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### Getting off the fence

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# **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**

Jasmijn Bloemert

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university of  
 groningen

# 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**

**PhD thesis**

to obtain the degree of PhD at the  
 University of Groningen  
 on the authority of the  
 Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga  
 and in accordance with  
 the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on

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*“It is a narrow mind which cannot look at  
a subject from various points of view.”*

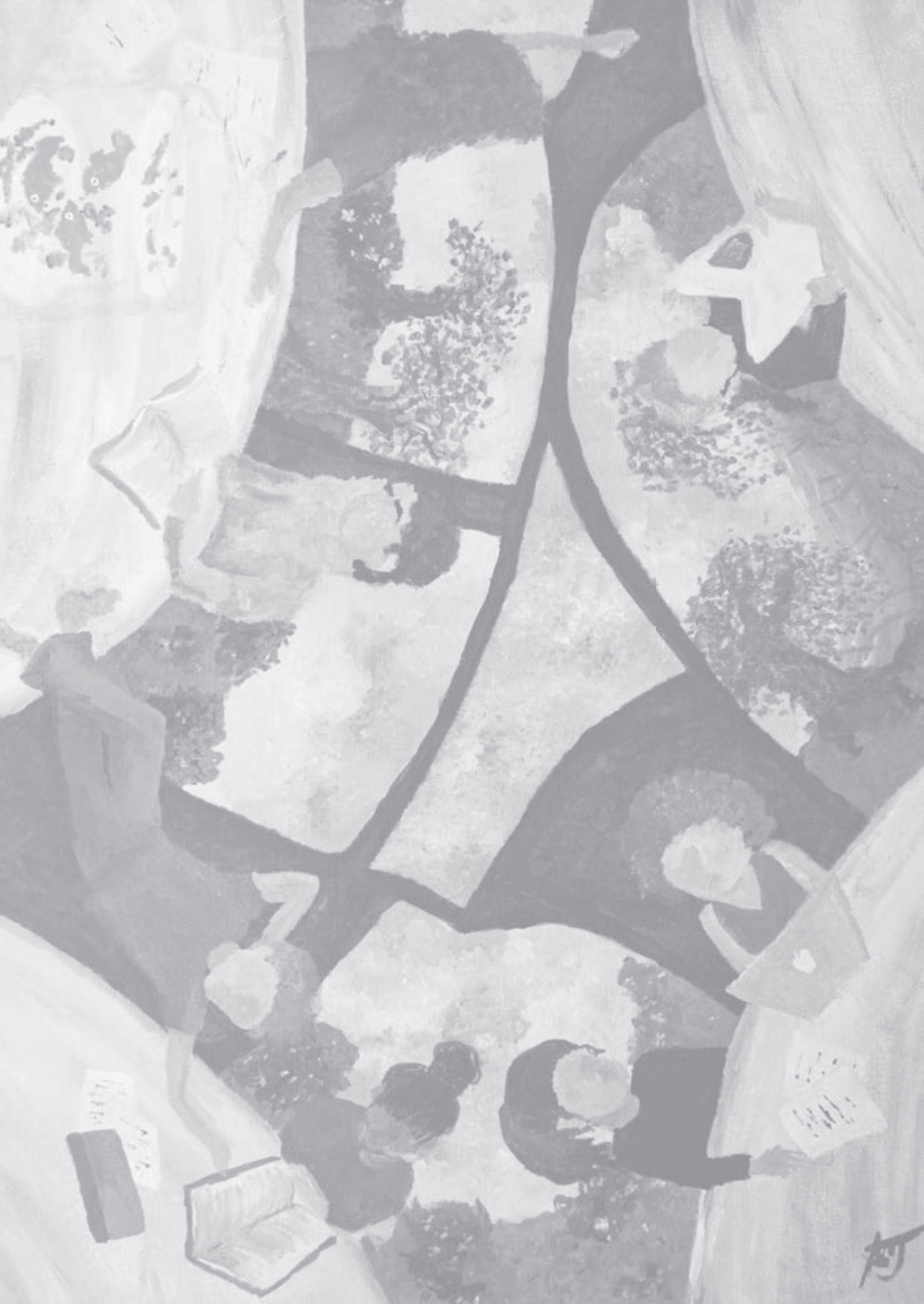
George Eliot  
Middlemarch

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# CHAPTER 1

## General introduction



## 1.1 Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)<sup>1</sup> has a prominent position in Dutch secondary education and became compulsory for every student in 2013. Although the majority of the EFL curriculum concerns foreign language skills, such as reading and writing, literature also plays an important part. It is, however, noteworthy that ever since the EFL curriculum was formalised in 1863, continuing discussions about the position, relevance, and focus of the literature component have taken place. These discussions have resulted in several theses (such as de Melker, 1970 and Wilhelm, 2005 for EFL) and overview studies, including *Geschiedenis van het talenonderwijs in Nederland: Onderwijs in de moderne talen van 1500 tot heden*<sup>2</sup> (Hulshof, Kwakernaak, & Wilhelm, 2015) and the series of papers published by Kwakernaak in 1997 and 2016. Discussions about the position, relevance, and focus of the foreign language literature curriculum have also been taking place at an international level. Studies and reviews by for example, Sage (1987), Lazar (1993), Paran (2008), and Paesani (2011) come to the same conclusion as the studies that describe the Dutch context, namely: the position of literature in the foreign language curriculum appears to be a *principium tertii exclusi* - law of the excluded middle - shifting between either a focus on the literary text or a focus on foreign language development. In this thesis, we explore the relevance and focus of EFL literature teaching in Dutch secondary education by empirically researching the current situation from different perspectives.

In this Introduction, foreign language literature teaching is first discussed within the Dutch context and then positioned within the international field. Leading from this discussion we provide the objective for this thesis and the research questions. We then introduce an overview of the main theories we used in the empirical chapters (Chapters 2 - 6) and we finish with an overview of the content and the organisation of this thesis. Because the majority of the sources used in Chapter 1 are written in Dutch, we decided to only provide the English translation of direct quotations.

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1 Although we focus on EFL (English as a foreign language) in this thesis, several studies and overviews sometimes describe a particular language and sometimes refer to foreign language teaching in general. In order to be as specific as possible without affecting the readability, we will use EFL when it concerns English and foreign language teaching when it concerns foreign languages in general.

2 In English: History of language teaching in the Netherlands: Education in modern languages from 1500 to the present.

## 1.2 Dutch context

A historic overview of the position, relevance, and focus of foreign language education in the Dutch secondary school context reveals that the shifting focus between the literary text and foreign language development has been the centre of discussion for over 150 years. Based on how both literature and language development were viewed and interpreted, we distinguish three major periods, which will be discussed in more detail below.

### 1.2.1 1863 – 1967 (Period 1)

In order to acquire a respectable position within the school curriculum, the way Greek and Latin were taught was the model for the EFL curriculum in Period 1. Especially Latin, the language of religion, literature, and science, represented a ‘higher culture’ and was seen as exemplary (Kwakernaak, 2014). Traditionally, Greek and Latin education consisted of reading and translating canonical texts where the texts were analysed lexically and grammatically. In other words, literary texts were used to serve a language learning purpose. Achieving this desired respectable position lasted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is not surprising, considering the fact that French, German, and English only received an official academic status in 1921 (Kwakernaak, 1997a).

Although the focus was primarily language acquisition, Wilhelm (2005) provides an example of a course book from 1808, where the practical motive of language learning was combined with a cultural motive. This rise in the interest in literary history and the actual literary texts themselves in foreign language teaching was further testified by the publication of several literary histories and anthologies. Foreign language teaching halfway the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a change from a purely utilitarian aim with an emphasis on learning to read English through approved authors to a utilitarian aim complemented with a cultural aim (Wilhelm, 2005). That this shift was supported, is evidenced by a government report, the so-called *Report concerning the State of Higher, Secondary, and Primary Schools* (in Dutch: *Verslagen nopens den Staat der Hoogere, Middelbare en Lagere Scholen*), of the schoolyear 1855 - 1856, which stated that “Education in the foreign languages remained generally sufficient, although the treatment of the grammatical rules could be more scientific and more literature could be used in the practice of languages” (Kwakernaak 1997a, p. 110).

Stemming from the 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition of Enlightenment, education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was primarily concerned with a moral and social purpose. According to Wilhelm (2005), “young people were expected to make their acquaintance with accepted and respected authors, as it was believed that reading their literature would educate youngsters to become valued citizens and morally good people” (p. 72). Importantly, “the written language of the great writers was seen as the actual language and the everyday spoken language as degenerate” (Kwakernaak 1997b, p. 137). The importance of the integration of language acquisition through literary texts was emphasized during a meeting held in 1879: “The school - whichever it is - must educate civilized but also useful people for life, that is to say for our purpose: the student must learn to understand and enjoy the works of excellent writers and poets, but must also be able to express intelligibly his thoughts to strangers (whose language he has learnt) as well as understand them” (de Melker, 1970, p. 19). Although it was believed that studying literary texts had a formative effect, explicit instruction consisted of the study of literary history where students were offered overviews, names and titles of works of important authors, and extracts of texts that they were required to translate.

In this period, the study of literary texts was connected to an oral examination. The focus of these oral examinations was the major literary periods which were exemplified by several important literary texts. Because the exam programme stated that the candidate “was able to properly account for the application of the language rules”, besides literary knowledge, fluency was examined as well (Kwakernaak, 2014). That these requirements were too demanding is evidenced by criticism at the time. The leading education inspector Dr. Parvé, for example, had his reservations about examining literary history in the oral exams, because this often degenerated into a superficial recitation of dates and other facts (Kwakernaak 1997a, p. 111). Multiple complaints about the dominant position of literary history led to a reduction in the requirements: in 1901, students were examined on only one or two major literary periods and more emphasis was put on the texts themselves.

Another criticism concerned the dual focus of these exams, i.e. literary knowledge and fluency. The *Messages and Announcements report* of 1899 - 1902 states that “Discussion of works read by students can only be properly conducted in Dutch: Only in the mother tongue do feelings and thoughts immediately evoke similar words” (de Melker, 1970, p. 21). Issues with combining the oral exam and literary knowledge remained throughout this period. In 1963 for example, Verhoeff

objected to linking literary knowledge to the oral exam. If a disconnection is not possible, he disputed that “we will have to reconcile that we are actually teaching skills with a work of art as a direct object” (de Melker, 1970, p. 32). In other words, Verhoeff argued that combining the oral exam and literary knowledge was in fact disregarding the literary works.

### 1.2.2 1968 – 1997 (Period 2)

After the introduction of the *Mammoetwet*<sup>3</sup> in 1968, the position of EFL literature education changed. Teachers now had complete freedom regarding the content and form of the exam. The only prescription included that “the literature read by the candidate ... must include a number of works from the last half century and a number from the time before that”. (Kwakernaak, 1997a, p. 112). Unsurprisingly, this situation led to “non-commitment, lack of clarity, and confusion about goals, scope, and content” (Kwakernaak, 1997b, p. 136). Nevertheless, the examining of literary knowledge remained connected to the oral exam. Interestingly, when Thijssen (1985) asked teachers of German why literature should be a part of their subject, only an average of 8% of the teachers ticked the “it is important for language development” box (p. 108).

After years of discussion and critique, 1992 saw a clear break between language proficiency and literature teaching. The designated committee of 1992 declared that in the process of selecting and formulating the literature objectives, it was decided that the aspect of language acquisition through literary education was intentionally left out. This resulted in the following guidelines for the literature exam: “Mixing of literary skills and productive skills must be prevented. When testing knowledge of and insight into literature and reporting on learning and reading experiences, the candidate can determine the language in which the testing takes place. Integrated testing of literature and another language proficiency is excluded in the examination programme” (Kwakernaak, 1997b, p. 138). At the end of this period, there was even an attempt to separate literature and language completely by granting students two separate marks.

Despite its more anchored position in the curriculum, literature teaching was now also in competition with language proficiency. Especially with the rise of communicative language teaching since the second half of the 1980s, foreign

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3 The main idea behind the ‘Mammoetwet’ (officially the Secondary Education Act) was that every student should follow both general and vocational education. Because this Act brought forth a plethora of changes, it was labelled the ‘Mammoetwet’.

language teaching became more and more utilitarian, aiming at being able to properly function in society (Kwakernaak, 2012). The 19<sup>th</sup> century academic views that literature education served a higher moral purpose was regarded more and more as elitist. This change in views could have been inspired by a number of radical changes in literary theory. Before the 1960s, the historical approach to literature, where literary works are studied in the light of the context in which the work was written, was dominant (Kwakernaak, 1997a). This means that facts about the author's life as well as historical, social, and cultural circumstances were considered important in interpreting a literary text. In the 1960s, foreign language literature teaching in the Netherlands saw the rise of the text-immanent approach which had its roots in, for example, New Criticism, Formalism, and Structuralism (Kwakernaak, 1997a). All of these approaches to literary criticism share the notion that a literary text is an independent entity and insist on the intrinsic value of a text. In other words, the method of close reading is embraced and 'external' aspects such as the life of the author or contextual information is considered a distraction. The 1970s focused on socio-economic approaches, also called sociological criticism (Kwakernaak, 1997a). This type of literary criticism focuses on the relationship between the author and their society, thereby emphasising societal elements within the literary text as well as within the life of the author. The most common form of this approach is Marxist criticism which approaches the literary text itself as a social institution with a specific ideological function. Studying a literary text through this approach means that especially the political and economic aspects will be highlighted. And finally, from the 1980s, the reader became the centre of attention in foreign language literature teaching in Dutch secondary education (Kwakernaak, 1997a). This approach was based on the ideas of Reader-Response critics such as Rosenblatt (1969) and Iser (1978) who believed that the literary text is not an independent artefact but creates meaning only when it is read and interpreted. According to this approach, our interpretation of a literary text is affected by our personal cultural, social, and religious values and therefore, different interpretations of a literary work are possible. "Literature education had to promote reading pleasure, and the student had to become a competent literature consumer" (Kwakernaak 1997a, p. 112). Because the different approaches were all valuable contributions to literature teaching, all of them were adopted and translated in the following four perspectives: the 'literary-historical perspective, the literary-theoretical perspective, the person-oriented perspective, and the perspective aimed at developing a personal reading taste" (Kwakernaak, 1997c).



Despite all these changes in the EFL curriculum, the traditional link between literary knowledge and language proficiency remained, although it changed its focus to practicing reading skills with literary texts. Literary knowledge was also still primarily tested in an oral exam, even though the literature lessons were increasingly taught in Dutch (Kwakernaak, 1997b).

### **1.2.3 1998 – 2019 (Period 3)**

In line with the developments up until 1997, the new exam programme that was introduced in 1998 (in Dutch: *Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs*) introduced even more specific curriculum standards for the literature curriculum as well as a further reduction in lesson time, based on the so-called ‘study load hours’ (in Dutch: *Studiebelastinguren*) (Hulshof, Kwakernaak, & Wilhelm, 2015). The new prescriptive requirements included that the number of literary works students had to study was reduced to a minimum of three (Kwakernaak, 2014), there were requirements for the division of the percentages between the different proficiency components and literature, and several learning objectives were introduced, covering the following three subdomains: literary development, literary terminology, and literary history.

Taking together the reduction in time, the more diverse goals, the unclear content, and the separation from language proficiency, literature within foreign language education was no longer taken for granted (Kwakernaak, 2016b). The break between language and literature was further emphasised by the option to exclude all literature teaching from the foreign language curriculum and merge the literature component with the then new subject ‘Culture and Art’ (in Dutch: *Culturele en Kunstzinnige Vorming*, in short, *CKV*), so-called ‘Integrated Literature Education’ (in Dutch: *Geïntegreerd Literatuur Onderwijs*) (Kwakernaak, 2017). However, many foreign language teachers did not experience this as an opportunity for joint improvement of literature teaching, but as an attack on their own subject (Kwakernaak, 2017).

The *Improved Educational Reforms* of 2007, which saw several changes in the requirements for literature teaching, are still in use today: how the percentages for the different components in the curriculum are divided is up to the teachers themselves, the required minimum of literary works remained three literary works, and the number of learning objectives was reduced to the following three for pre-university level students:

- (1) the student can recognize and distinguish literary text types and can use literary terms when interpreting literary texts;
- (2) the student can give an overview of the main events of literary history and can place the studied works in this historic perspective; and
- (3) the student can report about their reading experiences of at least three literary works with clear arguments (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007).

These three subdomains, i.e. literary development, literary terminology, and literary history which were introduced in 1998, remained.

The most recent national development is Curriculum.nu (which started in 2018) where development teams of teachers and school leaders, under the supervision of *Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling*, have formulated nine learning areas including what primary and secondary school students should be able to know and do within each learning area. The primary objective of Curriculum.nu is to design a proposal for revising the current core curriculum standards (in Dutch: *kerndoelen en eindtermen*). One of the nine learning areas is *English/Modern Foreign Languages* and one of the innovative proposals is a more holistic approach to foreign language learning where language learning is more than training language skills. The position of literature within this more holistic approach is seen as integrated within learning how to communicate in a foreign language. This proposal, however, does not coincide with reality: the decision to make EFL, together with Dutch and Mathematics, a core subject in 2013 has resulted in excessive exam training in the reading of expository texts and a dwindling position of the literature component. This development is in line with the curricular changes in the language curriculum towards a utilitarian proficiency-centred programme ever since 1968.

To summarise, after decades of discussions, disagreements, and policy changes, the position, relevance, and focus of literature within the EFL curriculum remains the centre of attention for researchers and policy makers. It could even be argued that, similar to the Dutch literature curriculum, the foreign language literature curriculum can be defined as ill-structured. Witte (2008) used the term 'ill-structured domain', introduced by Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, and Coulson (1991), in order to characterise the curriculum for Dutch literature. Witte (2008) argued that the literature domain in secondary education is ill-structured because of a lack of theory, a multitude of visions, and an inadequate connection between education and the learning needs of students (see also van der Knaap, 2014 regarding literature teaching in German as a foreign language).

### 1.3 International context

Reviews by, for example, Carter (2007), Hall (2015), Kramersch and Kramersch (2000), Paesani (2011), Paran (2006), and Paran (2008) all discuss the converging and diverging movements between literature and language throughout the decades. To summarise, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature was the primary object of study, holding a “place of prestige in the academic community and served as a source of moral and ideational inspiration and content” (Paesani, 2011, p. 161). Between 1940 and 1960, this academic prestige was regarded as an elitist pursuit, superfluous to everyday communication. The period between the 1970s and 1990s, with the growth of communicative language teaching, however, reconsidered the role of literature. In the United States this period was labelled the ‘proficiency movement’, perceiving literature as “an opportunity to develop vocabulary acquisition, the development of reading strategies, and the training of critical thinking, that is, reasoning skills” (Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000, p. 567). The most recent development in this field of research includes literature in the language curriculum as a way to address intercultural awareness and intercultural competence (Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000; Paesani, 2011). Or, as Paran (2008) summarizes: “more holistic perspectives which take different aspects of the learner and the context of learning into account, looking at the whole person and the whole culture, in which literature is part of developing the whole person, and in which affective development and affective factors are taken into account” (Paran, 2008, p. 469). Paesani (2011) labelled the search for a balance between a language learning focus and a literary focus “language-literature instruction” and defined it as “the deliberate integration of language development and literary study at all levels of the curriculum” (p. 162).

Indeed, the questions that have been addressed for over 150 years in the Dutch context were also at the heart of the discussion internationally, evidenced for example by the two overarching concerns of *Literature and Language Teaching* (Brumfit & Carter, 1986): “What is literature, and what therefore should be selected as a basis for teaching literature, and why? How should it be taught, and what is its overall place, internationally, in language education?” (Carter, 2007, p. 4). Carter (2007) quite right concludes that the question that had been raised 20 years previous in the papers in Brumfit and Carter (1986) were still being asked, in many cases with greater sharpness and relevance for the design of curricula” (Carter, 2007, p. 7). Moreover, although the “resurgence in the use of literature

in language teaching” (Paran, 2008, p. 465) has seen a growth in the corpus of empirical and classroom practice articles on language-literature instruction, Carter (2007), Paran (2008), and Paesani (2011) all conclude their surveys with a call for more empirical research into the use of literature in foreign language classrooms as well as “systematic enquiries into the views of the learners” (Paran, 2008, p. 490).

This resurgence is in response to or at least in line with two major developments internationally. First of all, the 2007 report *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World* authored by the Modern Language Association. In this report, the committee recommends replacing the traditional two-tiered structure of foreign language programmes in higher education in the United States with a more coherent structure where literature and language are merged. The myriad responses this report received (e.g. Bernhardt, 2010; Gala, 2008; Grabe, 2010; Rarick, 2010; Rifkin, 2012) shows the impact this message had on the foreign language teaching and researching community.

The second major development concerns the changes regarding literature in the recent companion volume to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2018). Whereas the 2001 edition referred to literature or literary texts sporadically, the second edition includes the following three aspects relevant to creative text and literature: reading as a leisure activity; expressing a personal response to creative texts; and analysis and criticism of creative texts (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 50).

## 1.4 The focus of this thesis

The position of literature in the foreign language curriculum has seen a circular movement where it started as the core of foreign language teaching then became marginalised and separated from language development and now is moving towards an integrated and more holistic and integrated model. These recent movements appear to break with the *principium tertii exclusi*, leaving the ‘either-or’ situation behind. Interestingly though, as Carter (2007) already observed, we keep asking the same questions which focus on the justification for the inclusion of literature in the foreign language programme, the use of the target language in foreign language lessons and exams, and the position of foreign language literature as integrated or separate. Repeating these questions without finding consensus

in the answers and repeatedly justifying the role, position, and relevance of literature in foreign language teaching has prevented us from moving forward, from developing a coherent foreign language literature methodology, and from systematically investigating this area of research. In our view, if we want to get off the fence, break this justification habit, and take steps in building a well-structured and content rich foreign language curriculum, we need to: (1) systematically investigate the current situation of literature teaching within the foreign language curriculum, (2) understand how the relevance and usefulness of a desired situation where literature and language teaching go hand-in-hand (Paran, 2008; Paesani, 2011) is experienced by teachers and (3) emphasize the perspective of students (Paran, 2008).

