclusion of student voice could be grouped according to the way in which they involve learners. We proposed a new categorisation, which includes the following three perspectives: *Learners as data source*, *Learners in dialogue*, and *Learners as initiators*. In our understanding, each of these perspectives should be considered unique and complementary, thereby questioning the leading hierarchical ideas that the *Learners as initiators* perspective is supposedly superior to the *Learners as data source* (Fielding, 2001; Hart, 1992; Holdsworth, 2000; Lodge, 2005). We also argued that the prevalent current practice where student voice, when included, is primarily included as a data source, results in a mono-dimensional and therefore limited view.

These arguments led us to the design of a multi-dimensional dialogical process in which both the research team and a group of secondary school students ($n = 268$) engaged. The aim of this process through learner-oriented discourse (Charteris & Smardon, 2018) was the further validation of the Comprehensive Approach. Learner-oriented discourse is a shared narrative based on collaboration and co-construction of knowledge in which learner agency, personalised learning, and radical collegiality is distinguished (Charteris & Smardon, 2018). The shared narrative was established through written reflective accounts, unguided focus groups, and a single open question survey through which the collective student voice as well as the individual student voice could be heard (Cook-Sather, 2002). By working through the three different data elicitation methods consecutively with different groups of students, we created alternating turns in which both the students and the research team engaged in convergent and divergent inclusive forms of dialogue (Burbules, 1993).

The multi-dimensional dialogical process resulted in several additions and changes to the Comprehensive Approach. In fact, almost all of the 20 underlying elements of the initial model underwent a minor or sometimes more major change. Whereas most of the changes resulted in a reduction of elements or simplification of the description of the element because of an ambiguous distinction or because elements were too verbose or terse, the most important changes were found when we added words or an entirely new element (section 3.3.1).

7.2.3 Research question 3: How do students perceive EFL literature lessons?

Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis concentrate on how students perceive EFL literature lessons. In Chapter 4 we reported the results of a study in which we asked a total of 635 pre-university level students from 15 different secondary schools to answer the following question: What do you think are the benefits of EFL literature lessons? The Comprehensive Approach was used as a framework to analyse the 2361 answers we collected. In Chapter 5, we focused on the students' motivation regarding EFL literature lessons, in which we operationalised external motivation as student level of engagement and internal motivation as how students view the importance of EFL lessons. The Likert-scale survey, which was based on the Engagement versus Disaffection survey (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009) and the Comprehensive Approach, was administered to 365 pre-university level students (year 5). The results of descriptive statistics, an exploratory factor analysis, and correlation analyses revealed four major findings.

First, based on the answers to the question how students view the importance of EFL literature lessons, we found a total of three factors, which we labelled Literature, Personal Development, and Language (Chapter 5). The original Text and Context approaches within the Comprehensive Approach seem to be considered as one according to students, which we labelled the 'Language development and variety' to be part of the Literature factor. In other words, based on teacher data we established that our understanding of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning can be expressed in four approaches (Chapter 2). However, based on student data we found that there are not four but three approaches (i.e. factors) (Chapter 5). Although we acknowledge this contradiction and we revised the underlying elements based on student input, apart from Chapter 5, we decided to continue working with the original four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach based on the theoretical distinct difference between the Text and Context approaches (see sections 2.1.2).

Second, the majority of the students perceive the EFL literature lessons primarily through the lens of their language course (Chapter 4 and 5). This means that students predominantly find Language factor elements such as 'Language skills', 'Vocabulary and idioms', and 'Grammar and syntax', important in their EFL literature lessons. This is perhaps not surprising, considering the fact that in Dutch secondary education, the literature component is part of the EFL curriculum, which is language skills-based. Interestingly, despite the fact that the students' primary objective appears to be linguistic and improving their language proficiency, the majority of students mention multiple approaches when asked about the benefits of EFL literature lessons.

Third, we found a large variation regarding which factor students find important both at student and at school level. This variation in student perception was also visible in their answers to the single open question in Chapter 4 when looking at which approach they mentioned: There were students whose answers fell into either one, two, three, or four approaches in various combinations. Furthermore, the students' answers seem to suggest that they value either a combination of the Literature and Personal Development factors or a combination of the Language and Personal Development factors. In other words, the Personal Development factor appeared to be of importance to students.

The fourth and final major finding concerns the level of student motivation in the EFL literature lessons, which we operationalized in their level of engagement and how important they value the EFL literature lessons (Chapter 5). The results showed that students with a relatively high level of engagement generally also show a high level of perceived importance and vice versa. Furthermore, the results indicate that students who value the Literature factor highly show a high level of engagement. Whether or not students value the Language factor highly does not seem to have an impact on their levels of engagement or disaffection. In other words, the majority of the students value the Language factor in EFL literature lessons highly but decidedly engaged students value the Literature factor.

7.2.4 Research question 4: How is EFL literature currently approached in Dutch secondary education?

In Chapters 2 and 6 we focused on the question how literature is currently approached in EFL lessons. In Chapter 2, we reported the results of a study in which we collected survey data ($n = 106$ EFL teachers). Teachers were asked to indicate how much time they spend, on average, on the four approaches of the

Comprehensive Approach. In Chapter 6 we also report how much time teachers spend on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach, but in this chapter the data consisted of video-recorded EFL literature lessons taught by eight teachers over the course of two school years.

Despite the differences in data collection methods, the results of both studies show that teachers spent, on average, most of their lesson time on the Text approach. The least amount of lesson time was spent on the Language approach. A difference between the two studies was the position of the Context and Reader approaches. In the survey, teachers indicated that they spent slightly more lesson time on the Reader approach compared to the Context approach. The observations, however, showed that the eight teachers spent more time on the Context approach compared to the Reader approach before the intervention but that this time was equal after the intervention. In both studies we also found a huge range in teachers in time spent on the four approaches. Although teacher demographics such as gender, level of education, or years of teaching experience were not related to how teachers approach literature, an increase in lesson time spent on literature and an increase in the percentage of the literature component as part of the School Exam was significantly related to how teachers approach literature, especially for the Text and Context approaches.

7.2.5 Research question 5: How do teachers experience the relevance and usefulness of a foreign language literature teaching model that includes various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text, when applied in a naturalistic setting?

Characteristic features of Educational Design Research include an active and collaborative role from practitioners, it is responsively grounded, it relies on empirical data collected in real-world settings, it is iterative, and it aims to make a real difference in daily teaching practice (McKenney & Reeves, 2019). Based on these characteristics, we designed a two-year instrumental multisite multiple case study including eight Dutch secondary school EFL teachers (Chapter 6). In this study we focused on the Theory of Change (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014), i.e. whether the new pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. the Comprehensive Approach) improved the teachers' knowledge and instruction regarding EFL literature teaching. In year 1 we video-recorded all EFL literature lessons ($n = 122$) and analysed how the teachers approached the literary texts thereby using the Comprehensive Approach as a framework for analysis. This was followed

by a continuous professional development programme in which the teachers enriched their EFL literature curriculum through the Comprehensive Approach, thereby focusing on learning objectives, assessment, and lesson design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In year 2, we again video-recorded all literature lessons ($n = 154$), which was followed by individual interviews.

In finding out how teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach after working with it for one year, we analysed the data through the lenses of sensemaking (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) and Practicality Theory (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015). In terms of relevance, the teachers experienced the Comprehensive Approach as a practical framework that made them more aware of their literature teaching practice. The Comprehensive Approach provided them with a common language which allowed them to gain a clear insight into the *why*, *how*, and *what* of their EFL literature curriculum. All eight teachers found a match between the pedagogical content knowledge focused on in the intervention (i.e. the Comprehensive Approach) and their own frame of reference. Although for some teachers the four approaches were an eye-opener, others used the four approaches as a confirmation of their current teaching practices. In other words, the extent to which the Comprehensive Approach led to a transformed own frame of reference (the process of accommodation) (Luttenberg et al., 2013) or to an adaptation of the Comprehensive Approach to fit the teachers' own frame of reference (the process of assimilation) (Opt. cit.) varied between the teachers. Regardless of assimilation or accommodation, several teachers experienced a rise in confidence and energy when working with the Comprehensive Approach.