## 1.5 Theoretical approach

In this thesis the issues presented in sections 1.2 – 1.4 are addressed through the framework of pedagogical content knowledge research (in Dutch: *vakdidactisch onderzoek*) because of its dual focus on content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and its dual focus on teacher and student perspectives.

The term pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was introduced by Shulman in his 1985 seminal address to the American Educational Research Association and defined as a type of content knowledge “which goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). Also, “it is the particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to teaching” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). In other words, because pedagogical content knowledge represents an amalgam of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, research in this area focuses on both knowledge of a particular subject and suitable pedagogical approaches to transfer this knowledge thereby considering the diverse abilities and interests of students. PCK research has mainly gained ground in the teaching of science subjects, especially mathematics (Blömeke & Delaney, 2012; Depaepe, Verschaffel, & Kelchtermans, 2013). Although PCK research is taking place in the field of foreign language teaching in an explicit way (e.g. Evens, Tielemans, Elen, & Depaepe, 2019; König, Tachtsoglou, Lammerding, Strauß, Nold, & Rihde, 2017), more often it is included implicitly and therefore very hard to identify in database searches. Isaac (2002), for example, examined the perceptions of students of

English as a second language regarding the role a literary cloze activity played in the development of their language and literary awareness. Although she does not explicitly refer to PCK research, studying how students perceive and/or experience specific content knowledge is, in fact, part of PCK research.

Although several researchers have identified underlying components of PCK, Grossman's (1990) clarification of these components is most widely referred to. According to Grossman (1990), PCK consists of four central components which are all included in this thesis: (1) conceptions of purpose for teaching subject matter (Chapters 2 and 6); (2) knowledge of student understanding (Chapters 3, 4 and 5); (3) curricular knowledge (Chapters 2 and 6); and (4) knowledge of instructional strategies (Chapter 6). In line with Grossman's (1990) interpretation, Grossman, Schoenfeld, and Lee (2005) formulated a set of questions that provide a framework for PCK, including the following four: "What are the different purposes for teaching the subject matter in public schools?" (teacher focus); "Why is the subject important for students to study?" (student focus); "What do understanding or performance look like with regard to this subject matter?" (teacher focus); and "What are students likely to understand about the subject matter at different developmental stages?" (student perspective) (p. 208). As we have indicated between brackets, and analysis of these questions shows that PCK does not only focus on the teacher, but also includes the student. Because the perspectives of students and teachers are equally valued within PCK research we will discuss these in more detail below as well as how both perspectives are included in this thesis.

### 1.5.1 Focus on student perspective

An analysis of the previously discussed historic overviews regarding foreign language literature teaching shows that the students' perspective appears to be excluded. This is however not surprising. Research in the field of foreign language teaching shows that this perspective is, more often than not, absent from the research radar (Pinter, 2014; Pinter & Zandian, 2014). This routine exclusion is a problem, because the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the teaching and learning context need to be more or less similar in order to obtain optimal functioning and effectiveness (Entwistle & Tait, 1990). However, the way students and teachers perceive the teaching and learning context does not always align (Brown, 2009). According to Vermunt and Verloop (1999), whenever a teacher's teaching approach is compatible with a student's learning approach, it creates a situation of congruence (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 270): a situation preferred by

students (Vermetten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 2002). On the other hand, when these teaching and learning approaches are not compatible, frictions may occur. In some cases, these are constructive frictions, which “may be necessary to make students willing to change and to stimulate them to develop skills in the use of learning and thinking activities they are not inclined to use on their own” (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 270). and which “represent a challenge for students to increase their skill in a learning or thinking strategy” (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 270). A third possibility is that of destructive frictions, which can occur when discrepancies between students’ and teachers’ perceptions are too large. Destructive frictions may, for example, occur when students perceive the teaching and learning as irrelevant and experience the gap between their own perception and their teacher’s as unbridgeable (Hattie & Yates, 2014). As a result, destructive frictions “may cause a decrease in learning or thinking skills” (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 270). In other words, ignoring the student perspective in educational research could have a negative impact on the quality of learning. To summarise, based on the theories of Shulman (1986), Grossman (1990) and Grossman, Schoenfeld, and Lee (2005), the students’ perspective is regarded as indispensable in PCK research and will therefore take a prominent position in this thesis.

In this thesis, we operationalize the students’ perspective in several ways: (1) as co-constructors of knowledge with a unique perspective on EFL literature education (Chapter 3); (2) the students’ level of engagement (an external manifestation of motivation) (Chapter 5) and (3) how students view the importance of foreign language literature lessons (an internal manifestation of motivation) (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) (Chapters 4 and 5).

### **1.5.2 Focus on teacher perspective**

The teacher perspective is included in this thesis in two different ways: as a source of information regarding how the teacher approaches literature in their EFL lessons (Chapters 2 and 6) and as a co-constructor of knowledge regarding how they experienced working with a desired EFL literature teaching model (Chapter 6). Regarding the latter, one way to establish an active role for teachers in PCK research is via an intervention study that includes professional development opportunities for teachers. According to Desimone and Stuckey (2014), professional development opportunities are sustainable when both the Theory of Change (does the new knowledge improve teacher knowledge and instruction?) and the Theory of instruction (does the new knowledge improve student learning?) work. When

putting these two theories in line with Desimone's (2009) conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development on teachers and students, a certain sequentiality arises because, according to Desimone (2009), professional development includes four interactive critical features: (1) a teacher takes part in a professional development programme and (2) experiences changes in knowledge, skills, and attitude; (3) these changes lead to changes in instruction, which ultimately (4) lead to increased student learning. This means that the Theory of Instruction, focusing on increased student learning, follows the Theory of Change, focusing on changes in knowledge, skills, attitude, and consequently instruction. This thesis focuses on the Theory of Change.

## 1.6 Objective of this thesis

The objective of this thesis, then, is threefold. The first objective concerns the design of a literature-teaching model that is in line with the recent holistic perspectives as described by Paran (2008), which include various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text. The second objective concerns a systematic enquiry into the current position of EFL literature education through the eyes of teachers as well as students. And the third objective concerns an in-depth analysis of how teachers experience the relevance and usefulness of a literature-teaching model as described in the first objective. By doing this, we aim to contribute to the growing field of research into foreign language literature teaching, motivated by several gaps in the international knowledge base: empirical research into EFL literature classroom practices in secondary education and an investigation into the views of secondary school students regarding EFL literature education.

Central, therefore, in this thesis is the development of a foreign language literature teaching model that is in line with the recent holistic perspective, which include various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text. Important for us in the design of this model, was to take a multi-perspective, including the teacher's and student's perspective. We then used this model to describe current EFL literature teaching practice as well as how students experience EFL literature lessons. The final step involved an intervention where we researched how eight EFL teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the model after working with it for one year.



The following five research questions are guiding this thesis:

1. What does a foreign language literature teaching model look like that includes various aspects of the learner, the context, and the literary text?
2. What can the contribution of students to the collaborative and co-constructive process of validating such a foreign language literature teaching model be?
3. How do students perceive EFL literature lessons?
4. How is EFL literature currently approached in Dutch secondary education?
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?

## 1.7 Methodological approach

This thesis contains two educational design studies, which emphasise the involvement of teachers and students in a natural teaching context (McKenney & Reeves, 2019). The first is described in Chapters 2 and 3 and follows the original process of consecutive prototypes through cycles of analysis, design, development, and evaluation. The second is described in Chapter 6 and follows an adaptation of the process whereby multiple prototypes (cases) were developed simultaneously by several teachers. Both studies were theoretically oriented, iterative, highly collaborative, interventionist, and responsively grounded (McKenney & Reeves, 2019).

Considering the three-fold objective and research questions of this thesis, a mixed method approach was applied, including surveys, interviews, and video-recorded lesson observations. In the editorial of the first volume of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Tashakkori and Cresswell (2007) define mixed method research as research “in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry” (p. 4). The fundamental principle of mixed methods research is the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods, thereby building on their complementary

strengths and different weaknesses (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). We selected a mixed method approach for this thesis because, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), mixed methods are appropriate in long-term projects where the research questions are geared towards understanding initial research findings in greater detail. Methodological decisions will be accounted for in more detail in each of the subsequent chapters.

## **1.8 Outline of the thesis**

In order to answer the main research questions, the five empirical studies in this thesis are organised in three parts.

### **1.8.1 Part 1**

Central to Part 1 of this thesis was the development of a model of foreign language literature teaching. In the first study (Chapter 2), an initial model was developed based on a literature review, formal curriculum documentation, and the researcher's professional experience as an EFL teacher and teacher educator. This initial model, the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language teaching and learning, which consists of four different approaches to EFL literature teaching, was validated through several consecutive Thinking Aloud Protocols with foreign language teachers and teacher educators. Because this initial model was part of a survey ( $n = 106$  EFL teachers), we were able to run a confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether, and the extent to which, the four approaches were linked to the underlying latent trait. By using descriptive statistics,  $t$ -tests, and correlation analyses, we explored how Dutch EFL teachers approach literature and whether teacher demographics and/or curricular factors are related to this.

### **1.8.2 Part 2**

Part 2 of this thesis consists of three studies which all concentrate on the student perspective. Because it is our understanding that the student voice is essential in curriculum development, the objective of the second study was to empirically validate the Comprehensive Approach through learner oriented discourses. In Chapter 3 we extend the discussion of the inclusion of student voice in research in two ways. We first argue that the leading hierarchical ideas about the inclusion of student voice should be considered dated, because it results in a mono-dimensional

and therefore limited view. We then propose that including the student voice from different perspectives and through a consecutive dialogical procedure will enhance research. This proposal is exemplified by a detailed report on how 268 Dutch secondary school students cooperated in the further development of the foreign language literature teaching model that was the results of Chapter 2.

In the third study (Chapter 4) we wanted to unearth the genuine views of a large group of students regarding their ideas about the benefits of EFL literature education. A second question we were interested in was whether we could find any differences between the perception of students from different schools. We designed a single open question survey which allowed for spontaneity in the student answer as well as avoided bias because the students were not provided with answer categories. A total of 635 pre-university level students (aged between 15 - 17) from 15 different secondary schools provided 2361 answers which were first analysed qualitatively and were then quantified.

Because student perception can have an impact on their achievement (Brown, 2009), it is not only important to find out what they find important, but also how this is related to their level of motivation in the EFL literature lessons. In the fourth study of this thesis (Chapter 5), we draw on the work of Skinner, Kindermann, and Furrer (2009) and Wigfield and Eccles (2000) and operationalise external motivation as student level of engagement and internal motivation as how students value the EFL literature lessons. To this end, a survey was developed based on the Comprehensive Approach and the Engagement versus Disaffection survey (Skinner et al., 2009). The survey was administered to 365 year 5 pre-university level students and their answers allowed us to investigate to what extent students are engaged during EFL literature lessons, how they value EFL literature lessons, and possible relationships between these two. The data were analysed by means of an exploratory factor analysis and correlation analyses.

### **1.8.3 Part 3**

The fifth and final study (Chapter 6) describes an intervention from a teacher perspective through an instrumental multisite multiple case study. This chapter explores how eight EFL teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach when implementing this in their own teaching contexts. Whereas in Chapters 2 and 3 we followed the original educational design research process, in this chapter we changed the consecutive process to a simultaneous one, believing to do justice this way to the diverse naturalistic teaching contexts. To this

end, 276 EFL literature lessons from eight different teachers were video-recorded over a period of two years and the eight participating teachers were interviewed.

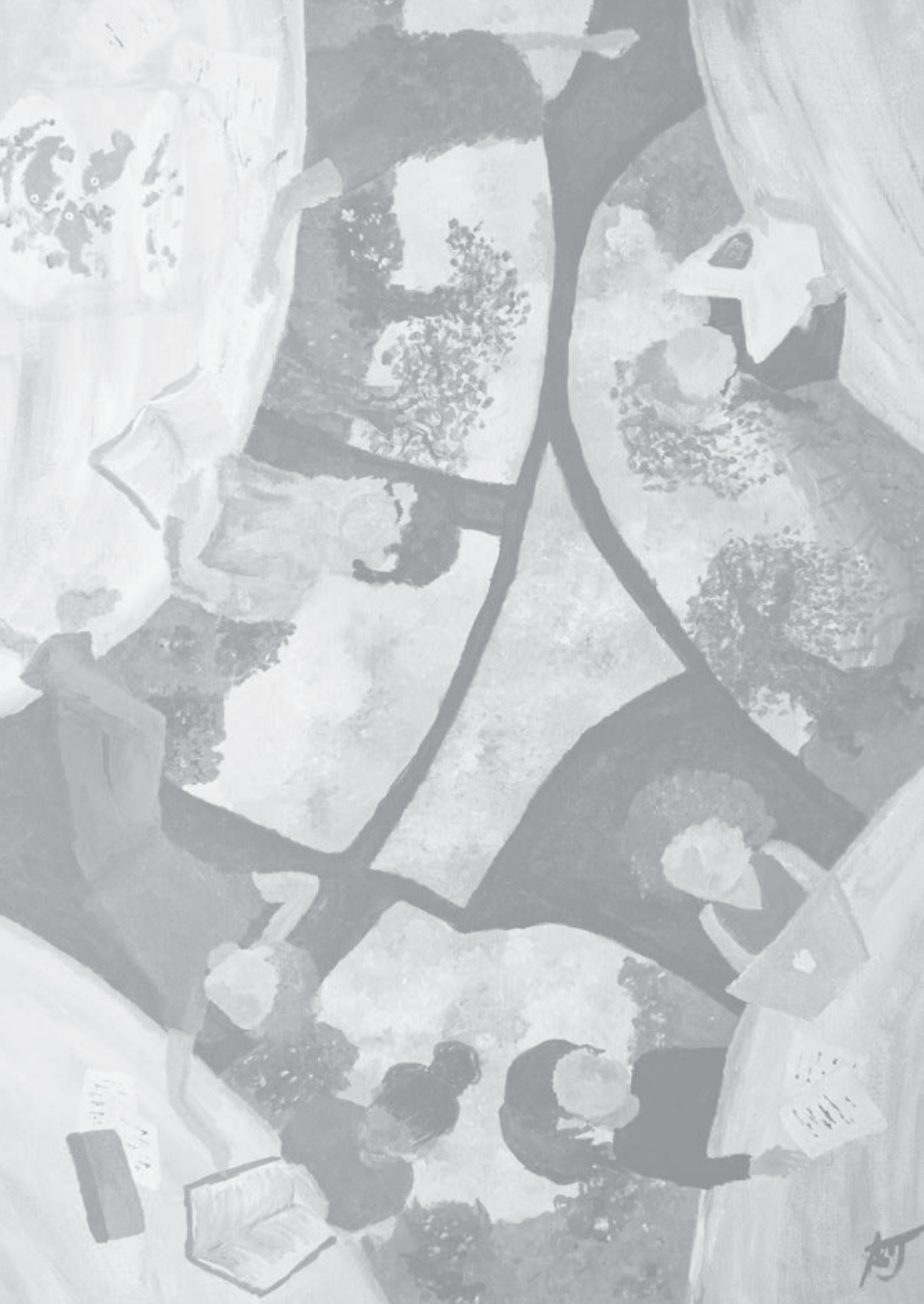
All data collection instruments for studies 4 and 5, as well as the data analyses, were piloted between April and June 2015 (Bloemert & van Veen, accepted). An evaluation of this pilot led to several minor changes in the instruments as well as in the analyses.

## 1.9 Organisation of the thesis

Because it was decided that this thesis would follow the thesis-by-publications format, Chapters 2 to 5 were submitted for publication in international peer-reviewed journals and can therefore be read independently. Chapter 2 was published in *Language, Culture and Curriculum* as Bloemert, Jansen, and van de Grift (2016). Chapter 4 was published in *The Language Learning Journal* as Bloemert, Paran, Jansen, and van de Grift (2019). Chapter 3 has recently been accepted by *Cambridge Journal of Education* and Chapter 5 has recently been accepted by *Applied Linguistic Review*. Because of this format some overlap in the introduction, theoretical background, and context sections may be encountered.

Due to the wide scope and the fact that we wanted to do justice to the data we collected, it was decided that the fifth empirical study (Chapter 6) followed the format of a chapter. This also means that this chapter is extensive in size.

In the final chapter, Chapter 7, the findings of the five empirical studies are briefly summarized followed by a general discussion of the overall conclusions. This is followed by directions for future research and practical implications for teachers and other educational professionals.



# CHAPTER 2

## Exploring EFL literature approaches in Dutch secondary education

This chapter is based on: Bloemert, J., Jansen, E., & van de Grift, W. (2016).  
Exploring EFL literature approaches in Dutch secondary education.  
*Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 29(2), 169-188.

## Abstract

There is an increasing awareness that the inclusion of literature in foreign language curricula can be beneficial to language learners. Especially the move towards integrated language and literature curricula is gaining ground. In this study we investigated the way EFL literature is approached in Dutch secondary education at pre-university level. Using a survey study ( $n = 106$  EFL teachers), we investigated (1) how EFL teachers approach literature at pre-university level in Dutch secondary education, and also (2) which factors are related to the reported occurrence of four foreign language literary teaching approaches. Confirmatory Factor Analysis shows that the four identified approaches represent one underlying construct, which underlines our understanding of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning. Results indicate that the variation between the ways foreign language teachers approach literature is enormous. Correlation analyses and  $t$ -tests indicate that curricular factors are significantly related to the way literature is approached. The fact that teacher demographics are generally not significantly related to the way foreign language literature is approached could be ascribed to curricular heritage or the way foreign language literature curricula are designed. The study concludes by suggesting several directions for future research.

## 2.1 Introduction

Ever since the 1980s, educational research has shown an increasing interest in the use of literature in foreign language education, resulting in a wealth of practical teaching materials (e.g. Collie & Slater, 1987; Kennedy & Falvey, 1999; McKay, 1982). In 1989 Hall expressed some concern regarding the results of this increasing interest believing that foreign language education is now introducing literature “without having sufficiently carefully theorised what literature might offer and how this potential can best be exploited” (Hall, 1989, p. 30). A few years later Gilroy and Parkinson (1996) note that “the extreme diversity of foreign language teaching situations ... precludes any grand consensus on the place and form of literature teaching” (Gilroy & Parkinson, 1996, p. 210). Showing that there is indeed a need for a more balanced understanding of the place and form of literature in foreign language programmes, several scholarly works have theorized what literature might offer and seem to conclude that literature can be beneficial for foreign language students in multiple ways, such as stimulating language acquisition, critical thinking skills, and cultural knowledge of the target language (e.g. Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Hall, 2015; Parkinson & Reid-Thomas, 2000). The current trend seems to be to empirically research these acclaimed benefits (e.g. Early & Marshall, 2008; Macleroy, 2013; Nguyen, 2014; Picken, 2005) moving from mere theory to actual evidence.

One of the developments in this field of research comes from the Modern Language Association (MLA), a U.S. organization dealing with university level education. In 2007 the MLA encouraged replacing the two-tiered language-literature structure within higher education with a more coherent curriculum in which “language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole” (Modern Language Association, 2007, p. 3). The suggested reform focuses on a unified curriculum that will situate language study “in cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of humanistic learning” (Modern Language Association, 2007, p. 4). In line with recent curricular reforms, more emphasis is placed on interpretative reading, which has resulted in a definite re-emergence of literature in foreign language curricula in the U.S. (Urlaub, 2013). Looking at the foreign language teaching situation in Europe, despite the strong focus of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) on communicative competences, the framework also covers the aesthetic uses of language and the cultural context in which language is set (Council of Europe,



2001). Furthermore, the Council of Europe believes that besides an aesthetic purpose, “literary studies serve many more educational purposes – intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 56; see also Paran, 2010).

Notwithstanding the international consensus regarding the position of literature in foreign language curricula, this general agreement has not yet reached the majority of classrooms (Paran, 2008). This claim is underlined by Pulverness’ plenary talk in Moscow in 2014 entitled *The Ghost at the Banquet: the use and abuse of literature in the language classroom* in which he compares EFL literature education to Banquo, the unwanted guest at Macbeth’s dinner table (Pulverness, 2014). Pulverness indicates that the title of his talk seems an appropriate metaphor “to allude to the rather uneasy position occupied by literature in English language teaching” (Pulverness, 2014, n.p.). When foreign language curricula became increasingly utilitarian, literature changed from being a ‘welcome guest’ to an ‘unwelcome ghost’ (Pulverness, 2014). Another issue that needs to be addressed is the fact that the majority of empirical studies in this field are conducted in higher education (e.g. Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Lao & Krashen, 2000) whereas secondary school settings are mainly represented by practitioner evidence (Paran, 2008). Paran (2008) calls for empirical research that will show the extent of the inclusion of literature in secondary language classrooms, since “these school settings are, after all, the locus of most language learning in the world” (p. 409).

### **2.1.1 The position of EFL literature in Dutch secondary education**

English is a compulsory subject at pre-university level in the Netherlands and, according to the Dutch core curriculum standards for EFL reading comprehension, students at pre-university level<sup>4</sup> should reach CEFR levels B2 to C1. All students have to take a National Exam in their final year (year 6) as well as various School Exams organised by each individual school taken throughout the final three years. The foreign language literature component is part of the School Exams which means that individual schools can decide in what way and how often literature is taught and tested. Table 2.1 presents an overview of the allocation of the various components.

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4 In the Netherlands, secondary education, which begins at the age of 12 and is compulsory until the age of 16, is offered at several levels. The highest level is the pre-university level (student age 12 to 18) and this diploma is the minimum requirement for access to a university. The exam programme at pre-university level is taught in the final three years (years 4, 5, and 6) and also comprises foreign language literature.

**Table 2.1** Organisation of foreign language curricula in Dutch secondary education

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

When foreign languages became a compulsory component in Dutch secondary education after 1863, canonical works were read out loud and translated sentence by sentence and students had to be knowledgeable about one or two literary periods (Wilhelm, 2005). Between 1968 and 1998 the Dutch secondary school system was determined by the *Law regarding Secondary Education*. Even though now more emphasis was placed on practical knowledge and usage of the foreign language, literature remained part of the curriculum (Mulder, 1997). Students were required to create an individual reading list of twelve literary works, which had to be studied at home without any help or input from foreign language teachers. Despite this requirement, many schools stuck with the pre-1968 tradition and often about a third of the lesson time was spent on studying literature (Mulder, 1997). The Educational Reforms of 1998 saw the introduction of several prescriptive requirements for foreign language literature: 13 learning objectives were introduced covering three subdomains (literary development, literary terminology, and literary history); directions about the number of works students had to read were reduced to a minimum of three (Mulder, 1997); and foreign language teachers received directions about the percentage of the different components for the final English mark (e.g. listening skills had factor 3 and literature factor 1).

Nine years after the introduction of the Educational Reforms of 1998 the government introduced a revised version, 'the Improved Educational Reforms' of 2007, which is still in use today. Since 2007, foreign language teachers are free to decide on the percentage of all components in the School Exams, the required minimum is still three literary works, and the number of learning objectives has been reduced from thirteen to the following three (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007):

1. The student can recognize and distinguish literary text types and can use literary terms when interpreting literary texts.
2. The student can give an overview of the main events of literary history and can place the studied works in this historic perspective.

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

These three standards are the only guidelines foreign language teachers have with regard to the literature component. There are, for example, no requirements with regard to the level of some of the standards and neither is there a specification of what can be understood by 'reading experience' or 'literary works'. Even though the three standards offer teachers a great deal of freedom when designing the literature component, they present two issues. First of all, due to their general and non-prescriptive nature they do not provide any form of theoretically informed guidance for foreign language teachers. Secondly, the standards do not provide clear learning objectives which are based on benefits literature can offer language students.

English, together with Dutch and Mathematics, became a core subject in 2013, which has resulted in excessive National Exam training with expository texts and a dwindling position of literature. This development is in line with the curricular changes in Dutch secondary education since 1968 and underlines the idea of foreign language education as economically beneficial (Paran, 2008; Shanahan, 1997) where the literature component is not of primary concern.

### 2.1.2 Foreign language literature as content

The suggested reform made by the MLA in 2007 to move towards an integrated language and literature curriculum presents the option for foreign language teachers to use literature as the actual content of language classes. In this light we can view Paran's (2008) quadrant (see Figure 2.1) of the intersection of literature and language teaching, as a conceptualization of these integrated constructs.

Paran's quadrant can be regarded as a visualisation 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. The more academic *study* of literature can be understood as a literary critical approach (quadrant 3) or as a stylistic approach (quadrant 1). In the *use* of literature as a resource the main focus is the interaction a student has with the text and other students (quadrant 2).

Various researchers and practitioners have defined approaches to the inclusion of literature in foreign language curricula (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2** A selection of categorisations of foreign language literature teaching approaches

Littlewood (1986)	1 <sup>st</sup> level: language as a system of structures 2 <sup>nd</sup> level: language as a specific stylistic variety 3 <sup>rd</sup> level: language as the expression of superficial subject matter 4 <sup>th</sup> level: language as the symbolization of the author's vision 5 <sup>th</sup> level: literary work as part of literary history or of the author's biography
Sage (1987)	The educational value The linguistic importance The cultural value
Carter and Long (1991)	The Language Model The Cultural Model The Personal Growth Model
Lazar (1993)	A language-based approach Literature as content Literature for personal enrichment
Parkinson and Reid-Thomas (2000)	1 <sup>st</sup> reason: cultural enrichment 2 <sup>nd</sup> reason: rhetoric 4 <sup>th</sup> reason: language difficulty 5 <sup>th</sup> reason: authenticity and genuine samples 6 <sup>th</sup> reason: literary language is memorable 7 <sup>th</sup> : assimilation of language rhythm 8 <sup>th</sup> reason: non-trivial motivator
Maley and Duff (2007)	Linguistic factors Cultural factors Personal growth factors
Van (2009)	Approach 1: New Criticism Approach 2: Structuralism Approach 3: Stylistics Approach 4: Reader-Response Approach 5: Language-Based Approach 6: Critical Literacy
Divsar and Tahriri (2009)	Language-based Literature as content or culture Literature as personal growth or enrichment
Nance (2010)	Cross-cultural understanding and ethical engagement Critical thinking Intellectual exploration Unique language benefits
Barrette, Paesani, and Vinall (2010)	Literary analysis Stylistics Culture

Most of these categorisations are based on practitioner evidence and beliefs, which even though valuable, often lack a clear theoretical concept. In order to move this area of research forward and empirically investigate foreign language classrooms in secondary school settings, the potential of foreign language literature should first be clearly defined as well as operationalized. For this reason, we have synthesized Maley's and Paran's ideas, thereby taking into account previous categorizations of approaches such as Sage (1987) and Carter and Long (1991), which lead to four

approaches to studying foreign language literature: the Text approach, Context approach, Reader approach, and the Language approach (see Table 2.3).

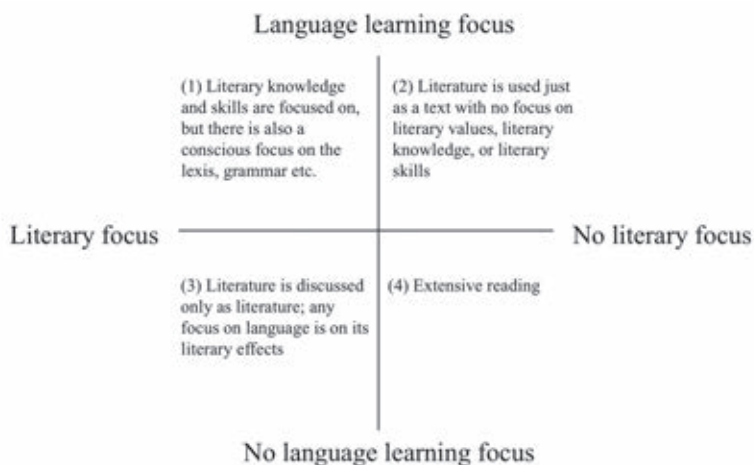


Figure 2.1 Parin's (2008) quadrant of the intersection of literature and language teaching

Table 2.3 Four approaches to foreign language literature education

Foreign language literature education			
The <i>study</i> of literature focus: the literary text		The <i>use</i> of literature as a resource focus: the student	
Text approach	Context approach	Reader approach	Language approach

The primary focus of the *study* of literature is the literary text, consisting of either the text itself (e.g. literary terms, character development) or the context surrounding the literary text (e.g. biographical details, cultural elements). The primary focus of the *use* of literature as a resource is the student, dividing into either personal development (e.g. personal interpretation, critical thinking skills) or linguistic development (e.g. vocabulary acquisition, reading skills improvement). In the next section the four approaches to foreign language literature education will be discussed in more detail.

### 2.1.2.1 Text approach

The Text approach is concerned with the teaching of the formal elements of literature, through, for example, close reading or educating students in the terminology of theoretical literary discourse. Within this approach the aesthetic

value of literature can be highlighted by advancing the students' sensitivity to literary texts through analysing literary language and conventions (Van, 2009) in order for students to learn how to read between the lines and interpret relations between linguistic forms and literary meanings (Carter & Long, 1991). Practicing interpretation skills with linguistically demanding texts is useful for making sense of all discourse (Widdowson, 1975). Having knowledge of literary terms and understanding their functions in texts can enhance comprehension (Picken, 2005). It could also allow for a more sophisticated understanding of the language, making students aware of how the use of literary terms can have an effect on the interpretation of the text (Barrette, Paesani, & Vinall, 2010).

Another aspect of importance in the Text approach is knowledge of genre and the ability to recognize and differentiate between different styles and types of texts (Van, 2009). Students at CEFR level B2 are supposed to have knowledge of “established conventions of genre” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 62) when it concerns creative writing. Moreover, students at C1 level should be able to “appreciate distinctions of style in long and complex factual and literary texts” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 62)<sup>5</sup>. Besides sensitizing students to stylistic variation, the Text approach is also concerned with the role of story structure. Understanding a text requires the reader's comprehension of how concepts within texts are related (Amer, 2003). Teaching strategies that explicitly focus on narrative text structure could enhance comprehension (Wilkinson, 1999). So-called ‘story grammars’ are formal devices that represent consistent elements found in narrative texts (Riley, 1993). By identifying these elements and their logical relationships, the reader identifies the story grammar and therefore the meta-structure of a literary text (Amer, 2003; Early & Marshall, 2008).

### **2.1.2.2 Context approach**

Another element that is suggested to be of importance when students are required “to understand contemporary prose” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 27) is the context surrounding literary works. Within the Context approach literature is regarded as a body of texts reflecting the culturally, historically, and socially rich diversities of our world (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). These diversities, contextualized in a literary work, often represent a “foreign world” (Littlewood, 1986, p. 180) to the language learner covering issues such as identity, political power, ethnicity,

<sup>5</sup> Because this Chapter is based on a paper published in 2016 we refer to the 2001 CEFR. The Companion Volume only became available in 2018.

and religion (Barrette et al., 2010; Van, 2009). Being informed about the history and demographics of literary movements as well as historical and biographical elements of a literary text could add to this contextualization and, therefore, could further understanding. Even though the world created in a literary work might appear foreign and different to language students, learning that this world is taken for granted by native speakers (Littlewood, 1986) might help develop a sense of tolerance and understanding (McKay, 1982). The imagination, interpretation, and representation of the human experience form the core of the humanities (Carter, 2007; Ceia, 2012). Culture plays a fundamental role in the interaction between language and thought (Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000). Literature not only gives access to a plethora of cultures (Hoecherl-Alden, 2006; Urlaub, 2013) but also allows for cross-cultural comparing (Gholson & Stumpf, 2005) and challenging pre-conceived notions of culture (Costello, 1990) thereby promoting intercultural and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2014; Kramersch, 1998).

### **2.1.2.3 Reader approach**

A Reader approach to literary texts does not only emphasise specific attention to the reader as an independent maker of meaning (Amer, 2003), but could also encourage foreign language students to step outside their comfort zone and experiment with looking at familiar as well as unfamiliar situations in a critical way. Foreign language literature classes can support students develop a so-called Theory of Mind (Dumontheil, Apperly, & Blakemore, 2010), especially because of the often unfamiliar contexts of literary works written in a foreign language. In other words, through discussing a literary text in the foreign language classroom, students are invited to analyse how people from different parts of the world where the target language is spoken have beliefs, desires, and perspectives that might be different from their own. This could not only enhance foreign language students' translingual and transcultural competence (Barrette et al., 2010; Modern Language Association, 2007) but can also be seen as an essential in understanding contemporary prose (Council of Europe, 2001).

The third core curriculum standard where students are required to report about their reading experiences is in line with Reader Response Theory, where students learn that their position as a reader cannot be disengaged from the meaning of the text (Amer, 2003). The very nature of literature with its multiple levels of meaning invites students to actively 'tease out' the unstated implications and assumptions of the text (Lazar, 1993) since in a literature class information does not come "ready

packaged, neatly arranged, or prepared for easy consumption” (Nance, 2010, p. 4). Furthermore, specific implementation of reader response techniques is claimed to enforce reading pleasure (Lao & Krashen, 2000), and supports positive self-awareness in students (Lazar, 1996).

#### **2.1.2.4 Language approach**

The Language approach focuses on the use of literature in language education as a vehicle presenting genuine and undistorted language (Lao & Krashen, 2000). One interpretation of this approach is extensive reading: “the ability to read long texts for extended periods of time” (Grabe, 2009, p. 311). Extensive reading provides foreign language students with opportunities to see how language works in extended discourse. Various studies (see Grabe, 2009) have demonstrated that long-term extensive reading has a positive influence on reading rates (Beglar et al., 2012), reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009), and vocabulary acquisition, such as the *Clockwork Orange Studies* (Pitts, White, & Krashen, 1989). Because extensive reading maximizes repeated exposure to specific uses of the target language, the social and contextualized usage of linguistic structures essentially facilitates the process of the emergence of linguistic skills and literacy (Warford & White, 2012).

Another interpretation of the Language approach to literary texts in the foreign language classroom is mining a text for its language. Literary texts can be a potentially rich source of input for language learners (Krashen, 1981; Nance, 2010; Widdowson, 1975) because it helps to entail a substantial supply of meaningful language in a variety of registers, styles, and text types (Lao & Krashen, 2000). Concentrating on specific use of the language, such as connotation, figurative use of language, or word order, could potentially extend the student’s “range of syntactic patterns, developing a feel for textual cohesion and coherence, and a sense of linguistic appropriacy” (Maley & Duff, 2007, p. 5).

#### **2.1.3 A Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning**

We consider literature to be an intrinsic part of languages that can provide rich and valuable content for foreign language students. Each of the four previously described approaches postulates several distinct benefits for foreign language students and could be regarded as conceptually separate and even be studied in isolation or in combination. However, we assume that the four approaches function as a unified whole and that there is a reciprocal relationship between



the Text, Context, Reader, and Language approach. We therefore suggest that a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning in which all four approaches are addressed in an interrelated way could enrich the foreign language literature lessons and enhance student learning. Other studies that promote the idea of integrated literature curricula are for example Barrette et al. (2010), Hoecherl-Alden (2006), Macleroy (2013), and Paesani & Allen (2012).

With regard to the uneasy position of foreign language literature curricula in Dutch secondary education and in response to Paran's (2008) call for empirical research in secondary foreign language classrooms, this study reports on a survey ( $n = 106$  Dutch EFL teachers in secondary education) providing insight into how literature is approached in the EFL lessons. Furthermore, due to the huge amount of curricular freedom of foreign language literature curricula in the Netherlands, we explore whether teacher demographics, such as level of education and/or years of teaching experience, and curricular factors, such as the number of hours literature is taught per year and/or the final percentage of the literature component in the foreign language literature curriculum, are related to how literature is approached in these lessons. This study was therefore guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do EFL teachers approach literature at pre-university level in Dutch secondary education?
2. Which teacher demographics and curricular factors are significantly related to the reported occurrence of the four foreign language literary teaching approaches?

## **2.2 Method**

### **2.2.1 Instrument**

In an attempt to operationalize the Text, Context, Reader, and Language approaches, we constructed a list of initial underlying elements for each approach. These elements were based on: a literature review; previous categorizations of foreign language literature teaching approaches (e.g. Carter & Long, 1991; Sage, 1987); the three Dutch Core Curriculum Standards for foreign language literature; the CEFR; a priori introspection; and the researcher's professional experience as an English language teacher and her current job as an ELT teacher trainer in

which she provided several workshops and lectures which centred around foreign language literature approaches.

The initial underlying elements were part of a questionnaire (see Appendix I) that provided the data for this study. In order to ensure that our formulation of the elements was unambiguous, we conducted several consecutive Thinking Aloud Protocols with Dutch foreign language teacher trainers ( $n = 3$ ), so-called peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and Dutch EFL secondary school teachers ( $n = 4$ ), so-called member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One by one the participants were asked to read the predetermined elements out loud and interpret them in their own words. During every protocol notes were taken and after every protocol the elements were refined when necessary and presented to the next participant. A total of seven consecutive protocols were conducted in this way until no more refinements were necessary. The protocols were of a deductive nature; the aim was to refine our interpretation and formulation of the four approaches and underlying practical elements. For this reason, we did not include participants' background information nor did we provide room for their personal beliefs during the protocols.

Table 2.4 presents the 20 initial elements as well as the Dutch Core Curriculum Standards and the CEFR descriptions for the required language levels.

We then designed an online questionnaire using the programme Unipark. Teachers were sent a link to the questionnaire in May 2013 and were invited to complete the questionnaire within a month. They were invited to fill out the questionnaire for each of the final 3 years of pre-university level they were teaching (see Appendix I). The language of the questions as well as instructions was in Dutch. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity in the research.

**Table 2.4** Detailed overview of the four foreign language literature teaching approaches

	Initial elements (summarised)	Dutch Core Curriculum Standards for foreign language Literature	Common European Framework Reference (2001)
Text approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Literary terminology</li> <li>2. Recognising text types</li> <li>3. Distinguishing text types</li> <li>4. Storyline</li> <li>5. Character development</li> <li>6. Who, what and where</li> </ol>	The student can recognize and distinguish literary text types and can use literary terms when interpreting literary texts	<p>B1 level: relate the plot of book or film and describe reactions in a sustained monologue</p> <p>B2 level: following established conventions of the genre concerned in creative writing</p> <p>B2 level: understand contemporary literary prose</p> <p>C1 level: appreciating distinctions of style in long and complex factual and literary texts</p>
Context approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Literary periods</li> <li>8. Literary history</li> <li>9. Historical aspects of a literary work</li> <li>10. Cultural aspects of a literary work</li> <li>11. Social and societal aspects of a literary work</li> <li>12. Information about the author</li> <li>13. Biographical aspects of a literary work</li> </ol>	The student can give an overview of the main events of literary history and can place the studied works in this historic perspective	B2 level: understand contemporary literary prose
Reader approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Reading pleasure</li> <li>15. Student's personal reaction</li> <li>16. Critically report on reading experiences</li> <li>17. Critical thinking skills</li> </ol>	The student can report about their reading experiences of at least three literary works with clear arguments	<p>B1 level: relate the plot of book or film and describe reactions in a sustained monologue</p> <p>B2 level: understand contemporary literary prose</p>
Language approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. English linguistic aspects in a literary text</li> <li>19. Making reading miles to improve language skills<sup>6</sup></li> <li>20. English vocabulary in a literary text</li> </ol>		<p>B1 level: relate the plot of book or film and describe reactions in a sustained monologue</p> <p>B2 level: understand contemporary literary prose</p>

### 2.2.2 Participants

Contact details of Dutch secondary schools that offer education at pre-university level were collected via online searches. Heads of Department were sent an email with the request to forward an invitation to participate to the EFL teachers who were teaching pre-university level in 2012 - 2013. Furthermore, an invitation to participate was also posted on an online platform ([www.digischool.nl](http://www.digischool.nl)). A total of 106 teachers filled out the questionnaire for 1 year, 18 teachers filled out two

<sup>6</sup> Translated from the Dutch: 'leeskilometers maken'. This refers to the notion of the benefits of extensive reading for the language development of foreign language students.

questionnaires for 2 years, and 10 teachers filled out three questionnaires, one for each of the three years. This resulted in the following number of responses for each of the 3 years: year 4:  $n = 54$ , year 5:  $n = 55$ , year 6:  $n = 63$ . Table 2.5 presents an overview of the four teacher demographics of the 106 teachers who filled out the questionnaire. The majority of the teachers were female (70%) and university educated (69%)<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the average number of years of teaching experience of the teachers was 13 but ranged between 0 and 40 which corresponds with the age range between 25 and 63.

**Table 2.5** *Teacher demographics*

Gender	Male (30%)	Female (70%)
Education	University (69%)	Higher Professional Education (31%)
Years of teaching experience at pre-university level	0 – 40 years	$M$ 13.44 $SD$ 10.97
Age	25 – 63 years	$M$ 46.65 $SD$ 10.61

### 2.2.3 Analytical procedure

In order to answer the first research question, participants were asked how often the 20 elements occurred in their EFL literature lessons. They were asked to mark their responses on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). The decision for an even scale was made to rule out the option for answering without considering the item or avoiding making a real choice (Dörnyei, 2003).

We calculated the reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of the scales measuring the average reported occurrence in literature lessons during one school year (September 2012 - June 2013) to see if the items of the four approaches each formed a reliable scale. Since it is our understanding that in a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning the four approaches can be regarded as a unified whole, we also needed to assess the existence of the reciprocal relationship between the four approaches. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

7 Initial teacher training programmes in the Netherlands are provided at institutions of Higher Professional Education (HBO) and at universities. The HBO teacher training course for secondary education is a practically oriented 4-year programme, which leads to a grade two qualification, allowing teachers to teach in the first three years of secondary education. After this 4-year-programme teachers can continue to obtain a vocational Master's degree which will provide them with a grade one qualification, which allows teachers to teach in all years of secondary education (years 1 – 6). The university training programme is a postgraduate programme open to university graduate students who have taken a Master's degree in a subject closely related to the subject they wish to teach and leads to a grade one qualification.

(CFA) was selected as the most appropriate statistical method to test whether the four approaches together represent one underlying construct because judgments were made a priori regarding the latent variables of the study.

Furthermore, we employed *t*-tests and correlation analyses to calculate whether several variables are significantly related to the average reported occurrence for each of the four approaches. It is standard practice to use a *p* value threshold of .05 for the decision as to whether a difference is significant or not. All data were processed and analysed using SPSS software.

## 2.3 Results

We first calculated the reliability of the scale of each of the four approaches in order to explore whether the elements could be considered to form a scale. The

**Table 2.6** *Four approaches to foreign language literature education and the 20 underlying initial elements*

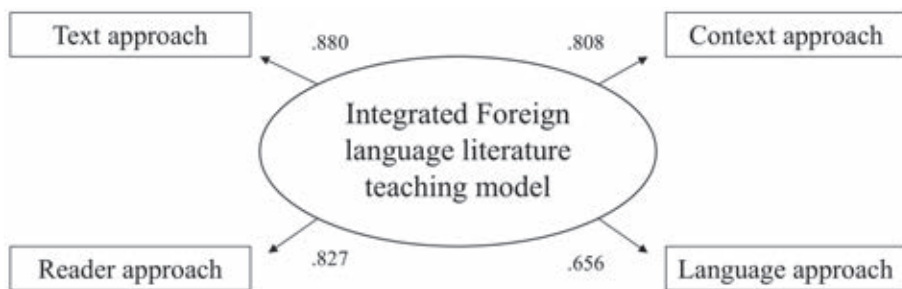
	<i>M*</i>	( <i>SD</i> )
<i>Text approach</i> (Cronbach $\alpha = .87$ )		
Storyline	4.54	(1.35)
Character development	4.30	(1.35)
Who, what, and where	4.28	(1.44)
Recognising text types	4.08	(1.37)
Distinguishing text types	4.05	(1.31)
Literary terminology	3.77	(1.45)
<i>Context approach</i> (Cronbach $\alpha = .88$ )		
Historical aspects of a literary work	4.07	(1.52)
Social and societal aspects of a literary work	3.83	(1.33)
Cultural aspects of a literary work	3.80	(1.33)
Literary history	3.46	(1.59)
Literary periods	3.39	(1.46)
Information about the author	3.20	(1.22)
Biographical aspects of a literary work	3.15	(1.27)
<i>Reader approach</i> (Cronbach $\alpha = .81$ )		
Student's personal reaction	4.33	(1.27)
Critical thinking skills	4.13	(1.30)
Reading pleasure	4.02	(1.39)
Critically report on reading experiences	3.65	(1.50)
<i>Language approach</i> (Cronbach $\alpha = .61$ )		
Making reading miles to improve language skills	4.05	(1.37)
English vocabulary in a literary text	3.68	(1.35)
English linguistic aspects in a literary text	2.89	(1.48)

\* 1 = never; 6 = always

coefficients in Table 2.6 show a range from relatively high (.88) to almost sufficient (.61) for evidence of internal consistency for each of the four approaches. The reliability analysis of the scale of the language approach showed that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  would be .64 if item 'making reading miles to improve language skills' would be deleted, which is slightly higher than the reliability coefficient obtained with all three items (Cronbach  $\alpha = .61$ ). However, we deemed the content of this item of such importance that we decided not to eliminate this item from the scale.