In terms of usefulness, the Comprehensive Approach appeared to be useful for all teachers, but to a varying extent and with a varying focus. How teachers made sense of the Comprehensive Approach had an impact on how they implemented it in their lessons. Some teachers truly embraced the Comprehensive Approach and enriched their lessons by consciously including each of the four approaches. Other teachers were more focused on the structure of their lessons, on including their students more in the learning process, or on being able to improvise more and add variety in their lessons. On average, the lessons in year 2 showed a smaller deviation from the assumed even distribution of 4 x 25%. In other words, in year 2 less time was spent on the Text approach and more time was spent on the Context, Reader, and Language approaches.

One aspect that needs careful consideration when discussing the usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach through the lens of Practicality Theory is the Language approach. One important result of our study is that the historically uneasy relationship between language acquisition and literature (sections 1.2 and 1.3) became tangible, not only in terms of how teachers interpreted this approach and experienced implementing this approach as difficult and time-consuming, but also in terms of analysis. The Language approach will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

7.3 Discussion

7.3.1 The Comprehensive Approach and the role of the Language approach

The Comprehensive Approach enabled us to paint a picture of how literature is currently approached in EFL lessons in Dutch secondary education and how students perceive and value these lessons. It also offered a group of eight teachers a common language, which enabled them to analyse their own curriculum and enrich it where necessary and possible. Although based on an extensive literature review and several activities with teacher educators, secondary school teachers, and students, designing such a framework is never objective. It contains a vision, a direction in which we believe foreign language literature education should move, i.e. as an integrated part of the foreign language curriculum. This assumed desirable position of literature within the foreign language curriculum however, does provide some issues.

Moving away from the *principium tertii exclusi*, i.e. leaving the shifting tradition between a focus either on foreign language development or on the literary text behind us, turned out to be relevant but also challenging. As we discussed and concluded in all empirical chapters, the Language approach appears to be an issue both practically as well as methodologically. Teachers indicated that implementing the Language approach in their lessons was tricky and time-consuming. One possible explanation could be the historical position of literature within the language curriculum (Kwakernaak 2016a; Kwakernaak, 2016b). Literature lessons in the Netherlands are generally separated from the rest of the curriculum, resulting often in a separate module and separate tests or exams. This is also visible in the three core curriculum standards (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007) for the literature component, which do not include elements of the

Language approach. This separation is further shown in the focus of lessons as well as teaching materials. Whereas the 'regular' lessons focus on the foreign language development of students where teachers often use course books, literature lessons primarily focus on literary content with often (semi-) self-made materials. In order to integrate both foci, teachers have to create language-learning activities based on literary texts, which requires not only time and effort, but also knowledge and experience in how to do this. Methodological issues with the Language approach centre around a much wider concern within foreign language research, namely, how do you know a student is in fact acquiring new knowledge or practicing existing knowledge about the language during the lesson? How do you measure the language development of students during the foreign language literature lesson?

Although the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach can be regarded as conceptually separate, we suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between the four approaches and that, when taught in an integrated manner, could enrich the foreign language literature lessons and enhance student learning. For the purpose of analysis, this interpretation was translated into an assumed even distribution of 25% lesson time per approach. This assumption indicates that each of the four approaches are equally beneficial for foreign language students. From a student perspective however, it could be argued that about half of the EFL literature lesson should focus on the Language approach. Then again, based on how EFL literature is approached currently, most emphasis should be placed on the Text approach. In other words, an even distribution of 4 x 25% represents a simplification of the underlying notion of the Comprehensive Approach (see also section 7.4). The question therefore remains what the desired distribution of the four approaches should be in order for the foreign language literature lessons to be as beneficial as possible for all students.

We also assumed that in foreign language literature lessons where the Comprehensive Approach is used as a framework, each of the four approaches should be taught in an integrated way. Such an assumption becomes interesting when observing how eight EFL teachers implemented the Comprehensive Approach in their existing literature curriculum. Some teachers consciously focused on including more than one approach within one lesson, thereby aiming to find some sort of balance or variety or aiming to reduce the emphasis on the Text approach. Ysabel, however, was very content about her interpretation of integration. She organised her literature module of eight lessons in such a way that each approach stood central in two lessons. Perhaps this interpretation of

integration is more practicable, providing teachers a clear focus in the lesson. How integration is interpreted could also depend on the learning objectives, the materials or activities, or on the role and position of the literature component within the EFL curriculum.