### 2.3.1 Four approaches and one construct

In order to determine our understanding of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning in which the four approaches are considered unified, we ran a Confirmatory Factor Analysis. CFA focuses on whether and the extent to which the four approaches are linked to the underlying latent trait (i.e. a Comprehensive Approach). Figure 2.2 shows the factor loadings of the four approaches regarding a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning.



CFI = .983; TLI = .949; SMRM = .025;  $n = 169$

**Figure 2.2** Results of the CFA regarding a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning

Following the recommendations of Hu & Bentler (1999), the adequacy of model fit was evaluated on at least two statistics: a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of  $>.95$  and a Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of  $<.05$  indicates a good fit. Furthermore, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) value closest to 1.0 is also an indicator of a well-fitting model (Byrne, 2012). Results in Figure 2.2 show that the CFA resulted in a good fit of the model. The Text approach (.880) appears to have the strongest

link to a Comprehensive Approach, followed by the Reader (.827) and Context approaches (.808). The lower contribution of the Language approach (.646) might be due to the relatively low reliability because of the low number of items of the language scale. This validates our model of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning which includes a Text, Context, Reader, and Language approach.

### 2.3.2 Research question 1

With regard to the huge amount of curricular freedom foreign language teachers have with the literature component in Dutch secondary schools we investigated how EFL teachers approach literature. Table 2.7 shows the reported occurrences of the four approaches. Marked on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*), the difference between the highest mean score for the Text approach (4.18) and the lowest mean score for the Language approach (3.55) is .63, which is considered small. For each of the four approaches some participants indicated that the approach *never* occurred in their EFL literature lessons. However, each of the four approaches have also been indicated to *always* occur in these lessons. These results show that, on average, each of the four approaches occur *regularly* in the EFL literature lessons, but there is also a wide range in the way EFL literature is approached.

**Table 2.7** Descriptives of the reported occurrences of the four foreign language literature teaching approaches

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Text approach	4.18	1.07	1.00	6.00
Context approach	3.56	1.07	1.00	6.00
Reader approach	4.03	1.09	1.00	6.00
Language approach	3.55	1.06	1.00	6.00

### 2.3.3 Research question 2

In order to answer our second research question, we investigated whether several teacher demographics and/or curricular factors are significantly related to the average reported occurrence of the four approaches.

#### 2.3.3.1 Teacher demographics

We employed a two-tailed *t*-test to find out whether there are significant differences between gender and level of education and the average reported occurrence of the four approaches (see Table 2.8).

**Table 2.8** *t*-test values of variables gender and level of education

Gender	Approach		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Sig.
Gender	Text	<i>Male</i>	4.03	1.20	0.42
		<i>Female</i>	4.19	1.05	
	Context	<i>Male</i>	3.70	1.04	0.25
		<i>Female</i>	3.48	1.07	
	Reader	<i>Male</i>	3.89	1.13	0.43
		<i>Female</i>	4.04	1.10	
Language	<i>Male</i>	3.51	0.96	0.95	
	<i>Female</i>	3.50	1.07		
Education	Text	<i>Higher Professional</i>	4.16	1.04	0.86
		<i>University</i>	4.18	1.13	
	Context	<i>Higher Professional</i>	3.57	1.06	0.73
		<i>University</i>	3.51	1.10	
	Reader	<i>Higher Professional</i>	4.12	1.06	0.13
		<i>University</i>	3.85	1.14	
	Language	<i>Higher Professional</i>	3.55	1.04	0.95
		<i>University</i>	3.54	1.10	

*t*-test, two-tailed

Table 2.8 shows that no significant results were found for gender or for level of education. This means that there are no significant differences between the way male and female EFL teachers approach literature. Similarly, there are no significant differences between teachers who received their teacher training at an institute for Higher Professional Education or at a university.

The results of a Pearson's correlation analysis of the variables age and years of teaching experience are presented in Table 2.9.

**Table 2.9** *Correlations between age and years of teaching experience and literature approaches*

	Age	Years of teaching experience
Text approach	-.02	-.01
Context approach	.18*	.07
Reader approach	.09	.08
Language approach	-.04	-.03

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

The results show only one significant weak correlation between age and the Context approach ( $r = .18, p < .05$ ); older teachers seem to spend slightly more time on this approach than younger teachers. We did not find a significant correlation between the way literature is approached and the number of years of teaching experience.



### 2.3.3.2 Curricular factors

We investigated the following three curricular factors: the difference in average occurrence of the four approaches between years 4, 5, and 6; the number of literature lessons taught per year; and the percentage of the literature component for the final English mark. The results presented in Table 2.10 show that each of the three curricular factors are to a certain extent significantly related to one or more of the four approaches. For this reason, each of the three curricular factors will be discussed in the sections below.

**Table 2.10** *Correlations between curricular factors and teaching approaches*

	Years 4, 5, and 6	Number of literature lessons per year	Percentage of the literature component for the final English mark
Text approach	.06	.23**	.32**
Context approach	.26**	.34**	.30**
Reader approach	.08	-.12	.14
Language approach	-.03	.19*	.08

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

As Table 2.10 indicates, there is a significant relation between the average occurrence for the Context approach and the difference between years 4, 5, and 6 ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This means that teachers reported spending more time on the context approach the higher the year they were teaching. We did not find significant relations between the three years and the Text, Reader, and Language approach.

Results from the questionnaire informed us that there is an enormous variation between schools regarding the number of literature lessons taught on a yearly basis; with a minimum of 0 hours and a maximum of 120 hours per year. As expected, the correlation analysis shows that there is a significant relation between the number of literature lessons per year and the average occurrence for the Text ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Context ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the Language approach ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These results indicate that when teachers teach more hours of literature per year, the reported occurrence for three approaches is higher. The amount of lesson time spent on the Reader approach decreases slightly but not significantly when more lesson time is spent on literature.

Similar to the number of literature lessons per year, the percentage of the literature component for the final English mark also differs massively between schools (between 0 and 60%). The results show that the percentage of the literature

component for the final English mark is significantly related to the average reported occurrence for the Text ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ) and Context ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ) approaches. In other words, an increase in this percentage means a significant increase in the amount of lesson time spent on the Text and Context approach.

## 2.4 Discussion

Previous research regarding foreign language literature education has often theorized what the benefits are of foreign language literature education without converting these theoretical constructs into measurable variables. In order to move this area of research forward, we have not only conceptualized four approaches to foreign language literature education, but we have also operationalized and validated them in a secondary school setting. The reliability of the scales of each of the four approaches range from acceptable to relatively high and results from a CFA inform us that our understanding of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning seems to represent one underlying construct.

Current research in the field of foreign language literature education is moving in the direction of empirically researching a selection of the acclaimed benefits largely in the context of higher education. Following Paran's (2008) call for more empirical research in secondary education, translating our conceptualization into 20 underlying elements enabled us to research how Dutch EFL teachers in secondary education approach literature in their lessons. The way the foreign language literature curriculum is currently organized and the nature of the non-prescriptive parameters of the three core curriculum standards provide a lot of freedom for foreign language teachers. On average, each approach was reported to occur regularly in the EFL lessons, but the wide range in the way literature was approached also indicates vast differences. Even though foreign language teachers generally enjoy this high level of independence when designing the literature component, it could also cause uncertainty inherent in equivocal situations, such as the ambiguity of the three Core Curriculum Standards. Another issue that this level of diversity raises is the degree of transparency and concerns regarding quality control. In the current situation it is fairly impossible for students, teachers, and school boards to measure the quality of the foreign language literature component.

The correlation analyses and *t*-tests provided us with more details regarding the relation of various teacher demographics and curricular factors on the reported occurrence of the four approaches. The data informed us that the way foreign language literature is approached in the lessons is not significantly related to the gender, years of teaching experience, or education of the teachers. This could be explained by a phenomenon we describe as *curricular heritage*: teachers start working at a new school and ‘inherit’ the existing curriculum. Due to factors such as tradition, showing respect towards colleagues, lack of financial means, or lack of experience, new teachers adopt the existing curriculum and teach accordingly. Another explanation could be the way literature curricula are designed; in case of joint effort this could lead to consensus in curricular decisions.

Albeit not very strong, we did find that the age of the teacher is slightly related to the time spent on the Context approach. A reason for this could be their personal experience as secondary school or higher education/ university students; the focus of foreign language literature curricula used to be rather Context approach heavy (de Melker, 1970; Wilhelm, 2005).

The Context approach also stood out when we examined the following curricular factors: the difference in average occurrence of the four approaches between years 4, 5, and 6; the number of literature lessons taught per year; and the percentage of the literature component for the final English mark. The Context approach was the only approach that significantly related to each of these curricular factors and it was the only approach that significantly related to the difference between the three years. An increasing amount of lesson time is spent on this approach when students move from one year to the next, which could be linked to the third Core Curriculum Standard which requires students to have an overview of literary history and asks students to place studied works in a historic perspective. The increasing experience students have with foreign language literature and their increasing language levels could be relevant in explaining this significant relation. On the other hand, the fact that most of the approaches did not correlate significantly with the difference between the three years is not surprising, since the three standards are not associated with any particular year.

The Reader approach did not significantly relate with any of the three curricular factors. One possible reason for this could be the way literature is tested; questions related to personal opinion and development might be harder to grade than questions related to the Text or Context approach. This assumption is underlined when looking at the results of the percentage of the literature component for the

final English mark and the four approaches. The higher the percentage, the more lesson time is spent on the Text and Context approach.

Examining the data, we can conclude that the way foreign language literature is approached in the lessons is mainly due to curricular factors and not teacher demographics, which emphasises our interpretation of *curricular heritage*. This brings us to a few limitations that should be highlighted. First of all, because this study has employed self-report questionnaires, sampling relied on self-selection of participants which could lead to a lack of representativeness and therefore to biased estimates. Besides the obvious disadvantages of self-report questionnaires, the retrospective focus of the questionnaire could have further obscured the data since teachers were asked in May/June 2013 to reflect on their teaching from September 2012 till May/June 2013.

## 2.5 Conclusion

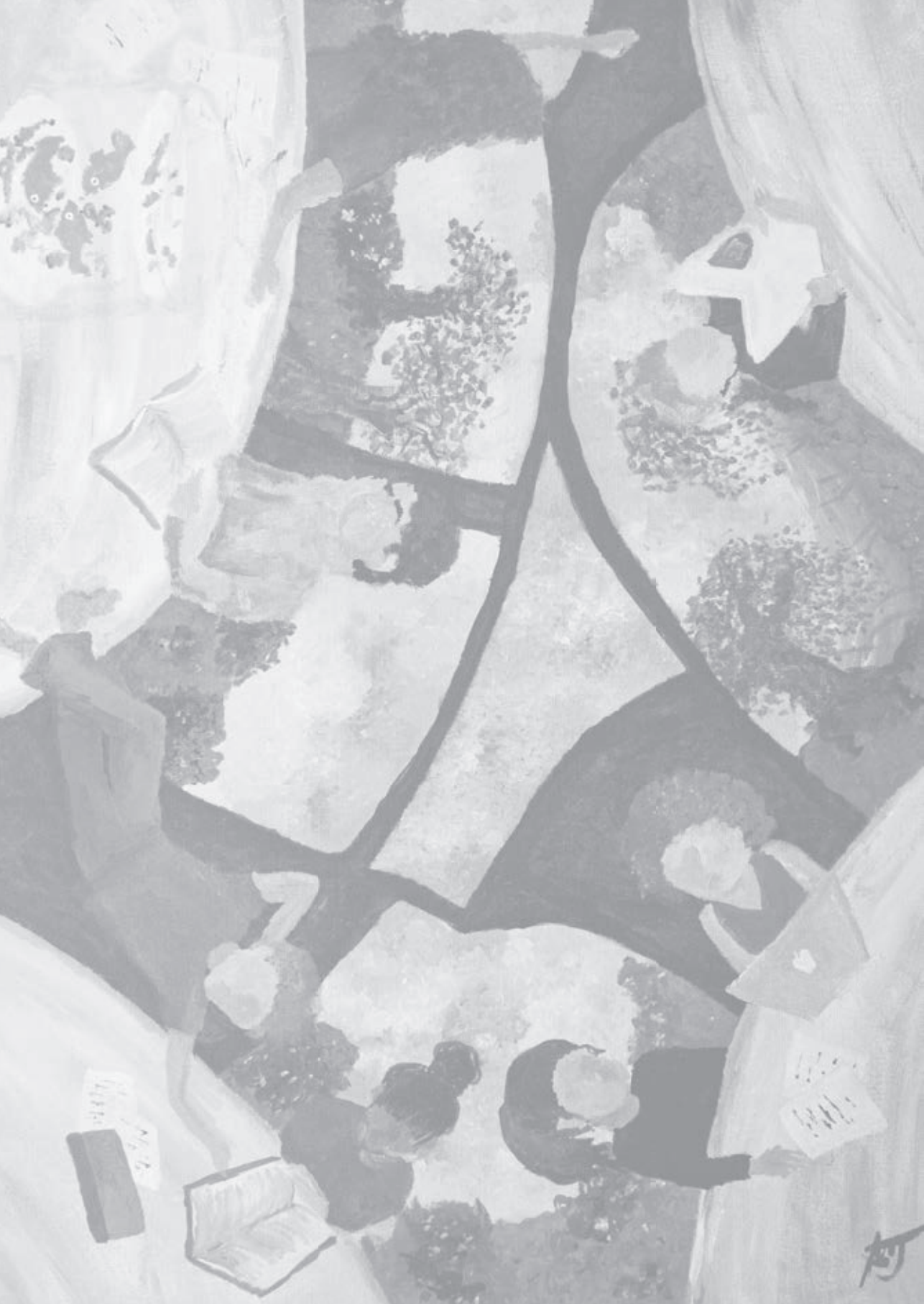
The EFL literature component in Dutch secondary education is not so much an ‘unwanted guest’ or an ‘unwelcome ghost’ but it does occupy an uneasy position in the otherwise carefully structured foreign language curricula. The findings of this study indicate huge differences between foreign language teachers regarding the amount of time they spent on literature and, more specifically, on the four approaches. Furthermore, we can conclude that the way EFL literature is approached is related to several curricular factors and is not related to teacher demographics, with the exception of the relation between the age of the teacher and the time spent on the Context approach.

Our conceptualization of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning in which we distinguish a Text, Context, Reader, and Language approach is a pragmatic interpretation of educational programmes that promote integrated curricula. In the current utilitarian setting with its focus on expository text comprehension, explicating the benefits foreign language literature can offer language students by implementing this Comprehensive Approach might be a good way to reverse the dwindling position foreign language literature is finding itself in.

We suggest that implementing a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning could enrich literature lessons as well as increase foreign language students’ understanding of contemporary literary

prose. Even though substantial care was taken in designing the initial elements, we need to make sure that foreign language students also have a very clear and unambiguous understanding of the various approaches and underlying elements. This implies that future research should first and foremost validate these practical elements with foreign language students if we wish them to fully benefit from the literature lessons they are offered. Furthermore, little to nothing is known about how foreign language teacher trainees are instructed to teach literature or what foreign language students' preferences are with regard to the literature lessons. This means that in order to work towards a Comprehensive foreign language literature curriculum, we need to obtain more detailed data at secondary school level regarding the way literature is taught and tested and we need to take the three elements *audience*, *purpose*, and *context* into serious consideration.





# CHAPTER 3

## **Connecting Students and Researchers: The Secondary School Student's Voice in Foreign Language Education Research**

This chapter is based on: Bloemert, J., Paran, A. & Jansen, E. (accepted).  
Connecting Students and Researchers: The Secondary School Student's  
Voice in Foreign Language Education Research.  
*Cambridge Journal of Education.*



## **Abstract**

The inclusion of the student voice in foreign language research often relies mainly on a perspective that includes their voice as a data source, in spite of claims that the perspectives that include students as initiators should be at the fore. In this chapter, we address the incongruity of this situation, arguing for a revision of current views. We discuss different conceptualizations of student voice in educational research, and argue that combinations of different perspectives on student voice provide unique insights that are necessary to develop our knowledge base. We then provide a detailed account of an empirical study in which an English as a foreign language (EFL) literature teaching and learning model was validated through collaboration and co-construction with secondary school students. We demonstrate the ways in which two different perspectives were combined within the project, resulting in a dialogical process, which then lends multidimensional support to the findings.

### 3.1 Introduction

Despite the increasing interest in actively engaging students in research in subject areas such as sociology and education, in foreign language research students are either routinely excluded or primarily involved as objects of study (Pinter, 2014; Pinter & Zandian, 2014). However, excluding the voice of students from research leads to an incomplete picture of the educational system. Indeed, Cook-Sather (2002) argues that there is “something fundamentally amiss about building and rebuilding an entire system without consulting at any point those it is ostensibly designed to serve” (p. 3). Such participation, however, is not self-evident (Könings, Brand-Gruwel, & van Merriënboer, 2005), and it was only in the late 70s and early 80s, that the exclusion of student voice was noted by several educators and educational researchers (Cook-Sather, 2006). The prevalent image of students was, and unfortunately sometimes still is, as passive recipients of education determined by others (Lodge, 2005; for a brief historical overview see McCallum, Hargreaves, & Gipps, 2000). Remarkably, this is in spite of the student-centred approaches of pedagogues from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as John Dewey and Janusz Korczak who implored educational researchers and teachers to “listen to students and to be *alive* to their thinking and learning” (Dewey, 1933, p.56).

The different ways in which student voice can be included in research have been described in a variety of typologies, which place student voice on a continuum from practically no involvement through to learner-initiated research. Typical of these typologies is that they are generally hierarchical, moving from lower to higher levels, and suggesting that rather than viewing learners as providers of data, more value should be placed on learners as initiators of research. However, the overwhelming majority of educational research in general includes student voice primarily as data providers, which is generally perceived as the lowest level (Pinter, Mathew, & Smith, 2016).

In this chapter we extend the discussion of the inclusion of student voice in research in two ways. Firstly, we argue that the leading hierarchical ideas mentioned above and the prevalent current practice result in a mono-dimensional and limited view of including the student’s voice in research. We present different approaches to the issue and propose that including the student’s voice from different perspectives will enhance research and will “open up unchartered territories” (Pinter, 2014, p. 180). Our second contribution takes this theoretical position and provides a detailed example of a study in which this involvement was brought

about, explaining how we integrated the student voice into the development of a model of English as a foreign language (EFL) literature teaching and learning in the context of Dutch secondary education.

In much of the literature the concern is with either learners who are children or with learners who are adults. In our own study the learners are teenagers and young adults (age 15 - 18). Nevertheless, we use the generic term *student* because we believe that the underlying principles discussed in the literature and the issues we highlight apply to all age groups.

### **3.1.1 The importance of student voice research**

Including student voice in the design (and re-design) of educational curricula can have a positive impact on the instructional environment (Brown, 2009; Könings, Brand-Gruwel, & van Merriënboer, 2005; Vermunt & Verloop, 1999) because the way students perceive their learning environment has an effect on the way they approach learning and thereby the quality of the actual learning outcomes (Entwistle & Tait, 1990). However, how students and teachers perceive the instructional environment does not always align. For example, in a study where students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching were compared, Brown (2009) found that whereas students favour a grammar-based approach, the teachers favoured a more communicative approach to language learning. These significant discrepancies need to be addressed in order to avoid so-called destructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999) and move toward a situation of congruence, a situation preferred by students (Vermetten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 2002).

An important distinction is made by Charteris and Smardon (2018), who emphasize that it is likely that students enact agency differently as a function of the type of discourse on student voice: institutionally focused discourses, or learner-oriented discourses. Within institutionally focused discourses, which Charteris and Smardon (2018) identified as governmentality, accountability, and institutional transformation and reform, student voice is used as a means to monitor effectiveness and quality assurance, focusing on “the transformation of schooling settings to raise student achievement” (Charteris & Smardon, 2018, p. 8). In learner-oriented discourses, however, students are active participators or co-researchers engaging in “student-teacher partnerships where there is a joint construction of knowledge” (Charteris & Smardon, 2018, p.10). This second type of discourse distinguishes learner agency, personalised learning, and radical

collegiality. In learner agency discourse, students determine their own learning, make their own decisions, and “take action demonstrating command of personal, social and discursive resources” (Charteris & Smardon, 2018, p. 100). A discourse of personalised learning describes the ability to recognise the voice of students in order to be able to make the connection between the learning process and each individual student’s experiences. And a discourse of radical collegiality suggests shared power relations where a student’s consultative participation is valued (Charteris & Smardon, 2018). It is with this type of discourse that we align ourselves in this current chapter.

### 3.1.2 Perspectives of student voice inclusion in educational research

In 1992, Hart published an essay commissioned by UNICEF in which he reported a way of analysing the involvement of young people in society along a specific continuum. This so-called *Ladder of Participation* diagram, designed to “serve as a beginning typology for thinking about children’s participation in projects” (Hart, 1992, p. 9), consists of eight degrees of participation (including non-participation; see Table 3.1). Hart’s (1992) typology has been uniquely influential, reproduced and adapted in different fields, especially public health (Funk, van Borek, Taylor, Grewal, Tzemis, & Buxton, 2012; Moules & O’Brien, 2012), but also in the field of education, such as Wyse (2001), or as the object of research in Horwath, Efrosini, and Spyros (2012). Hart’s typology has also been influential in adaptations that took a different angle, such as Treseder (1997), who developed a circular model (as opposed to Hart’s linear ladder) or Kirby, Lanyon, Cronin, and Sinclair (2003) who proposed four different categories of participation.

Focusing on the field of educational research and reform, several of these adaptations have been developed over the years in order to understand the various ways in which student voice can be included. In Table 3.1, we present Hart’s typology as well as four additional ones, all of which focus on secondary education. This selection is not intended as a systematic review or to achieve theoretical saturation, but rather as a comparison of a number of important typologies within the field of educational research and reform originating from different educational contexts in different countries (i.e. Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom) and developed at different times over more than a decade (between 1992 and 2005). Lee and Zimmerman (1999), introduce their student voice continuum as part of the Manitoba School Improvement Program in Canada. Holdsworth (2000), a former secondary school teacher and researcher, discusses two arenas

of student participation, namely school governance and curriculum development, in an Australian secondary school context. Fielding (2001), presents a student voice typology, exemplified by longitudinal research project that took place in two secondary schools in the United Kingdom. And finally, Lodge (2005) explores the value of student voice in school improvement. She first presents a matrix in which an approach to student voice can be analysed along two dimensions, which is followed by an analysis of three projects that took place in primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom. An analysis of these typologies reveals that each typology contains three distinct perspectives, which we have labelled: *Learners as data source*, *Learners in dialogue*, and *Learners as initiators*.

The *Learners as data source* perspective describes the inclusion of student voice as information-providing. Within this perspective, students get the chance to voice their opinion or understanding of a certain concept without the option of engaging in a conversation. The *Learners in dialogue* perspective, however, concentrates on the dialogue between students and, for example, researchers or teachers. Within this dialogue, students are valued as co-creators of knowledge. The difference between the *Learners in dialogue* and the *Learners as initiators* perspectives is that, in the first, the initiative is taken by the researcher or teacher, whereas in the second, the initiative is taken by the students.

Apart from Lee and Zimmerman (1999), the typologies presented in Table 3.1 are explicitly hierarchical when it comes to valuing the different perspectives. Hart (1992) distinguishes eight degrees, labelling the first three as “models of non-participation” (p. 9) and the following five as “models of genuine participation” (p. 11). Fielding (2001) also argues, that “the students as researchers mode is linked to a set of assumptions and values that are preferable to the other three levels” (Fielding, 2001, p. 137). Although less explicit, Holdsworth (2000) mentions that levels such as ‘Being heard’, can be used to give decisions-makers the feeling that they are doing the right thing. That this sense of including student voice through so-called ‘Tokenism’ (Hart, 1992) seems to be the shared objection against the *Learners as data source* perspective is exemplified by Lodge (2005) who suggests that when students’ voice is included merely as a data source they become simply “consumers providing feedback” (p. 132).

In contrast to the *Learners as data source* perspective, Hart (1992), Holdsworth (2000), Fielding (2001), and Lodge (2005) argue that what we have called the *Learner in dialogue* and the *Learner as initiator* perspectives do suggest some level of active and constructive involvement. This assumes that students have agency

**Table 3.1** Selection of typologies focusing on secondary education identifying three perspectives of student voice inclusion

	Hart (1992)	Lee & Zimmerman (1999)	Holdsworth (2000)	Fielding (2001)	Lodge (2005)
Perspective 1: Learners as data source	Manipulation Decoratation Tokenism Assigned but informed	Passive (information source)	Speaking out Being heard Being listened to	Students as data source	Quality control Students as a source of information Compliance and control
Perspective 2: Learners in dialogue	Consulted and informed Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children	Active (participant)	Being listened to seriously with respect Incorporating view into action taken by others Shared decision-making, implementation of action & reflection with young people	Students as active respondents Students as co-researchers	Dialogic
Perspective 3: Learners as initiators	Child-initiated and directed Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Directive (designer)		Students as researchers (initiators)	

and are able to initiate their own volitional actions “to change the terms and the outcomes of the conversation about educational policy and practice” (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 12). Fielding (2001) for example considers his *Students as co-researchers* level as an opportunity for students and teachers to co-operate, acknowledging “the legitimacy of both perspectives and (...) the necessity of their reciprocally conditioning joint pursuit” (p. 131). For Lodge (2005), just like Holdsworth (2000), dialogue is the highest form of involving students’ perspectives because, she argues, “through dialogue all members of the school will learn more about learning than they could have learned on their own” (p. 135). However, other researchers, such as Hart (1992) and Fielding (2001) argue that the highest form of including student voice in research is placing the students in the position of initiating researchers, the *Learners as initiators* perspective. A counterargument however is given by Lee and Zimmerman (1999) who argue that their Student Voice Continuum “is not intended to suggest that all schools need to have students involved at the directive end” because “factors of readiness, context, and resources” (p. 35) will have an effect on the extent to which students can be involved.

In the *Learners in dialogue* perspective, we will follow Lodge’s (2005) definition of dialogue as a shared narrative, where through engagement, openness and honesty, participants arrive at a point they would otherwise not get to alone. Defining dialogue this way links in with what Burbules and Bruce (2002) call a contemporary vision of dialogue in that it is “egalitarian, open-ended, politically empowering, and based on the co-construction of knowledge” (p. 1102). According to Burbules (1993), two kinds of distinctions need to be considered when discussing dialogical situations: dialogue in its relation to knowledge and the attitude toward one’s partner in dialogue. With regard to the first distinction, one can hold a convergent or a divergent view of dialogue. Within a convergent view, the dialogical process strives toward a particular epistemic endpoint whereas in a divergent view we observe the coexistence of plural meanings as well as ambiguous connotations. In the second distinction, Burbules (1993) defines a critical and an inclusive attitude toward one’s partner in communication. A critical attitude emphasizes a sceptical and judgmental position whereas an inclusive attitude focuses on understanding the outlook and experiences of one’s partner. For example, an inquiry, (where the aim is generally to solve a specific problem or answer a specific question), is regarded more critical and convergent, whereas a conversation is more inclusive and divergent, aiming for intersubjective comprehension (Burbules, 1993). Considering the fact that “dialogue is not just

one thing” (Burbules, 1993, p. 110), a careful selection of the form of dialogue should be considered depending on the goal of the dialogical engagement within the research project.

Contrary to the general view of student involvement within a *Learners as data source* perspective in both institutionally focussed discourses and learner-oriented discourses (Charteris & Smardon, 2018), which sees such involvement as passive, we argue that providing data can in fact be construed as active and constructive engagement. In providing data without engaging in a dialogue students can make their own decisions and take action demonstrating command of resources (learner agency); individual student voices can be heard and a connection can be made between individual learning processes and experiences (personalised learning); and a consultative participation of students can be valued (radical collegiality). This does mean that whether student involvement in the *Learners as data source* perspective is construed as active depends to a large extent on how student voice is valued by the researcher and/or teacher; this in turn has an effect on the interpretation of the data.

Furthermore, with regard to the *Learners as initiators* perspective, students do not make a school alone. Schooling is a cooperation, not only between students, teachers and school leaders, but also educational specialists, researchers, policy makers, and even materials designers. Privileging student-initiated research at the expense of, for example, teacher-initiated research seems somewhat arbitrary, and, moreover, incomplete and limited. We furthermore claim that the *Learners as initiators* perspective can arguably only be attained when the research topic is concrete, and students are in some way familiar with the topic. When topics concern more abstract notions such as pedagogical or methodological issues, we can hardly expect students to initiate innovative research projects, let alone be dependent on this initiation. Consequently, we would contend that the additional value of including student voice in educational research is not the fact that students *initiated* the research but the fact that their voice is regarded as an essential component. In other words, the three perspectives we have discussed – *Learners as data source*, *Learners in dialogue*, and *Learners as initiators* – each bring unique insights and should therefore be regarded as compatible rather than hierarchical.

### 3.1.3 Foreign language-literature teaching research

Foreign language-literature teaching, a term coined by Paesani (2011), is in the process of a curricular redesign worldwide. Ever since the Modern Language



Association published a report in 2007 in which they advocated replacing the traditional two-tiered language and literature configuration with a “broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole,” (n.p.) language-literature instruction has gained increasing interest worldwide. This is evidenced, for example, by the recently published companion volume to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe, 2018). Although the first edition, which was published in 2001, included literature in its general descriptions, literature was only sparingly part of the can-do statements. Furthermore, the 2001 version is explicit about the distinction between foreign language and literature teachers: “It is much to be hoped that teachers of literature at all levels may find many sections of the Framework relevant to their concerns and useful in making their aims and methods more transparent” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 56). In addition to leaving the explicit distinction between language teachers and literature teachers out, the 2018 edition also includes three new scales, which ideally should become part of the redesign of foreign language-literature curricula: Reading as a leisure activity; Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature); and Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) (Council of Europe, 2018).

Although language-literature instruction is not new, research into this area is slowly moving from essentially theoretical and practitioner based research (Paesani, 2011) to empirical research. In order to move this area of research forward, Paran (2018) argues that we not only need more empirical research and sophisticated data collection and data analysis, we especially need more empirical research in the context of secondary education “the locus of most language teaching in the world” (Paran, 2008, p. 490).

### **3.1.4 Student voice in foreign language-literature teaching research**

Despite the increasing interest in actively engaging students in educational research (McCallum, Hargreaves, & Gipps, 2000), in foreign language research students are primarily involved as data sources (Pinter, 2014; Pinter & Zandian, 2014). According to Pinter (2014) this is due to the prevalent experimental positivist research tradition within these fields. In a review study of research in foreign language-literature education, Paran (2008) discerned two types of research into students’ views: large-scale research concerning the role of literature in foreign language courses and more small-scale research focusing on feedback

regarding courses that included literary texts. Recent examples regarding the first type include a research project commissioned by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (Duncan & Paran, 2017), in which one of the research questions explored the views of students regarding the impact of literature on language learning. An example of the second type is Nguyen (2014), where students were asked to explore the pedagogical change on their learning experience with literary texts via a pre- and post-project questionnaire.

Although it goes without saying that student voice research in which student voice serves as a data provider is extremely valuable to our understanding of students, Pinter (2014) argues that “it is essential that SLA [Second Language Acquisition] also widens its research agenda” (p. 168) with research that focuses on students as active research participants where they are given “central and autonomous conceptual status” (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 481). This ties in with Charteris and Smardon’s (2018) call for research where young people are positioned “agentically as action-oriented individuals” (p. 10). To our knowledge, in the area of EFL and literature teaching, no research has been conducted that focuses on learner oriented discourse with the students as active participants in a co-construction of knowledge. Our study aims to fill this gap.

### **3.1.5 The present study: context, purpose, and research question**

The current study is part of an on-going research project exploring the teaching of literature in EFL classrooms in secondary schools in the Netherlands, where literature is part of the common core curriculum (see Chapter 2). The larger project responds to the movement, within the global context of foreign language education, towards a re-integration of the domains of language and literature teaching (Carter, 2015). Even though the division between language and literature still exists in many contexts (Paesani & Allen, 2012), several frameworks have been developed to promote this integration (for an overview see section 2.1.2). Although these frameworks may be practical and valuable, in Chapter 2 we claimed that most of them lack a theoretical foundation. Through investigating EFL classrooms in a secondary school setting and building on previous theoretical understandings we have proposed a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning model (hereafter: Comprehensive Approach). The term ‘approach’ refers to the focus of the EFL lesson where literature is used. Within the Comprehensive Approach we make a distinction between on the one hand the literary text as the focus of the study of literature, and on the other hand,

the student as the focus of the study of literature. When the literary text itself is the focus, a further distinction can be made between a Text approach (which includes the specific elements of literary terminology, genre, and character development) and a Context approach (concerned with elements of biographical information and historical, social, and cultural aspects of a text). When the student is the focus of the study of literature, a further distinction can be made between the Reader approach (whose elements are critical thinking skills and reading experiences) and the Language approach (whose elements are vocabulary, grammar, and the English language development of students). Each of the four approaches is operationalized in underlying practical elements mentioned above. This model was empirically tested in a sample of 106 Dutch EFL teachers (Chapter 2).

Even though the Comprehensive Approach was validated with EFL teachers and teacher trainers, when we presented this model we pointed out in our conclusion that the empirical validation of the model did not include the voice of the target audience, that is upper secondary school students. For this reason, we decided to further develop the model by including secondary school students' perspectives through a learner-oriented discourse (Charteris & Smardon, 2018).

To summarise, in moving away from the traditional polarization in student voice research, the purpose of this research project was the validation of the Comprehensive Approach through two different perspectives: the *Learners as data source* and *Learners in dialogue* perspective. The *Learner as initiator* perspective was not included in this validation because our aim was to further develop and validate a foreign language literature teaching model that was the result of previous research (see Chapter 2). The lack of inclusion of the *Learner as initiator* perspective will be explored in section 3.4.

The research question of this study was formulated as follows: How and what can secondary school students contribute to the development of a foreign language literature teaching model through *Learners as data source* and *Learners in dialogue* perspectives?

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Participants

The selection of the three schools (Schools A, B, and C) for our project was based on convenience sampling: the three teachers who were involved in this study as part of their MA in Education research project were working in these schools as EFL teachers<sup>8</sup>. A total of 268 students participated in one of three activities (described in more detail below) in order to contribute their perspective in the development of our model: written reflective accounts (student age 15 - 16), unguided focus groups (student age 15 - 16), single open question survey (student age 15 - 18) (see Table 3.2 for an overview).

**Table 3.2** *Number of students participating in research activities per school*

School	Teacher	Written account & Unguided focus group	Single open question survey	Total students per school
A	A	4	29	33
B	B	4	32	36
C	C	-	199	199

### 3.2.2 Data collection: methods

The data collection took place between September 2014 and January 2015 and consisted of the three different data elicitation methods described below, all of which took place in Dutch.

#### 3.2.2.1 *Written reflective accounts*

Because we were interested in the students' interpretation of the Comprehensive Approach, we asked students to translate the underlying practical elements of each of the four approaches into their own words. Since we were interested in *what* the students thought, that is, the *outcome* of their thinking rather than the students' actual thought *processes* while completing this task, we asked the students to reflect on the meaning of the elements of the Comprehensive Approach in writing. The students received an A4 sheet of paper listing the 20 underlying elements and were asked to write down, in their own words, how they understood each element. They were also asked to indicate whenever they felt the elements were not relevant for the EFL literature component. Importantly, this procedure allowed the students to

<sup>8</sup> We would like to thank the three MA students whose schools participated in this study. In order to preserve student and school anonymity, however, we cannot thank them by name.

take all the time they needed to express their views, thereby respecting individual differences (i.e. inclusive divergence).

### **3.2.2.2 Unguided focus group**

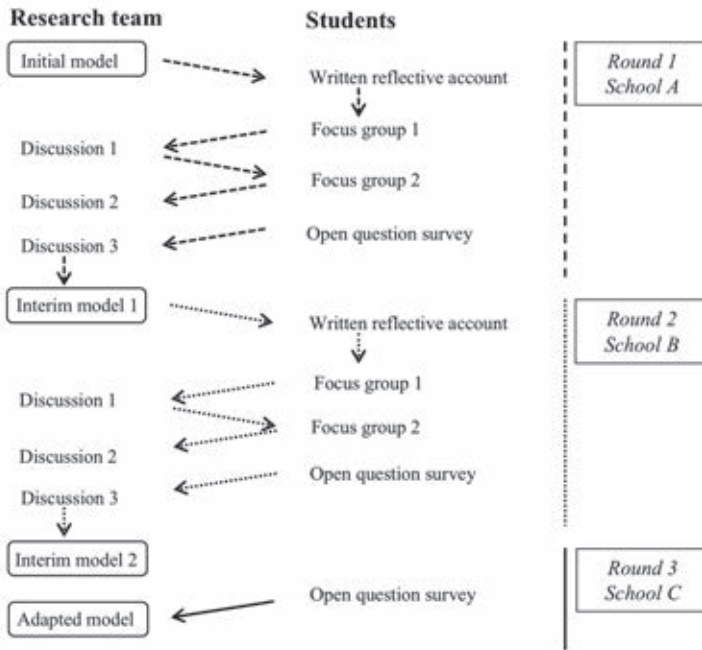
In the next stage, we created a situation in which students would be able to construct a shared understanding (Lodge, 2005): the students' own written interpretations of the underlying elements served as input for an unguided focus group. Since our aim was to elicit the students' viewpoints and have them arrive at a shared understanding of the underlying practical elements (Berg & Lune, 2012) without influencing their thinking, the focus group was unguided, meaning that the researcher(s) were in the same room as the students but did not interfere in the process. Furthermore, similar to the written reflective accounts, we were not interested in the *process* but in the *outcome* of the focus group, so we asked the students to write down their group understanding of the elements and did not record the discussions that led to this group understanding. In contrast to the written accounts, we consider the nature of the dialogue established within the focus groups to be convergent and inclusive (Burbules, 1993).

### **3.2.2.3 Single open question survey**

According to Cook-Sather (2002), it is the "collective student voice, constituted by the many situated, partial, individual voices that we are missing" (p. 12). In order to include this *collective* voice, at different stages of this study we asked three groups of Dutch secondary school students to answer the following open question: What do you think are the benefits of EFL literature lessons? The students wrote their answers individually and anonymously in bullet points on an A4 piece of paper. Our aim with this open question was to move the dialogue back again to a more inclusive and divergent situation (Burbules, 1993).

### **3.2.4 Data collection: procedure and data analysis**

The data collection took place in three consecutive and partially iterative rounds and each school was engaged in one round. Figure 3.1 shows the activities and the interaction between the students of each school and the research team, which consisted of the researcher together with the class teachers. As part of the research team, the class teachers were actively involved in the dialogical procedure described in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1.** Dialogical procedure of including student voice in the development of the Comprehensive Approach

To summarise, as Figure 3.1 shows, the students of School A were presented with the underlying practical elements of the Comprehensive Approach (which we refer to as ‘the initial model’) and participated in three consecutive activities. The output of these activities led to a refinement of the initial model (which we refer to as ‘Interim model 1’). The students of school B were then presented with Interim model 1 and engaged in the same three activities as school A. The output of the students of school B (which we refer to as ‘Interim model 2’) was then used to analyse the answers of the students of school C regarding the open question survey, which led to the final model (which we refer to as ‘adapted model’).

In round 1, teacher A first selected four students based on their willingness to cooperate outside school hours (convenience sampling), who were then presented with the Dutch translation of the underlying practical elements of the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach as presented in Chapter 2 (see Table 3.3 ‘initial model’). These four students were asked to individually write down their interpretation of the elements in their own words (i.e. written reflective account). The students were then asked to discuss their interpretations and arrive

at a consensus (i.e. unguided focus group 1). The output of this unguided focus group served as input for the first discussion and data analysis between teacher A and the researcher (Research team in Figure 3.1), which led to several adjustments of the underlying elements. Two days later the same four students were presented with the adjusted elements in a second unguided focus group, allowing them to validate our interpretation of the output of the first focus group in which they had taken part. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this kind of member checking increases the trustworthiness of qualitative research and it led to several minor adjustments. Next, a different year 4 class in the same school was invited to individually write down their answer(s) to the single open question survey. Both teacher A and the researcher used the adjusted elements to individually code all the student answers. The third discussion and data analysis, which followed the comparison of the coding, led to a few more adjustments.

Round 2 was a repetition of round one conducted at school B by teacher B and the researcher. Importantly, the input for this second group of four students was the list of adjusted elements from the research activities that took place at school A. This repetition of Round 1 was undertaken in order to increase the validity as well as reach conceptual saturation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

In round 3, teacher C invited all students in the upper years ( $n = 199$ ) from school C to answer the single open question survey. In order to validate Interim model 2, teacher C was first trained by the researcher. The training consisted of an in-depth discussion regarding the theoretical foundation of the Comprehensive Approach. This was followed by a practice session in which the answers to the open question survey provided by the students from schools A and B were labelled according to the underlying practical elements of interim model 2. After this training, teacher C invited all students in the upper years from school C to answer the single open question survey. The student answers to the open question survey from school C were coded by teacher C and the researcher. Interrater reliability was established using Cohen's kappa value (.839), showing strong agreement. The discussion that followed led to several minor refinements in order to increase mutual exclusivity (when elements were too broadly defined) and exhaustiveness (when elements were too narrowly defined). In order to make sure that these final refinements would not have a negative impact on the reliability of the coding, teacher C and the researcher coded the answers again, which led to a Kappa score of .923, again showing strong agreement.

### 3.3 Findings

We first summarize the results, focusing on the students' contribution to the development of the Comprehensive Approach. Because the entire research project, which took place in three different schools and included 268 secondary school students, was very much an organic process, we then provide an illustrative set of responses for the three different data elicitation methods in chronological order: written reflective accounts, focus group, and the single open question survey.

#### 3.3.1 Summary of the findings

Table 3.3 presents the underlying practical elements of the initial model as well as those of the adapted model (the result of the contribution of the students' voice). In order to be able to refer to specific elements as well as allow the reader to compare the two, we have numbered the elements of the adapted model.