To summarise, the multiple focus that is required from teachers in a foreign language literature lesson taught in a comprehensive manner is demanding, and leaves us with two general questions. Firstly, how can the four approaches best be integrated? Secondly, how can the Language approach be included in a meaningful way? Both questions will be further addressed in sections 7.4 and 7.5.

7.3.2 The discrepancy between student perceptions and current teaching practice

Results from several studies in this thesis show that there are discrepancies between student and teacher perspectives regarding EFL literature teaching at three different levels. First, there is a major difference between what students believe is beneficial and important and what is currently happening in the EFL literature lessons. Whereas students indicated that the Language approach is especially beneficial and important, albeit in combination with other approaches, Dutch EFL teachers generally spend most of their lesson time on the Text approach and least of their lesson time on the Language approach. From a student perspective, the Text and Context approaches within the Comprehensive Approach can be considered as one, which we labelled the Literature factor. And from a student perspective, the element 'Language development and variety', which was originally considered to be part of the Language approach, bears a stronger relation to elements from the Literature factor, such as 'Literary terminology'. These substantial differences between students and teachers regarding their perceptions of EFL literature lessons raises three questions: Why do students perceive EFL literature lessons in a pragmatic, utilitarian language learning way? Why are literary texts mainly taught through a Text approach? Do we need to reconcile the previously described discrepancies?

That the majority of the students view EFL literature lessons through the lens of their language course could be ascribed to a reaction to current foreign language teaching in Dutch secondary education. Foreign language lessons in the Netherlands are primarily concerned with training students to become communicatively competent in a foreign language. This means that the current message students receive is that learning a foreign language primarily means mastering communicative language skills. Within this context, it is very likely

that students perceive EFL literature lessons with a strong content focus primarily as another opportunity to master these language skills. A different reason for students' lower scores on the Text, Context, and Reader approaches could be linked to literature teaching as part of the Dutch language lessons. Students could perceive these approaches as less beneficial for their EFL lessons because they are also part of their Dutch literature lessons and therefore do not have an additional value for their EFL literature lessons.

The results showed that the Text approach is the dominant approach in Dutch EFL literature lessons, followed by the Context approach. One reason for this dominance could be the Core Curriculum Standards for foreign language literature teaching: two of the three standards include literary text types (Text approach), literary terms (Text approach), literary history (Context approach), and a historic perspective (Context approach) (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007). It is therefore perhaps not very surprising that these two approaches are dominant. It could also be argued that the Text and Context approaches are easier to teach and test because they concern more objective facts in comparison to the Reader approach. Questioning and grading students on their reading experience and personal development can be perceived as more complicated compared to, for example, literary terms and information about the historical context. Another reason could concern curricular heritage in two different ways. First, most EFL teachers are educated in a context where literature and language teaching are separated. Just as literature lessons generally do not include a Language approach, regular language lessons generally do not include literary texts. Second, teaching is often influenced by how teachers were taught themselves, in secondary school, at university, but also during their teaching education. In other words, when a teacher was taught literature primarily through a Text approach, chances are that this heritage plays an important part in their own teaching practice.

Our third question concentrates on the need to reconcile the previously described discrepancies. Is it, for example, necessary to convince students that the Text approach is most beneficial and important? This is, after all, what Dutch teachers spend most of their time in the literature lessons on. According to Vermunt and Verloop (1999), a detailed analysis of lessons might reveal that learning tasks can be "very one-sided and more often reflect teachers' personal styles than students' needs" (p. 277). It could be argued that, in our case, we indeed located a blind spot, i.e. an over-representation of the Text approach. Or do we need to teach literary texts primarily through a Language approach because this is what

students find most beneficial and important? One argument why such measures would perhaps be too drastic concerns student variation. Although in general, students seem to find the Language approach very beneficial and important, they did not indicate that the literature lessons were only about acquiring English language skills and linguistic competence, the so-called “isolationist position” (Paran, 2008, p. 468). More specifically, we found that students appear to value either a combination of the Literature and Personal Development factors or a combination of the Language and Personal Development factors. Moreover, we found that even at class level, students vary in what they find beneficial and important. To summarise, we suggested that the discrepancy between teachers and students in this case can be reduced by approaching literary texts in the EFL lessons through a Comprehensive Approach, thereby aiming to create a more desirable situation of congruence and constructive friction (Vermetten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 2002) (see also section 7.5.4).