**Table 3.3** *Initial and adapted Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning model*

	initial model	adapted model
Text approach	Literary terminology	1. Literary terminology
	Recognizing text types	2. Genre
	Distinguishing text types	3. Story, plot, and themes
	Storyline	4. Setting
	Character development Who, what, and where	5. Characters
Context approach	Literary periods	6. Biographical information
	Literary history	7. Historical, cultural, and social context
	Historical aspects of a literary work	8. Literary history
	Cultural aspects of a literary work Social and societal aspects of a literary work Information about the author Biographical aspects of a literary work	
Reader approach	Reading pleasure	9. Reading experience
	Students' personal reaction	10. Literary taste
	Critically report on reading experiences Critical thinking skills	11. Personal development
Language approach	English linguistic aspects in a literary text	12. Grammar and syntax
	Making reading miles to improve language skills	13. Vocabulary and idioms
	English vocabulary in a literary text	14. Language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)
		15. Language development and variety



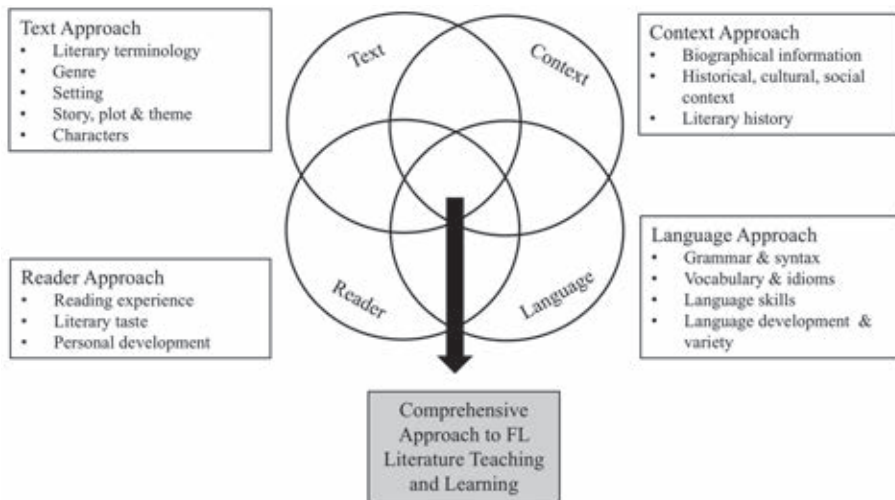
The adapted model is the result of three types of changes. The first type consists of the most important contribution of the students' voice to this study: namely, where we added part of an element or an entirely new element. For example, in the Language approach we added the element 'Language development and variety' (element 15), which was not part of the initial model. Furthermore, within the Language approach, we added the word 'idiom' to the underlying element 'Vocabulary'. Such a change also occurred in the Reader approach, where the students mentioned personal development several times when talking about critical thinking skills, which we therefore added to element 11.

The second and third types of change were minor, and fall into two types: ambiguous distinctions and verbosity/terseness. Most minor changes made belong to the former, an ambiguous distinction between two or more elements in the initial model. The Text approach elements, 'recognizing text types and distinguishing text types' were merged and replaced with 'Genre' (element 2). Text approach element 'Storyline' changed into 'Story, plot, and theme' (element 3). And Text approach elements 'Who/what/where' and 'Character development' changed to 'Setting' (element 4), and 'Characters' (element 5). Each of the three Context approach elements underwent a refinement of this order. The three initial model Context approach elements 'Historical aspects of a literary work', 'Cultural aspects of a literary work' and 'Social aspects of a literary work' were merged into one element, 'Historical, cultural, and social context' (element 7). The students also indicated that there was an overlap between 'Biographical aspects' and 'Information about the author'. We therefore changed these two elements into 'Biographical information' (element 6). The same was the case with Context approach elements 'Literary history' and 'Literary periods, which we changed into 'Literary history' (element 8). The final refinement of this order was a change from two Reader approach elements, 'Students' personal reaction' and 'Critically report on reading experiences', into one: 'Reading experience' (element 9).

The other minor type includes changes that were made because elements were too verbose or terse. For example, the Language approach element 'Making reading miles to improve language skills' was changed into 'Language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)' (element 14): this involved taking out the specifically Dutch (and possibly obscure) concept of reading miles, and spelling out the language skills. The students also indicated that the phrase 'linguistic aspects' confused them. We changed this into 'Grammar and syntax' (element 12),

which they felt was an improvement. Another example is the initial model Reader approach element 'Reading pleasure'. When discussing this element, the students indicated that the word pleasure was somewhat misplaced. They felt that it was more about encountering different kinds of literature and forming your opinion about them. Therefore, we changed the initial element into 'Literary taste' (element 10).

Figure 3.2 presents the adapted Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning including the underlying elements.



**Figure 3.2.** Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning

To summarise, almost all of the underlying elements of the initial model underwent a minor or sometimes more major change thanks to the input of the students. Whereas most of the changes resulted in a reduction of elements or simplification of the description of the element, the most important changes were found when we added words or an entirely new element. The following section presents three detailed examples of what students contributed in each of the activities.

### 3.3.2 Illustrative responses from students

#### *Written reflective accounts*

Figure 3.3 shows an example of a written reflective account of round 2 at school

B where one student wrote down in his own words how he understood the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach. The data presented in Figure 3.3 focuses on the Language approach. This particular student did not so much write their own interpretation of the elements but wrote down some suggestions. According to this student element 4.3 had to become more personal and with 4.5 the word 'contextualized' needed a different formulation. Furthermore, the student wondered about the situation mentioned in element 4.2 and whether this referred to something grammatical or the subject. The student placed a positive tick at 4.1, which in Dutch education means that something is correct. Element 4.4 was not commented on.

4.3	Op anderen gericht. → moet persoonlijker	4.3 Focused on others → should become more personal.
4.2	Welke situatie? Grammaticaal of betreffende versch. versch. contextueel + anderszins	4.2 What situation? Grammatical or the subject?
4.5	Contextualiseerd → anderszins	4.5 Contextualised → formulate differently.
4.1		
4.4		

Figure 3.3. Example of student output of a written reflective account at school B

### Unguided focus group

Figure 3.4 shows an example of the output of the unguided focus group of round 1 at school A where the students wrote down in their own words how they understood the underlying elements. The data presented in Figure 3.4 focuses on the Context approach.

ITEM	OMSCHRIJVING / OPMERKINGEN	
2.3	'Biografisch': wat wordt hiermee bedoeld	2.3 Biographical: what is meant by this
2.2	Duidelijk v.b. Als er in een oude taal over ridders wordt geschreven kan het waarschijnlijk uit de Middelouwen.	2.3 Clear. e.g.: If a work is written in archaic and about knights it was probably written in the Middle Ages.
2.4	Duidelijk v.b. veel feministische werken komen uit de vorige eeuw.	2.4 Clear. e.g.: many feminist works were written in the previous century.
2.1	Duidelijk, maar handig als er een voorbeeld bij staat.	2.1 Clear, but convenient if it came with an example.
2.7	Duidelijk v.b. in verschillende culturen schrijft men anders en heeft men andere meningen.	2.7 Clear. e.g.: In different cultures people write differently and have different opinions.
2.5	ook weer 'biografisch' is onduidelijk.	2.5 Again biographical is unclear.
2.6	Duidelijk, maar 'sociaal-maatschappelijke context' kan onduidelijk zijn.	2.6 Clear, but 'social and societal context' can be unclear.

Figure 3.4. Example of student output after unguided focus group 1 at school A

The students in this focus group question, for example, the fact that in the initial model two Context approach elements focused on biographical information,

which they felt was unclear. In the top row, the group has written ‘Biographical, what is meant by this’ and in the sixth row they came back to this topic, writing: ‘Again ‘biographical’ is unclear.’ Three of the elements were clear (2.2, 2.4, and 2.7), and the students actually provided their own examples for these three. The students also indicated that they felt that although 2.1 was clear, an example would be convenient.

### Open question survey

The single open question survey, in which the students were asked about the benefits of EFL literature lessons, was administered at all three schools and a total of 260 students answered our question. Figure 3.5 shows the response from one student, who provided us with eight answers of which the majority focused on the Language approach and some on the Context approach in our model.

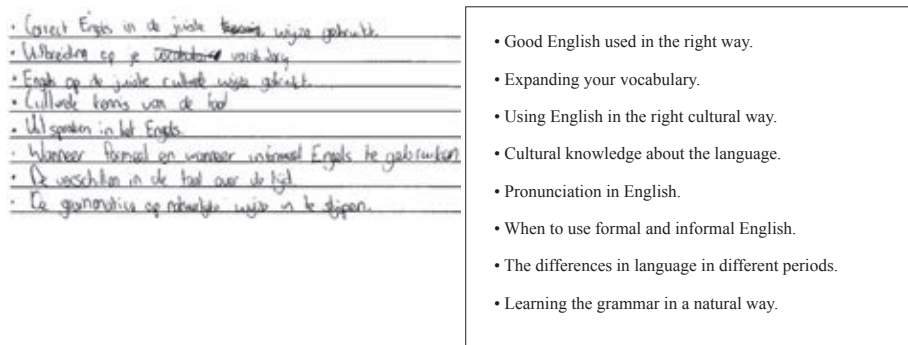


Figure 3.5. Example of answers of one student regarding the single open question survey

## 3.4 Discussion

The first part of our research question asked *how* secondary school students can contribute to the development of a foreign language literature teaching model through the *Learners as data source* and *Learners in dialogue* perspectives. Our account above has shown how the three types of activities - written reflective accounts, unguided focus groups, and a single open question survey - focused on establishing an inclusive dialogue aiming for mutual understanding as opposed to a critical attitude that emphasizes a sceptical and judgmental attitude (Burbules, 1993). Moreover, with the three activities we included both convergent (unguided focus groups) and divergent (written reflective accounts and the single open

question survey) views of dialogue. The second part of our research question asked *what* secondary school students can contribute to the development of a foreign language literature teaching model. As we showed in the previous section, the student voice had a major influence on our model of the Comprehensive Approach, helping us to reduce the number of elements to 15, adding new elements but also combining different elements and resolving ambiguities. We now turn to a fuller discussion of these two elements of our study.

One of our main arguments in this study is that the leading hierarchical ideas and the prevalent current practice result in a mono-dimensional view of including the student's voice in research. We also argued that the *Learners as data source* perspective is not so much passive but can be construed as active and constructive. We offer an alternative view that asserts a multi-dimensional stance in which both the *Learner as data source* and the *Learners in dialogue* perspectives are considered unique and complementary. The account of this study demonstrates what this multi-dimensional stance looks like in empirical research.

Most importantly, because each of the perspectives offers a unique platform for student voice and therefore contributes unique and invaluable insights, they cannot and should not be compared, let alone be ranked. For example, integrating student voice through the *Learner as data source* perspective does not aspire to include students in its research design or analysis and should therefore not be judged as such. It could further be argued that because of their unique position, applying only one perspective of student voice in research could be considered limited, showing just one side of the multi-faceted notion of student voice. When the *Learner as data source* perspective is, for example, combined with the *Learner in dialogue* perspective, several dialogues are established through which the collective as well as individual students can be heard (Cook-Sather, 2002).

Furthermore, despite the consensus established in previous research that the *Learner as data source* perspective equals consumerism and degrades the students as passive agents, we have argued that, at this level too, the students can fulfil an active role, contributing their valuable perceptions. The open question survey, though technically using the learners as data sources, created a safe space through facilitating sufficient openness (Bergold & Thomas, 2012) for a large group of students where they could take the time they needed to share their perspectives on the benefits of EFL literature education. This is an altogether respectful and active role far removed from the understanding of this perspective by researchers 'being suspicious of children's trustworthiness and doubtful of their ability to give and

receive factual information' (Christensen & Prout, 2012, p. 480).

According to Lodge (2005), a shared meaning of learning is established through engagement and dialogue because it 'prompts reflection, critical investigation, analysis, interpretation and reorganization of knowledge' (p. 135). The written reflective accounts, which created a legitimate and valued space (Cook-Sather, 2002) for the students to think about, to question, and to reconsider their interpretations of the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach, together with the output of the unguided focus groups, created dialogical processes of knowledge-production between the students and the research team. The power of presenting the students with our interpretation of the output of their focus group dialogue in the form of asking them to discuss the revised underlying elements lies in the open acknowledgement, to them, of the legitimacy of their voice and showed an overt interdependence. The open question survey was to some extent also part of this dialogue since these answers fuelled the dialogue in the research team of which the output was presented in the following focus group.

Figure 3.1 above emphasises how the collaboration between the students and the research team was a joint process of knowledge-production leading to a better understanding of the underlying elements (Bergold & Thomas, 2012) and therefore of the model as a whole. The combination of the three different data elicitation methods created a certain stichomythic form, a rhythmic intensity of alternating turns in which both the students and the research team engaged in convergent and divergent inclusive forms of dialogue (Burbules, 1993). Each dialogical step was a constructive continuation of the previous one, questioning and discussing the output of the preceding step and thereby further developing the model through collective knowledge building.

In comparing the initial and adapted versions of the Comprehensive Approach (Table 3.3) it becomes clear that secondary school students can offer valuable insights in developing a model for teaching and learning through collaboration and co-construction. By eliciting the students' voice regarding our initial model, the most important contribution was where they felt the underlying elements were incomplete or lacking altogether. Furthermore, as we have shown in Table 3.3, apart from the first Text approach element, 'Literary terminology', all the other elements underwent a change. There were six cases where we changed the description of the initial element and five instances where we merged either two or three elements into one. Whenever students indicated that the initial elements were ambiguous or confusing or when certain words were misplaced, we adjusted the elements

based on their suggestions, thereby ensuring a clearer formulation. Through these additions and changes, the students helped us shape and define our model by showing us how they view EFL literature education within the boundaries of the initial model. In other words, through learner-oriented discourses (Charteris & Smardon, 2018) the students' contributions did indeed have a constructive and unique impact on the development of our model. Importantly, our final model is a model, which we could not have reached on our own – one of the points Lodge (2005) makes in her definition of dialogue, referred to in our opening sections.

Despite our carefully constructed dialogical research process with the collective student, this process did not directly involve the *Learner as initiators* perspective. Although including this perspective was not considered relevant because we were interested in further developing and validating a literature teaching model that was the result of previous research, what we could have done in retrospect to improve this project, was include this perspective of student voice when designing the actual research process and research activities. The students could have opened up uncharted territories (Pinter, 2014) by designing refreshing research activities from their own unique points of view. Or as one of the participants in an IATEFL webinar on researching with children (Pinter, Kuchah, & Smith, 2013) wondered: “If we put students in the centre of learning, why should we not put them in the centre of research projects as well?” (p. 486).

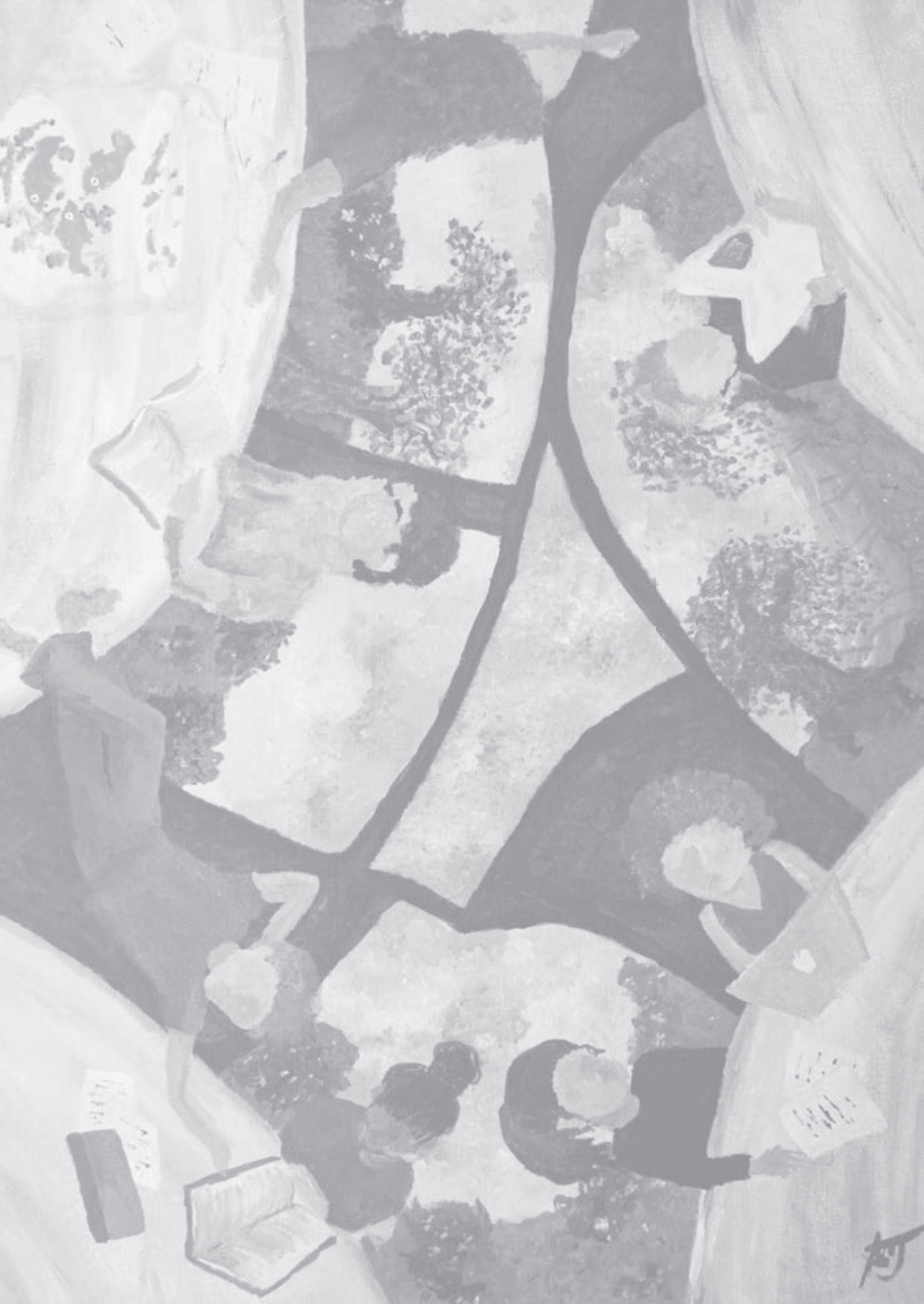
### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the different perspectives in which secondary school students can be constructively involved in research projects, thereby adding to the body of empirical research in secondary foreign language-literature teaching as well as research into learner oriented discourses. Including the student's voice in refining the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach can be beneficial for foreign language teachers who wish to align the way the instructional environment is perceived by their students and themselves because alignment can only be achieved when students and teachers have a very clear and unambiguous understanding of the underlying elements.

In this chapter, we have argued that the prevailing understanding that including student voice through the *Learners as data source* perspective is considered a model of non-participation (Hart, 1992) should be rejected. Instead,

we have argued that including student voice through this perspective can allow for a large group of students to actively engage in research. Especially when combined with the *Learners in dialogue* (as we did in this case) or the *Learners as initiators* perspectives, a multi-dimensional dialogical process can be established through which traditional conventions of research can be deconstructed. In aiming for this reciprocal relationship Christensen and Prout (2002) argue that “researchers need to explore and justify details of children’s participation in research and the decision to involve them in or exclude them from the research process” (p. 483). Because educational research has not yet fully embraced the three perspectives of including student voice, future research in these fields should take Christensen and Prout’s (2002) argument to the next level: educational research should at all times justify why students are involved or excluded and should provide sufficient details in what way(s) their voices played a part in the research process. If we put a halt to the incongruous situation where the *Learners as data source* perspective is frowned upon but is at the same time the dominant way of including student voice, and start observing our students’ voices as *sui generis* with “presence, power, and agency” (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 363) their voices will soon become indispensable from future knowledge construction.





# CHAPTER 4

## **Students' Perspective on the Benefits of the use of Literature in Foreign Language Lessons**

This chapter is based on: Bloemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, E., & van de Grift, W. (2019). Students' perspective on the benefits of EFL literature education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(3), 371-384.

## Abstract

Understanding students' perspectives on the foreign language curriculum could be considered a vital step in curriculum design and lesson planning. This study drew on data provided by a single open question survey to investigate the perspective of Dutch secondary school students ( $n = 635$ ) from 15 different schools with regard to the benefits of literature education in English as a foreign language (EFL). This study also sought to find out whether there are any differences in these perspectives between the different schools. The Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning was used to analyse the students' answers. Results show that the majority of the students consider literature in a foreign language primarily as language education. Furthermore, a comparison between the 15 schools indicated that there were differences in the way students from different schools perceive the benefits of the EFL literature curriculum. The article concludes with a discussion of pedagogical issues and suggestions for ways in which the student perspective can be studied on a small scale.

## 4.1 Introduction

Teachers, teacher educators, and researchers often discuss what happens in classrooms around the world without inviting students to take part in these discussions. Especially in situations where part of the curriculum is in transition, such as foreign language literature teaching, it is all the more valuable to include the voice of those who experience the curriculum first hand. It was precisely such a voice, a secondary school student's deceptively simple question, 'What's the point of reading this novel in English?' addressed to the researcher, which was the starting point for this study. This question led us to investigate the benefits of literature in English as a foreign language (EFL) through the perspectives of Dutch secondary school students, for whom this component is a compulsory part of their English language course.

We start with a short survey of the re-emergence of literature as a valuable component in foreign language teaching, with a focus on integrated language and literature programmes. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of studying student perspectives and how this has been researched within the field of foreign language education so far. We then present the findings from a study in which we analysed the responses to a single open question regarding the benefits of foreign language literature education. We end with a discussion of the implications of our findings in a theoretical as well as practical light.

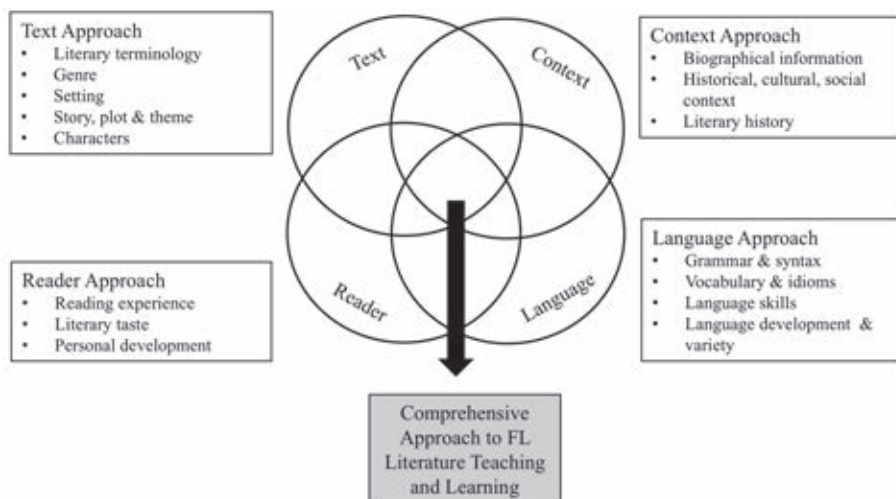
## 4.2 Background

### 4.2.1 Integrated Language and Literature Curricula

The idea that literature can be considered an integrated component in the foreign language curriculum has been around for several decades. Herr (1982), for example, spoke about literature as "an integral and revitalized part of foreign language education at every level" (p. 205). The position of literature teaching in foreign language education later moved from being a 'welcome guest' to an 'unwelcome ghost' (Pulverness, 2014), and finally back to being regarded as a valuable component of the foreign language curriculum (Paran, 2008). The notion of an integrated language and literature curriculum was further emphasized by the Modern Language Association (MLA) in the US, which in 2007 proposed a reform replacing the language-literature divide with an integrated foreign

language curriculum. The idea that literature can serve as the actual content of foreign language classes has also resulted in an increasing number of papers that promote the idea of integrated language and literature curricula, such as Hoecherl-Alden (2006) and Barette, Paesani and Vinall (2010). However, Paesani and Allen's (2012) review of the merging of language and literary-cultural content suggests that the language-content divide still exists (see also Paran, 2008).