7.3.3 Including the voices of teachers and students

In PCK research the perspectives of teachers and students are equally valued (Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005). The inclusion of the perception of students in our studies resulted in several unique contributions. Through the surveys we administered in Chapters 4 and 5 we found out that the majority of the students view the EFL literature lessons as a language learning opportunity but also that students vary in what they find beneficial and important. Also, students view EFL literature lessons somewhat differently compared to teachers: the Text and Context approaches together formed one factor, which we called the Literature factor. Also, the Language approach element ‘Language development and variety’ was considered to be part of this Literature factor (see section 7.3.3 for a detailed discussion). Furthermore, students who find the Literature factor important show a high level of engagement. Last but not least, the students’ contributions had a constructive and unique impact on the development of the Comprehensive Approach; every underlying element of the four approaches underwent some kind of change and students even added an element.

The inclusion of the perception of teachers contributed to our insights into how EFL literature is approached as well as how teachers experience the relevance and usefulness of working with the Comprehensive Approach. Through the lenses of sensemaking (Coburn, 2001; Weick et al, 2005) and Practicality Theory (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015), teachers indicated that they

experienced a match between the Comprehensive Approach and their own frame of reference (Luttenberg et al., 2013) and they made sense of the Comprehensive Approach as a framework, which provided structure and a heightened sense of awareness. Finally, in a teaching context where the literature component in the EFL curriculum is often regarded as detached from students' English language development (Kwakernaak, 2016b), the teachers contributed to our insights regarding the Language approach: how they interpreted this approach as well as how they experienced implementing it.

7.3.4 The challenge of enriching existing foreign language literature curricula

In Chapter 6 we reported on the changes that eight teachers realised in their lessons as well as the changes they perceived regarding EFL literature teaching after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year. We were especially interested in how teachers made sense of the innovation (Coburn, 2001; Weick et al., 2005) and the extent in which they regarded the innovation as relevant and useful. Although enriching existing curricula provided us insight regarding the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach, it also instigated several challenges that are important to consider.

In our research we did not present the teachers with ready to teach materials but we presented the Comprehensive Approach as a framework through which they could analyse and enrich their existing literature curriculum. This active involvement in curriculum development required the teachers to first make sense of the framework. As we discussed in section 6.2.2, sensemaking is highly personal and (Spillane et al., 2002; Weick, 1995) and often results in a different interpretation, adaptation, or even a transformation of the initial intent of a reform (Coburn, 2001). Because how teachers make sense of the Comprehensive Approach has an impact on how they implement it, the outcome is bound to be variable. Although this outcome is very interesting from the perspective of the Theory of Change, it becomes an issue when the Theory of Instruction is investigated. Although it is essential in light of sustainability to research an innovation from the perspectives of both theories (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014), researching an innovation through enrichment instead of replacement requires a careful consideration of the impact of sensemaking on the changes in student learning (see also section 7.4).

A different challenge concerns curricular heritage, which describes the phenomenon that when a teacher starts working at a new school, he/she inherits the existing school curriculum (Chapter 2). Because most foreign language

teachers do not use a course book in their literature lessons but make their own teaching materials, this particular curricular heritage is often very individual. Due to factors such as tradition, showing respect towards colleagues, lack of financial means, or lack of knowledge and/or experience, these existing curricula are often adopted. An additional issue related to this is the fact that the foreign language literature curriculum can be considered ill-structured (Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1991). This means that there is a lack of theory and structure, a multitude of visions, and an inadequate connection between education and the learning needs of students (Witte, 2008). To summarise, trying to enrich a part of the curriculum that is not only ill-structured but also often highly personal, creates a challenge for teachers that should be considered when analysing and interpreting the results of an innovation in foreign language literature teaching through enrichment.