Our research into integrated foreign language curricula has resulted in the formulation of a model of a Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning (see Chapter 3). This comprehensive model consists of four approaches, each operationalized in several different elements (see Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1.** Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning

The Text and Context approaches are both linked to the 'study of literature' (Maley, 1989). The Text approach is concerned with elements such as literary terminology and setting, whereas the Context approach focuses on, for example, the historical or cultural contexts of literary texts. The Reader and Language approaches on the other hand, are linked to using literature as a resource (Maley, 1989). The Reader approach emphasises the connection between the reader and the text and the Language approach focuses on using literary texts to advance students' language skills, such as reading and speaking, but also knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. The place where the four approaches overlap would describe a classroom where the teacher deals with all these areas, bringing together a focus

on the text itself and information about the context, and encouraging the learners to make connections with the text, all the time ensuring that support is being given to language learning. This then results in what we have called the Comprehensive Approach which, we suggest, is likely to support high quality teaching and learning.

#### **4.2.2. Students' perspectives on foreign language literature education**

Recent understandings of teaching show that teachers' approaches to teaching influence the way in which learners learn (Beusaert, Segers, & Wiltink, 2013). Many and Wiseman (1992) found that different approaches to L1 literature significantly affected the content of the students' written responses. In a foreign language context, Tutaş (2006) found that how literature is taught affects the learners' stance towards the texts as well as texts they read later. In other words, whether teachers teach through a Comprehensive Approach or only through, for example, the Text approach, could have an effect on how students experience and learn from foreign language literature.

Students' perceptions of a learning environment influence how much they learn and therefore have an impact on the efficacy of the instructional environment (Brown, 2009; Entwistle, 1991). Indeed, whenever a teacher's teaching approach is compatible with a student's learning approach, it creates a situation of congruence (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). In other cases, existing learning strategies are called upon but are not necessarily compatible between teacher and students. This may lead to so-called constructive frictions, which Vermunt and Verloop (1999) claim "may be necessary to make students willing to change and to stimulate them to develop skills in the use of learning and thinking activities they are not inclined to use on their own" (p. 270). Understanding how students view foreign language literature could not only help teachers create a situation of congruence and constructive frictions but also help them design a strategy in order to reconcile possible differences. In our view, therefore, a move towards an integrated language-literature curriculum should take into account student perspectives as well, in order to maximize learning (see also Peiser & Jones, 2013).

However, few researchers have studied students' perspectives in the field of foreign language literature education. An early study in the Higher Education context, Martin and Laurie (1993), found that the main reason students of French at an Australian University were studying French was related to linguistic interest. In contrast, Liaw (2001) found that her Taiwanese management students enjoyed the inclusion of literature in a language course. Moreover, the students gained

confidence in reading English literary texts and most preferred the short stories to the course book.

Paran (2008), however, warns that we should consider the findings of these studies with caution. Most of the courses investigated were electives or were part of a curriculum the students had voluntarily selected as part of their university degree. In addition, it is secondary schools rather than universities that are “the locus of most language learning in the world” (Paran, 2008, p. 490). Since EFL is compulsory for most secondary school students in the Netherlands (as opposed to the elective nature of other foreign languages such as French or German) this group of students is relatively large. Therefore, due to this large number, we believe that this particular group of students is extremely valuable for educational research and curriculum design.

Two large-scale studies shed some light on secondary school students’ perspectives on EFL literature courses. Akyel and Yalçin (1990) surveyed students in five different secondary schools in Turkey. They demonstrated that students’ English language proficiency was related to their appreciation of the inclusion of literature in the EFL classes. Schmidt (2004), taking a narrower focus, explored the reality of German EFL classes using Shakespeare and the possible connection between pupils’ interest in Shakespeare and the ways in which Shakespeare was taught. Most students indicated that they accepted Shakespeare as an obligatory author in their EFL course, but this was not related to an actual interest in his works. However, despite Paran (2008) call for more “systematic enquiries into the views of the learners” (p. 490), such studies are still few and far between. Our study seeks to explore this under-researched area.

### **4.2.3 Research questions**

The principal objective of the present study was to use the perspectives of adolescents to inform EFL literature teaching. Furthermore, due to the divergence in EFL literature curricula in Dutch secondary education (Bloemert & van Veen, accepted), we wanted to find out whether the perception of students from different schools would vary. Studying the difference between schools could suggest a possible relation between how literature is taught and how students perceive literature education. These objectives led to the following two research questions: (1) What are the benefits of EFL literature education according to Dutch secondary school EFL students, and (2) are there differences between the perception of students from different schools?



#### 4.2.4 Context of this Study

The changing position of foreign language literature teaching as described above can also be seen in the foreign language curricula in Dutch secondary education. In 1863, foreign languages became a compulsory component in Dutch schools and till 1968 only canonical works were studied and translated (Wilhelm, 2005). In the next 30 years (till 1998, when more emphasis was put on practical language skills), literature was still mandatory, but students were now requested to study foreign language literature independently. With the educational reforms of 1998, 13 core curriculum standards for foreign language literature were introduced and the number of works students had to read was reduced from twelve to three. Importantly, it was argued that teaching foreign language literature in the target language could become an obstacle for discussing literary texts. The preferred language of instruction became L1, although the literary works were read in the original foreign language. Moreover, teachers were not allowed to test language skills and literature in an integrated manner (Kwakernaak, 2016b).

Nine years after the educational reforms of 1998, the government introduced a revised version, which is still in use today: the required minimum remained three literary works but the core curriculum standards for foreign language literature were reduced from 13 to the following three: the student can recognize and distinguish literary text types and can use literary terms when interpreting literary texts; the student can give an overview of the main events of literary history and can place the studied works in this historic perspective; and the student can report about their reading experiences of at least three literary works with clear arguments (Meijer & Fasoglio, 2007).

Apart from these three standards, Dutch foreign language teachers have complete freedom regarding text selection, the number of hours they wish to teach literature, how they wish to teach literature, and also how they wish to test literature. The extent of this curricular freedom is reflected in the variation between learning trajectories in different schools (Bloemert & van Veen, accepted). Despite the apparent language-literature divide and the 'uneasy position' literature occupies in Dutch secondary education (Chapter 2), an increasing number of literature lessons, resources, and tests in Dutch secondary education are again, at least partially, in the foreign language, and foreign language teachers consider the use of a foreign language in their lessons as a sign of quality (Kordes & Gille, 2012). This suggests a careful move towards an integrated language and literature curriculum.



Despite the fact that the three core curriculum standards apply to all foreign languages taught in Dutch secondary education (i.e. English, French, German, and Spanish), in this study we focus only on English as a foreign language. The findings may differ for elective languages.

## 4.3 Method

### 4.3.1 Participants

Between September 2014 and September 2015, the researcher contacted several secondary schools in the north of the Netherlands through her professional network. The selection of schools was based on convenience sampling where the researcher knew at least one of the EFL teachers. The schools were all located in the four northern provinces of the Netherlands, representing both rural and small town schools, with a relatively very low level of cultural diversity in the student population. A total of 635 students (all pre-university level year 5 students aged between 15 - 17) from 15 different schools and 28 different classes participated. Even though participation in this research was voluntary, all students cooperated. Data collection was completely anonymous and students' answers were not shared with their teachers. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the data collected.

**Table 4.1** *Overview of 15 participating schools*

School	No. of classes participating	Total no. of students
A	3	61
B	2	50
C	1	28
D	2	48
E	1	21
F	3	75
G	1	16
H	4	88
I	2	45
J	1	19
K	2	51
L	2	50
M	2	23
N	1	31
O	1	29

### 4.3.2 Procedure

Because we wanted to unearth genuine views, allow spontaneity, and avoid bias in response categories that might result from suggesting desirable answers, we asked the students the following single open question: What do you think are the benefits of EFL literature lessons? We chose this method in preference to interviewing because we wanted to collect answers from a large group of students from many different schools to gain a broad view of students' perceptions on this topic. The single open question survey was handed out by EFL teachers during regular lesson time and all students were instructed to answer the question in bullet-points. The students were given approximately 10 minutes to do this. The question was posed in Dutch and, apart from a few exceptions, all students answered in Dutch (all quotations in this study are our translations).

### 4.3.3 Analyses

Table 4.2 shows several examples of the data we collected, including the coding procedure (the questions we asked in the analysis and the code we assigned to the examples).

**Table 4.2** Coding procedure including example student answers

Step	Question	Example student answer	Code
1	Is the answer positively or negatively worded?	'No complete lessons about strange facts regarding the author because nobody is interested and you will forget these in no time'	Negative
2	Does the answer fit into one of the 15 elements?	'Getting ideas for reading new books'	Approach: Reader approach Element: Literary taste
3	Does the answer fit into one of the approaches?	'Knowledge of the English language'	Language approach
4	Is the answer related to English or English literature?	'You can join a conversation about English books and appear very intelligent'	Yes

In order to analyse the data we used the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning. The data were coded by an independent rater who was first trained in the four approaches and underlying 15 elements of the Comprehensive Approach (see Figure 4.1) and in identifying these approaches and elements in the data. At the start of the training the independent rater was informed about the background of the instrument and the purpose of its use. To ensure that we could code every single student answer (a total of 2361 answers) we used the coding procedure outlined in Table 4.2. We first decided whether the

answer was positively or negatively worded and whether we could fit it into one of the 15 elements (the subcategories of the four approaches in Figure 4.1). When this was not the case we checked whether the answer fitted into one of the four approaches. Then, if this was not the case either, we checked whether the answer was related to English or English literature.

After the independent rater coded all the answers, the researcher coded a random sample of the data (20%,  $n = 127$  students) to ensure the reliability of the coding. Interrater reliability was established using Cohen's kappa value (.93), which showed a strong agreement.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the type and variability of data we worked with. The first student mentions a variety of topics ('social development, general knowledge, English history, language development, good for the development of understanding texts of a higher level, improving reading skills'), but then ends with a somewhat facetious answer, 'you don't know who I am, ha ha ha'. The second example shows only one bullet point in which the student mentions one specific topic: 'You see how grammar which you encounter in the course book, is more concrete and how it is used in real life.'

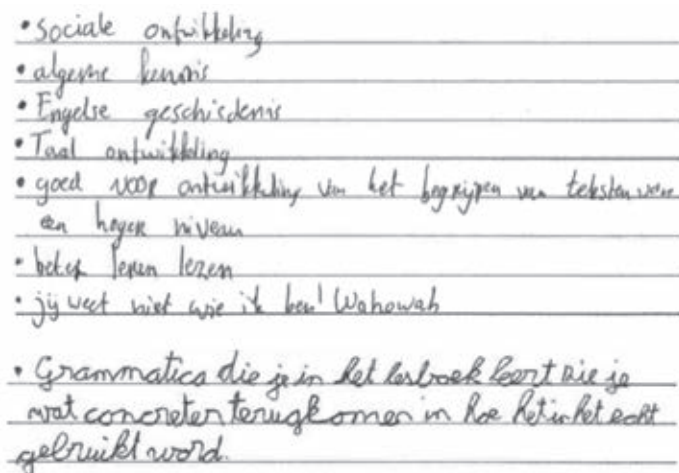
- 
- sociale ontwikkeling
  - algemene kennis
  - Engelse geschiedenis
  - Taal ontwikkeling
  - goed voor ontwikkeling van het begrijpen van teksten van een hoger niveau
  - beter leren lezen
  - jij weet niet wie ik ben! Wahawah
- Grammatica die je in het leerboek leert die je wat concreter terugkomt in hoe het in het echt gebruikt wordt.

Figure 4.2. Two examples of student answers

## 4.4 Findings

Table 4.3 presents the percentage of the total number of answers for each of the four approaches.

**Table 4.3** Overview of the 2361 answers of Dutch secondary school EFL students (n=635)

			Positive (94%)	Negative (6%)	Total
Four approaches TextTeText	Text		78	2	80 (5%)
	Context		517	10	527 (29%)
	Reader		272	4	276 (15%)
	Language		909	4	913 (51%)
Related to English/ literature	559		442	117	
Not related to English/literature	6				
Total no. of answers	2361				

We were able to code 1796 answers in one of the four approaches. More than half of these answers (51%) fitted into the Language approach, followed by the Context approach (29%), the Reader approach (15%) and finally the Text approach (5%). A total of 559 answers were formulated too generally to fit into one of the four approaches but was nevertheless related to English or English literature, such as: 'It creates more depth in the English lessons.' Only six answers (0.25% of the total) were not related to English or English literature. These included the comprehensible 'I prefer mathematics,' and the rather obscure (and again, probably facetious) comment, 'beer.' It is worth noting that, despite the positive framing of our single open question in which we asked the students to write down the *benefits* of EFL literature education, 137 answers were formulated in a negative way, such as 'Listening to boring stories.' Some students did mention specific elements of the Comprehensive Approach, but then gave an explanation how these were not regarded as beneficial, such as: 'Literary history; I do not see the benefits of this. It does not contribute to Dutch society. Nobody will blame you if you don't know this. The time we spend on literary history can be better spent on something that does contribute to society.'

In order to find out to what extent the students' answers encompassed the different elements of the Comprehensive Approach, we also calculated the number of approaches each student mentioned.

**Table 4.4** Number of approaches addressed by each student

		Number of approaches addressed by each student				
		1	2	3	4	None
All students	<i>n</i> = 635	206 (33%)	282 (44%)	103 (16%)	8 (1%)	36 (6%)

As Table 4.4 shows, the largest number of students (44%) mentioned two approaches, followed by one approach (33%), and three approaches (16%). A very small percentage of the students (1%) mentioned all four approaches. The sizable minority of 17% who provided answers that fitted into three or more approaches, added to the 44% who mentioned two approaches, means that the majority of students mention multiple approaches when asked about the benefits of EFL literature lessons.

Figure 4.3 provides an overview of the different combinations of approaches, arranged by descending frequency.

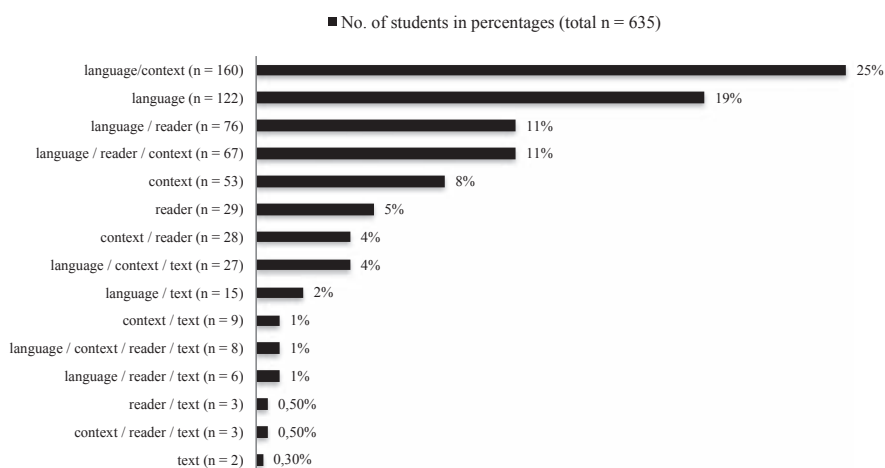
**Figure 4.3.** Approach combinations for total number of students in percentages

Figure 4.3 shows how all approach combinations are represented in our data, albeit with a vast difference in number of students, varying between 2 and 160 students. This indicates not only the difference between what students believe are the benefits of EFL literature education, but also shows that some approach combinations are clearly dominant. The language/context approach combination features most prominently; the answers of 25% (*n* = 160) of the students fell into

this combination, indicating that students regard the benefits of EFL literature in terms of Language and Context related elements. Furthermore, 56% ( $n = 335$ ) of the students mentioned either the Context approach or the Language approach, or a combination of the two. At the other end of the spectrum, a total of 11.5% ( $n = 73$ ) of the students mentioned the combinations in which the Text approach features, which ranged between 0.3% ( $n = 2$ ) and 4% ( $n = 27$ ).

In general, 74% ( $n = 472$ ) of the students mentioned the Language approach at least once, followed by 56% ( $n = 355$ ) for the Context approach, 33% ( $n = 211$ ) for the Reader approach, and 12% ( $n = 73$ ) for the Text approach. Table 4.5 presents a detailed overview of the elements within the four approaches as mentioned by the students. Most students mentioned more than one element.

A large majority of the students (74%,  $n = 472$ ) felt that the benefits of EFL literature lessons were Language approach elements, especially 'Vocabulary and idioms' (44%,  $n = 279$ ) and 'Language skills' (26%,  $n = 163$ ). Over half of the students (56%,  $n = 355$ ) mentioned Context approach elements; the most frequent element mentioned in this approach was the 'Historical, cultural, and social context' element, mentioned by 47% ( $n = 298$ ) of all students. A third of the students mentioned Reader approach elements; the most frequent element mentioned was 'Personal development', mentioned by 28% ( $n = 178$ ) as a beneficial element in their EFL literature classes. The approach that was mentioned by the smallest number of students was the Text approach (12%,  $n = 73$ ). None of the students' answers related to the elements 'Setting', 'Characters', or 'Reading experiences.'

The elements connected to the core curriculum standards for foreign language literature were mentioned by a remarkably small number of students. 'Literary terminology' (Standard 1) was mentioned by 2% of the students; 'Genre' (standard 1) were mentioned by 1% ( $n = 5$ ) of the students; 'Literary history' (standard 2) by 7% ( $n = 46$ ), and 'Reading experience' (standard 3) was not mentioned by any of the students at all. This large discrepancy in the number of times these elements were mentioned and the number of times other elements were mentioned raises important questions for the classroom and is examined in the discussion section.

In order to answer our second research question, whether there is a difference in perception between students from different schools, we compared how many students from each school mentioned the approaches at least once. Table 4.6 lists the schools according to the frequency with which each of the approaches was mentioned by the students. Ten of the fifteen schools show a pattern where the

order of approaches from most to least mentioned is: Language, Context, Reader, and finally the Text approach. For one-third of the schools, however, the order of approaches differs, although in each school the Text approach came in fourth position.

**Table 4.5** *Student answers organised according to the Comprehensive Approach*

		No. of students ( <i>n</i> = 635)	Student example
Language approach	Language approach general	17 (28%)	You study the English language in a different way.
	Grammar and syntax	66 (10%)	You develop a 'feeling' for English syntax.
	Vocabulary and idioms	279 (44%)	I learn synonyms of words I already know.
	Language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)	163 (26%)	You improve your English language skills.
	Language development and variety	117 (18%)	You learn where the language comes from, how it came into existence and how it developed.
Context approach	Context approach general	24 (4%)	Knowing about the mind-set of writers from that era.
	Biographical information	62 (10%)	You learn more about English authors and poets.
	Historical, cultural, and social context	298 (47%)	You learn about how people thought in different periods.
	Literary history	46 (7%)	You can place literary works in the right periods.
Reader approach	Reader approach general	5 (1%)	Understanding what a certain story means for your life.
	Reading experience	0 (0%)	--
	Literary taste	41 (7%)	You read different kinds of texts, novels, literary periods, eras. This is how you can develop your own style and what you like.
	Personal development	178 (28%)	It gives you time and space to think about topics that you would not look for on your own initiative.
Text approach	Text approach general	45 (7%)	You get to know the classics.
	Literary terminology	12 (2%)	You understand metaphors better.
	Genre	5 (1%)	You learn different types of poetry.
	Story, plot, and theme	14 (2%)	You discover the meaning behind stories.
	Setting	0 (0%)	--
	Characters	0 (0%)	--

**Table 4.6** *The number of students per school who mentioned an approach at least once (in percentages)*

School	<i>n</i> = no. of students	Language (%)	Context (%)	Reader (%)	Text (%)
E	21	95	43	10	10
L	50	94	48	26	6
N	31	94	42	19	19
M	23	93	78	35	9
A	61	84	74	20	16
B	50	84	72	32	14
I	45	82	29	24	7
F	75	76	47	32	17
G	16	69	50	31	0
O	29	66	62	38	10
		Language	Reader	Context	Text
J	19	95	63	42	5
H	88	78	55	45	6
		Context	Language	Reader	Text
K	51	73	61	37	16
C	28	71	36	32	21
		Context	Reader	Language	Text
D	48	65	31	21	8

The results presented in Table 4.6 suggest that there is quite a difference in the way the students from the 15 schools perceive the benefits of the EFL literature lessons. Even though for the majority of the schools the language and context approach were mentioned most often by most students, it is noteworthy that in one third of the schools the combination of the most frequently mentioned approaches is different. Furthermore, each of the four approaches was mentioned in each school, with the exception of school G, yet the difference between schools can be considered substantial for all four approaches: Text approach (0 - 21%), Context approach (29 - 78%), Reader approach (10 - 63%), and the Language approach (21 - 95%). If we compare schools D and I, for example, 82% of the students from school I mentioned the Language approach whereas only 21% of the students from school D mentioned it. On the other hand, 65% of the students from school D mentioned the Context approach, compared with only 29% of the students from school I. These differences suggest that students from these two schools view the benefits of EFL literature lessons considerably differently.