7.4 Limitations and directions for future research

In this thesis, we applied a range of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and instruments to access different types of information for comparing findings (methodological triangulation). Additionally, because the data was collected within different research paradigms, it included positivist as well as interpretivist theoretical perspectives (theoretical triangulation). We also obtained information from a range of participants, across settings, and over a period of several years (source triangulation). And finally, a key aspect of this thesis was the inclusion of students and teachers as co-constructors of knowledge with specific areas of expertise (investigator triangulation). Despite careful consideration of the choices we made in the data collection methods and instruments as well as analyses, several issues need to be addressed.

Even though Desimone and Stucky (2014) argue that both the Theory of Change and the Theory of Instruction need to work in order for the professional development opportunity to be sustainable, we only included the Theory of Change in this thesis. Concentrating on just one theory allowed us the opportunity to conduct an in-depth investigation into how a group of eight teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in naturalistic teaching contexts. We also argued that it is necessary to first investigate the Theory of Change before investigating the effects on student learning (sections 1.5.2 and

6.2.1). Nevertheless, we believe it is important to also investigate whether and how the Comprehensive Approach has an impact on student engagement and student learning. Further longitudinal research is necessary to confirm our results and to investigate the Theory of Instruction. Such research should preferably take the effects of the process of sensemaking (Spillane et al., 2002; Weick et al., 2005; Coburn, 2001) as well as several contextual factors (Desimone, 2009) into serious consideration.

In Chapter 6 we reported on a two-year intervention that included eight teachers and a total of 276 video-recorded EFL literature lessons. Observing only one or two teachers throughout the course of two years would have provided us the opportunity to include, for example, contextual factors at classroom and school level (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014), and thereby deepen the scope of our research. However, because we were primarily interested in how teachers experience the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach, we felt that perspectives from several teachers working in different secondary schools (and therefore working with different EFL literature curricula) would be more relevant in answering our research questions. With regard to the number of lessons, on the one hand, this was very time consuming and it could be argued that recording a certain percentage per teacher would have been sufficient to provide a representation of the lessons. However, recording a percentage requires selection (which lessons are recorded?) and assumes generalizability. Furthermore, because the average percentage of EFL literature lessons per year ranged between 6% and 42%, recording a percentage would have created a distorted balance between the eight teachers. It could also create pressure on the teachers in that they could get the feeling that they have to show an excellent lesson, again affecting the generalizability. Although we feel that the data collection suited our research purposes, further research into, for example, one case or a selection of specific representative lessons, could provide more detailed insights into how EFL literature lessons are taught and experienced by both teacher and students. As an example, a logical extension of this thesis would be a case study research into the Language approach in foreign language literature lessons, an issue that we encountered in several empirical studies in this thesis. Such research should not only consider the Language approach as a referential function of language where language is regarded as “fixed data, finished products, and non-negotiable meanings” (Chan, 1999, 39) but also in terms of language awareness. According to Hawkins (1984), language awareness involves challenging “pupils to ask questions about language, encouraging learners ‘to

gather their own data from the world outside school', and helping learners to develop a 'growing insight into the way language works to convey meaning'" (cited in Bolitho et al., 2003). Because of its very nature, literature can play a key role in the development of students' language awareness, taking the language learning pay-off (Jones & Carter, 2012) to the next level. In sum, taking current national and international curriculum developments in foreign language teaching into consideration (sections 1.2 and 1.3), investigating, for example, how a language awareness approach to literature in the foreign language classroom can enhance students' perception and sensitivity towards negotiable meanings, should be at the centre of research in this field.

In line with PCK research, we purposefully included the voices of teachers and students in all five empirical studies. Although we believe that including their voices provided us with a rich picture of the position, relevance, and focus of the EFL literature curriculum, it also created a very wide lens through which we were not always able to obtain a certain level of depth. For example, we did not investigate what teachers perceive as beneficial and important regarding EFL literature lessons or where these perceptions come from. We also did not investigate possible links between these perceptions and teachers' lessons. Investigating where teachers' perceptions regarding EFL literature teaching come from, what these perceptions are, and how they could influence teaching practice will provide valuable insights for teacher educators and curriculum developers. With regard to student voice, we did not, for example, include the *Learner as initiator* perspective in the design of the research process and research activities (section 3.4) and we did not include the students in the process of enriching existing literature lessons. Because students perceive EFL literature teaching in a unique way, future research in foreign language literature teaching should include students in the actual curriculum design; from learning objectives, to assessment, and finally lesson design. From this point of view, students can indeed be regarded as participants in Educational Design Research by being involved in the iterative cycles of analysis, design, development, and evaluation (McKenney & Reeves, 2019).

Lastly, we postulated in section 1.4 that, although there are a growing number of empirical studies in the field of foreign language literature research that could be considered PCK research, it is very seldom explicitly referred to as such. From the perspective of PCK research, it could be argued that, similar to Dutch EFL curricula in secondary education, international research in the field of foreign language literature education is also ill-structured. Although an increasing

number of studies are being conducted into this field of research (Paran, 2008), there is no clear research agenda based on existing frameworks such as the four central components of PCK research (Grossman, 1990) or the set of questions that provide a framework for PCK research formulated by Grossman, Schoenfeld, and Lee (2005). We would like to finish this section with the suggestion that one step towards a more structured foreign language literature research agenda includes a review study within the context of PCK research. Such a review will provide a structured and focused overview and recapitulation of previous research, and it will highlight areas that are over- and under-represented.

7.5 Implications

7.5.1 Rethinking the literature curriculum with the Comprehensive Approach

Similar to carefully considering the design of a foreign language lesson with, for example, an implicit or explicit focus on grammar based on theoretical insights (Piggott, 2018), designing the foreign language literature curriculum should, ideally, also be done based on theoretical insights. One major practical implication of this thesis is the Comprehensive Approach as a foreign language literature teaching and learning model, which has been adopted as a framework in rethinking foreign language literature curricula. Examples include: the eight teachers which we discussed in Chapter 6; example lesson plans based on the Comprehensive Approach published on the website of Stichting Leerplanontwikkeling (SLO) (see Appendix IV for an example); and the new course book for literature teaching in French as a foreign language: *Libre Service 4ème édition* by ThiemeMeulenhoff (see Appendix V for an example). In our experience, providing such a framework including detailed examples can inspire teachers in rethinking their literature curriculum.

7.5.2 Integrating language and literary content

The results of several studies in this thesis underline the uneasy position of literature within foreign language teaching. This is an important result of this thesis, because it relates to national and international trends in the field of foreign language education towards an integration of language development and (literary) content (Council of Europe, 2018; Curriculum.Nu, 2018; Meesterschapsteam MVT, 2018; Paran, 2008; Paesani, 2011; Schat, de Graaff & van der Knaap, 2018).

As also discussed in section 6.6, integrating foreign language development and content, however, is not new. Since the 90s, bilingual education has been on the rise in Europe, evidenced by teaching approaches such as Content Based Language Teaching (Snow & Brinton, 1988), Task Based Language Teaching (Norris, 2009) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (Coyle, 2007) which all centre on integrating content and language. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) define Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a “dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1). Although bilingual education centres on offering subjects such as History and Biology in the foreign language, de Graaff (2013) argues that the CLIL pedagogy is also very valuable for foreign language teachers, because “you cannot develop language skills without content to motivate and to communicate about, whether that is your daily life, literature, grammar, culture, current affairs, or content from other school subjects” (p. 7). Additionally, language mastery is dependent on knowledge mastery, such as cultural knowledge (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1988). In order to communicate effectively within the cultural commons, all kinds of shared background knowledge are critical in understanding what language says (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1988).

However, most foreign language teachers in Dutch secondary education are primarily trained to teach foreign language skills. If we want to move away from the current skills-centrism towards a dual-focused educational approach where foreign language teachers are experts at integrating language skills with language specific content such as literature, cultural affairs, and citizenship, initial foreign language teacher training programmes as well continuous professional development need to embrace this idea and make beginning and experienced teachers competent in the CLIL pedagogy. This claim is supported by Duncan and Paran (2017) who found that, teachers who had a large amount of training in their initial teacher training course using literary texts in the foreign language classroom, had a significantly more positive attitude towards using literary texts and reported using various types of activities significantly more than teachers who did not have this large amount of training (see also Duncan & Paran, 2018). This practical implication is also underlined by Meesterschapsteam MVT (2018) and Schat et al. (2018).

7.5.3 Towards a well-structured domain

In the introduction to this thesis we argued that the EFL literature curriculum is ill-structured because of a lack of theory and structure, a multitude of visions, and

an inadequate connection between education and the learning needs of students. In order to move towards a well-structured curriculum, each of these issues should and can be addressed.

The results of the growing number of empirical studies (Paesani 2011; Paran, 2008) add to the theoretical knowledge base regarding the field of foreign language literature teaching. These theoretical insights need to be communicated to teachers via teacher educators, materials developers, and journals that are available to Dutch teachers such as *Levende Talen Magazine*, and *Levende Talen Tijdschrift*. This has already resulted in the special edition of *Levende Talen Magazine* entitled *Subject pedagogical research and educational practice* (2018) (in Dutch: *Vakdidactisch onderzoek en de onderwijspraktijk*).

Literature is by definition multi-faceted. In order to move towards a well-structured curriculum, it is essential that the multitude of visions is clearly translated into an aligned curriculum as well as clearly communicated. If we want our students “to value the outcome and expect success in achieving it” (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 32), the focus of the lessons should be clarified in clear learning objectives, which are embedded in an aligned EFL literature curriculum. However, in Bloemert and van Veen (accepted) we concluded that the step of formulating learning objectives could be regarded as the Achilles heel of EFL literature curricula. This means that teachers who work together within foreign language departments not only need to decide why they include literature in the curriculum, but also when and how (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Although these questions might appear basic, we found that, in general, foreign language teachers do not have a carefully considered answer to these questions that is in line with what is happening in their classrooms. We found that a framework such as the Comprehensive Approach offers teachers a common language through which they can answer these questions with more confidence.

The results of our studies showed an inadequate connection between what is currently happening in the EFL literature lessons and the learning needs of students. It could be argued that students who value the Language approach currently experience destructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999) in EFL literature lessons which emphasise the Text approach or perhaps even disregard the Language approach. In order to change this situation towards a more desirable situation of congruence (Vermetten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 2002) or at least a situation where the learning is perceived as relevant and students feel that the gap between their needs and what is offered is bridgeable (Hattie & Yates, 2014),

we suggested approaching literary texts through a combination of approaches. Depending on the learning needs of students, teachers need to, for example, decide which approach is emphasised or with which approach a lesson starts. This, in turn, requires teachers to be aware of the learning needs of their students as well as to be knowledgeable about how they approach literature in their EFL lessons. According to Carter (2015) there are two types of teachers: “those principally concerned with relevance and utility (mainly language teachers) and those principally concerned with literature, culture, and significance (mainly literature teachers)” (p. 316). The Comprehensive Approach can not only help teachers in distinguishing what type of teacher they are, it can also help foreign language teachers in analysing their literature curriculum and so prevent any blind spots (Vermunt & Verloop, 1991).

7.6 To conclude

A central aim of educational research - according to Verloop (1991) quoted on the first page of the research programme of the teacher education institute of the University of Groningen (van Veen, 2015) - is to provide teachers with empirically and theoretically based insights and coherent frames of references to better understand and improve their teaching and the learning of their students. For the eight teachers in our study, one of the main results of enriching their existing EFL literature curricula with the Comprehensive Approach was that it allowed them to rethink the *why*, *how*, and *what* of their EFL literature teaching practice. As such, we can conclude that the results of this thesis have reached this central aim. Moreover, the results of the five empirical studies in this thesis can be used in current national and international discussions regarding the integration of language development and content in the foreign language curriculum.

In referring to the title of this thesis, it is time to get off the fence and decide that the *principium tertii exclusi* is outdated. It is time to stop justifying the role, position, and relevance of literature in foreign language education. It is, however, time to create a well-structured foreign language literature research agenda and to start helping teachers in the *why*, *how*, and *what* of a content rich foreign language curriculum.