## 4.5 Discussion and Classroom Implications

In this study we asked 635 students in 15 secondary schools to write down the benefits of EFL literature education. The most important finding of our study is that the majority of the students see the EFL literature component through the lens of their language course; a total of 74% of the students mentioned the Language approach as a beneficial component of EFL literature education. These findings support previous research such as Martin and Laurie's (1993) who showed that the students generally perceived the inclusion of literature in a pragmatic language learning way. Although these results are not surprising (the EFL literature component in Dutch secondary education is after all part of a language course), the fact that the students indicated that they recognize the contribution of literature to their language development underlines the notion of an integrated language and literature curriculum promulgated by, for example, the Comprehensive Approach. This is supported by Dutch EFL teachers who value the use of the foreign language in the literature classroom (Kordes & Gille 2012) as well as different voices in the literature. Grabe (2009), in an overview of the research, suggests that meaningful foreign language reading, such as literature, is an important source for improving reading accuracy and reading rate. Lao and Krashen (2000), too, argue that reading foreign language literature exposes language learners to a wealth of language varieties and registers.

The second most beneficial approach according to this group of students was the Context approach. Slightly more than half of the students (56%) mentioned the Context approach at least once, and 47% of them focused on the 'Historical, cultural, and social context' element. The high percentage for this particular element could represent a desire that Martin and Laurie's (1993) students also expressed: a desire for "relevant cultural content" (p. 195). Since most literary works that are presented to foreign language students are placed in a *foreign* world where students learn about the historical, cultural, and social elements through fiction, poetry and drama, studying these works in the foreign language classroom could enhance the students' intercultural and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2014). One could even argue that being able to contextualise a literary work through a language that is not your own, thereby possibly cultivating a sense of tolerance and understanding (Barrette et al., 2010; Bredella, 2012; McKay, 1982), might be a unique feature of foreign language literature education.

The two approaches that were absent from the answers of the majority of the students were the Reader approach (where 33% of students mentioned any of

the elements) and the Text approach (where only 12% of students mentioned any of the elements). The only element of these two approaches that was mentioned by a relatively large number of students (27%, which for one element is a large percentage) was 'Personal development'. According to Barrette et al. (2010), studying literary texts in the foreign language classroom could enhance students' translingual and transcultural competence, precisely because they are confronted with stories and themes from other historical, cultural and social contexts. However, when students do not see how this diverse input in their language course could, for example, enhance their personal development (which is part of the Reader approach; see Figure 4.1), or how foreign language literature can be studied from multiple approaches, this is a missed opportunity in the foreign language literary experience. The fact that the other elements of these two approaches were rarely mentioned or not mentioned at all might be because the students simply do not see these elements as beneficial for their EFL learning. Another possibility is that these elements are already covered by the literature lessons in their first language or in a different foreign language, with the result that students don't see the point of repeating this in the English literature lessons.

Even though the majority of the students (61%) mentioned more than one approach, only eight students (1%) provided us with answers that fell into all four approaches. In other words, this group of 635 secondary school students did not regard foreign language literature lessons in what we would call a comprehensive way. Even though each of the four approaches assumes possible benefits for foreign language students, it is their reciprocal relationship that is particularly enriching in foreign language literature lessons (Chapter 2). Therefore, when students, for example, see the foreign language literature lesson as beneficial only for their language development but their teachers approach the texts primarily through a Text approach, one could understand the student question we quoted at the beginning of this chapter about the actual point of reading literature in English.

The findings also show that there is variation in the way students from different schools perceive the benefits of this part of the language curriculum, in spite of the fact that each of the four approaches featured in all schools. Whereas, for example, in some schools the majority of students mention the Language approach (e.g. school E with 95%), in school D this was merely 21% of the students. This suggests that within schools and perhaps even within classes, there is variation in how students perceive the EFL literature curriculum. Therefore, a Comprehensive Approach, where the teacher would teach literature through all four approaches,

could create a teaching situation where there is congruence between the individual student and teacher perspectives and where constructive frictions are created when the teacher introduces approaches that the student initially did not regard as beneficial.

Taking into consideration that teaching approaches can have an effect on student learning (Many & Wiseman, 1992; Tutaş, 2006), the differences in students' responses at school level could be related to what students are actually being taught. One interpretation of the findings is that EFL literature in Dutch secondary education is taught primarily through a Language approach followed by a Context approach in some schools or through a Context and Reader approach in other schools, thereby reflecting the students' answers. However, it might also be the case that EFL literature is often taught through a Text approach in combination with the Context approach element 'Literary history' and the Reader approach element 'Reading experience', since these are the elements that cover the three core curriculum standards for foreign language literature. In the latter case students might consider these elements simply as not beneficial and therefore these elements did not appear often in our data. However, our study does not allow us to draw conclusions with regard to direct relations between how the students are taught and how they perceive EFL literature education.

In spite of this, the difference in students' responses between different schools does call for future research that focuses on what is actually happening in these classrooms as well as an analysis of learning tasks. We believe that an analysis of these tasks might reveal that learning tasks can be "very one-sided and more often reflect teachers' personal styles than students' needs" (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 277). Locating a blind spot or finding out that certain approaches are over-represented can be very helpful in improving the quality of teaching (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). Despite the increasing body of information about student perceptions regarding various parts of the curriculum, more research is needed to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Being aware of the impact of the way literature is taught on how students perceive this component could help teachers in creating an effective situation of congruence as well as constructive friction (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). However, when a teaching approach has negative effects on student learning or when discrepancies between students' and teachers' perceptions are too large, this can create destructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). Destructive frictions may also occur when students perceive the teaching and learning as irrelevant and

do not feel this gap is bridgeable (Hattie & Yates, 2014). If teachers in a school like school J, for example, (0% Text approach) offered literature lessons primarily through a Text approach, destructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999) could occur because students do not see the relevance of this type of EFL literature lessons (Hattie & Yates, 2014).

One word of caution regarding the interpretation of our study is that although we made considerable efforts to understand the students' point of view, we still were limited to our own ways of interpreting their words due to the format of the students' responses. Because we asked the students a single open question, students were first of all constrained by their ability to articulate their ideas on the spot. Furthermore, our unit of analysis was fully dependent on whether or not students decided to elaborate their responses in detail. Due to this dependence on student willingness to participate, our data may not fully reflect the extent of the students' views about the benefits of EFL literature education. Another issue that should be raised here is the fact that we researched students' perspective with regard to EFL literature education. There is a possibility that students could have a different view of literature in other foreign languages. Therefore, we would suggest future research being conducted into this in the teaching of other foreign languages taught in secondary education. Future research could also investigate whether students have the same view of literature in English (a compulsory subject) and the other foreign language they are taking (as an elective).

Taken as a whole, our methodology did generate a substantial amount of rich data, and the results of this study provide important information about what learners think of EFL literary education, information that can be used by teachers and curriculum designers when working on designing or enriching the literature component. Also, understanding how students perceive specific areas of the curriculum can provide teachers with invaluable information that could be useful to fit course content to specific student needs (Akyel & Yalçin, 1990; Cook-Sather, 2002; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004).

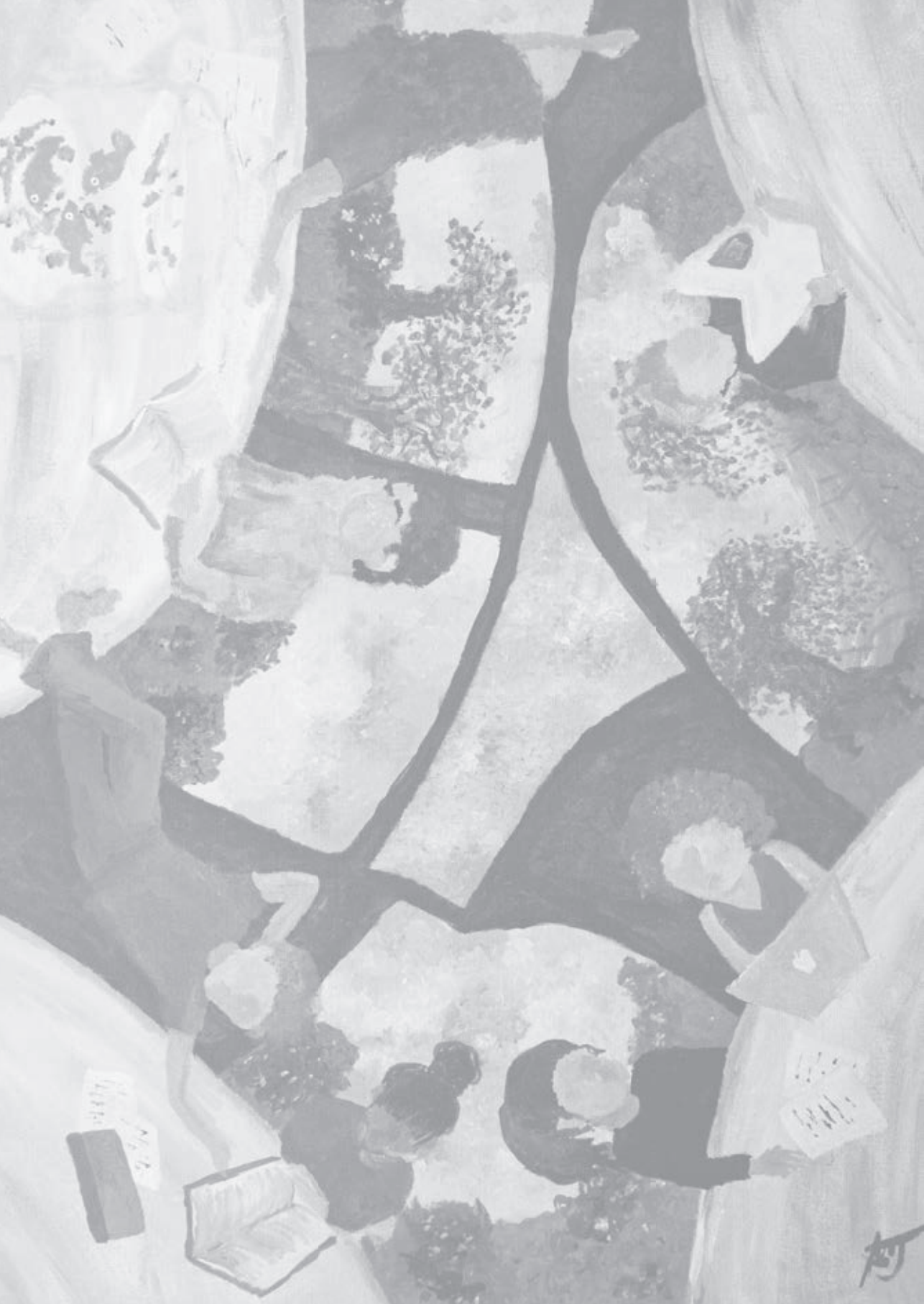
## 4.6 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate EFL literature teaching through the perspectives of a large group of secondary school students. The findings show that although there are considerable differences between the perspectives of

students in different schools, each of the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach nevertheless featured in all but one of our 15 schools. Furthermore, the Language approach featured as the most dominant approach. In other words, the students indicated that they primarily see the EFL literature component as a means of improving their language skills but they also, in varying degrees, indicate benefits related to the context, reader, and Text approach. Considering the impact a student's perspective has on how they learn, these findings have significant implications for the further implementation and development of integrated foreign language and literature curricula. If teachers want to create the desirable situation of congruence and constructive friction in their foreign language literature lessons, focusing on the Language approach in combination with the Context, Reader, and Text approach appears to be the way forward.

Understanding the range of student experiences within classes could contribute to effectively educating a wide variety of students (Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; see also Zapata, 2016), and there are different ways in which teachers can implement the findings from this study. This would most probably take the form of a small, localized research study in which teachers would: (1) find out what *their* students believe are the benefits of foreign language literature education, (2) compare the students' perspectives with the curriculum they are offered, and (3) enrich existing programmes. Ways in which the student perspective can be researched within the classroom context are, for example: organizing focus groups where students discuss a particular part of the curriculum; organizing student presentations in which they explain what they would like to learn, how they would like to learn this and why; constructing a web quest where students research different ways of teaching literature and comment on them; or letting students design their perfect foreign language literature lesson. Gaining insight into how students perceive the benefits of a particular component of the curriculum can enhance current educational practice (Brown, 2009) and re-inform existing conversations about educational reform (Cook-Sather, 2002). This is especially valuable considering the current position of foreign language literature education in its transition towards an integrated language and literature curriculum.





# CHAPTER 5

## **Student motivation in Dutch secondary school EFL literature lessons**

This chapter is based on: Bloemert, J., Jansen, E. & Paran, A.  
(accepted). Student motivation in Dutch secondary school EFL  
literature lessons. *Applied Linguistic Review*.



## **Abstract**

Foreign language curricula worldwide have seen a revival of the inclusion of literary texts, promoting so-called language-literature instruction. Responding to the plea for more empirical research in this area, specifically in secondary education, this study investigates the student's perspective by looking at the relationship between their level of engagement in literature lessons in English as a foreign language (EFL) and how they value these lessons. A total of 365 Dutch students from six secondary schools participated in the study. Data was collected via a four-point Likert-type questionnaire. The findings revealed that students primarily value EFL literature lessons for improving their language proficiency but no significant correlations were found between engagement and language aspects. Implications for curriculum development include a tripartite focus on language learning, literary study, as well as personal development.

## 5.1 Introduction

Ever since the Modern Language Association (2007) published a report in which an integration of foreign language and literature curricula was advocated, research into the use of literature in foreign language teaching has seen a resurgence worldwide (Hall, 2015; Paesani 2011). Although there is an increasing body of research in this area, focusing on the use of literature in language courses and the use of language in literature courses (such as Barrette, Paesani, & Vinall, 2010; Macleroy, 2013; and Paesani & Allen, 2012), this research is either predominantly theoretical or primarily takes place in higher educational contexts. In order to move this area of research forward, more empirical research is needed, especially in the context of secondary education, which is where most foreign language teaching takes place. Moreover, the current discussions on the use of literature in foreign language teaching could benefit from including the students' perspective (Brown 2009; Vermunt & Verloop 1999) as part of this development. Drawing on the work of Skinner, Kindermann, and Furrer (2009) and Wigfield and Eccles (2000), it is possible to gain access to the student perspective through examining the students' level of engagement (an external manifestation of motivation) as well as how students view the importance of foreign language literature lessons (an internal manifestation of motivation). This study investigates the relationship between student engagement and the importance students ascribe to EFL literature lessons in secondary school classrooms, thus addressing the empirical research gap referred to above. Gaining insight into what engaged students as well as disaffected ones value regarding the inclusion of literature in foreign language literature lessons should provide essential information for educational researchers, policy makers, and teachers.

## 5.2 Background

### 5.2.1 Language-literature instruction in foreign language curricula

There is a growing global awareness that where literature is taught in a foreign language, literature and language should go hand in hand in the curriculum. This so-called language-literature instruction is defined by Paesani (2011) as “the deliberate integration of language development and literary study at all levels of the university curriculum” (p. 162). Newfield and D'Abdon (2015), for

example, provide a recent example of such integration, reconceptualizing poetry as a multimodal genre in the foreign language-literature secondary classroom. Even though this is not new, Carter (2015) argues that this deliberate integration is carried out more consciously now: “many of the questions first raised 30 or more years ago are still being asked today, in many cases with greater sharpness and relevance to the design of today’s curricula in language and literature” (p. 317). Several frameworks based on practitioner evidence and beliefs have been developed to promote this integration in teaching practice, generally including a linguistic, a cultural, and a personal enrichment approach to foreign language literature (e.g. Carter and Long 1991; Lazar 1993; Maley & Duff 2007). Although these frameworks generally lack empirical research and validation, the most recent discussions have moved past whether literature should be a part of foreign language curricula, towards a discussion on how the two components should be integrated, visualized by Paran’s (2008) quadrant of the intersection of literature and language teaching (Figure 2.1). (See also Paesani 2011 for a review within the context of U.S. institutions of higher education).

### **5.2.2 Students’ perspective on EFL literature classes**

Previous research in a variety of educational contexts around the world suggests that for students in the foreign language literature classroom it is language learning that comes to the fore. In the secondary school context, linguistic relevance and utility appeared, for example, pivotal in the study we reported in Chapter 4 where we investigated the perception of 635 Dutch secondary school students of their EFL literature lessons. By answering a single open question, these students reported that the benefits of EFL literature lessons were first and foremost to improve their English language speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Similar results were found in a Higher Education context by Martin and Laurie (1993), who report that students of French at an Australian university “are hesitant about literature as a formal part of their language course” (p. 204) because their primary objective is linguistic and improving their language proficiency. Interestingly, however, Akyel and Yalçın (1990), researching the perspectives of Turkish secondary school students, found that there was a connection between the student’s appreciation of EFL literature lessons and their English language proficiency.

Knowing that students perceive the foreign language literature lessons primarily as a language learning opportunity has a major impact on the classroom situation. For example, a foreign language literature lesson “where the teacher

focuses explicitly on language learning and activities are specifically designed to further this aim” (Paran, 2008, p. 466) could establish a “congruent situation” (Vermunt & Verloop 1999, p. 270) with a high level of agreement and understanding between teacher and students. On the other hand, a foreign language literature lesson with a purely literary goal where “any focus on language is on its literary effects” (Paran, 2008, p. 467) could create undesirable destructive frictions “which may cause a decrease in learning or thinking skills” (Vermunt & Verloop 1999, p. 270). Furthermore, Brown (2009) argues that how students perceive lessons, and to what extent it is similar or disparate to their teachers’, has an impact on student achievement. To summarise, it is important to include students’ perceptions in the current discussions regarding the inclusion of literary texts in the foreign language classroom (See also Chapter 4).

### 5.2.3 Student engagement as an external manifestation of motivation

Student engagement can be considered as the external “manifestation of a motivated student” (Skinner et al. 2009, p. 494). In this study we follow Skinner’s motivational conceptualization of behavioural and emotional engagement and disaffection. Skinner et al. (2009) refers to engagement as “the quality of a student’s connection or involvement with the endeavour of schooling and hence with the people, activities, goals, values, and place that compose it” (p. 494). According to Skinner, Saxton, Currie, & Shusterman (2017), following this definition, engagement can be understood as an intrinsic motivational factor identified by self-determination theory.

Even though the growing international interest in student engagement has resulted in diverse conceptualizations of the term (Fredricks, McColskey, Meli, Mordica, Montrosse, & Mooney, 2011), most researchers consider engagement as a combination of a number of components, identified as emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and social (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; for alternative interpretations of engagement see for example Zepke, 2011 and Bryson, 2014). The two components most often included in studies of engagement are behavioural and emotional engagement (Lee, 2014), the two components also distinguished in a motivational conceptualization of engagement. (For other combinations of the four components see Lambert, Philp, & Nakamura, 2017; Qiu & Lo, 2017).

One notable feature of a motivational conceptualization of engagement is that participation in the classroom includes both an emotional and a behavioural

component (Skinner et al., 2009). Emotional engagement, also called affective or psychological engagement (Lee, 2014), focuses on states “that are germane to students’ emotional involvement during learning activities such as enthusiasm, interest, and enjoyment” (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008, p. 766). This includes affective reactions, such as whether students feel good and interested and whether they enjoy learning new things. Behavioural engagement is described by Skinner et al. (2008) as “the students’ effort, attention, and persistence during the initiation and execution of learning activities” (p. 766). Indicators are, for example, amount of effort, persistence and active involvement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016), which are expressed in trying hard to do well in school and participating in class discussions.

Another notable feature of a motivational conceptualization of engagement is the presence of its opposite, labelled disaffection (Skinner et al. 2009). Importantly, disaffection is more than merely the absence of engagement, because it “refers to the occurrence of behaviours and emotions that reflect maladaptive motivational states” (Skinner et al. 2008, p. 767). Disaffected behaviours include lack of initiation and passivity, expressed in students doing just enough to get by and students pretending to act as if they were participating. Disaffected emotions include feelings of sadness, boredom, and anxiety, expressed by students feeling worried, discouraged or frustrated.

#### **5.2.4 Students’ view of the importance of foreign language literature lessons as an internal manifestation of motivation**

In the same way that student engagement is regarded as the external manifestation of a motivated student, how students view the importance of foreign language literature lessons can be regarded as an internal manifestation of motivation. Knowing how students value foreign language literature is extremely relevant in view of the different ways in which literary focus and language learning are moving towards being integrated. This information can assist teachers in creating congruent instructional environments and, from there, promote desirable constructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). According to Vermunt and Verloop (1999), constructive frictions “represent a challenge for students to increase their skill in a learning or thinking strategy” (p. 270). In the foreign language literature lesson, by first creating a situation of congruence through, for example, addressing specific vocabulary in a literary text, teachers can move towards constructive frictions by bringing in elements such as literary terminology or biographical information.

This line of reasoning is empirically supported by Brown (2009), who, argued that mismatches between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding abstract L2 acquisition and concrete pedagogical practices "can negatively affect L2 students' satisfaction with the language class and can potentially lead to the discontinuation of L2 study" (p. 46).

Why a student values certain aspects of foreign language literature more than others can depend on several factors. Eccles (1983) identified four major components of subjective values: attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost. According to this so-called Expectancy-Value model of achievement, the subjective task value can be understood as the following student question: "Do I want to do this activity and why?" (Wigfield & Cambria 2010, p. 2). Wigfield and Eccles (2000) argue that these values, combined with a student's belief about how well he/she will do, can explain a student's 'choice, persistence and performance" (p. 68). Therefore, by investigating the relationship between engaged and disaffected students and what they value, the study should provide insights that seem most relevant for educational researchers, policy makers, and teachers focusing on the foreign language literature curriculum.

### 5.2.5 Research questions

Although the resurgent position of literature in foreign language curricula is increasingly accepted, in a recent symposium on research in EFL literature education at the IATEFL Annual Conference, Paran (2018) argued that challenges in this area of research lie in the lack of empirical research and appropriate data collection and data analysis. In response to this plea, this study explores EFL literature lessons in a secondary school context through the level of student engagement as well as their ascribed importance of the subject. The study addressed the following three research questions:

1. To what extent are students engaged during EFL literature lessons?
2. What level of importance do students ascribe to EFL literature lessons?
3. What is the relationship between the students' level of engagement and the importance they ascribe to EFL literature lessons?

## 5.3 Methods

### 5.3.1 Participants

Sixteen intact upper college EFL classes from 6 Dutch secondary schools participated in this study. All students ( $n = 356$ , average student age 17) were native Dutch speakers who were learning English as a foreign language and who were considered to be at upper-intermediate (B2) proficiency levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001).

In Dutch secondary education, EFL is a compulsory subject where foreign language learning is firmly established and linked to learning outcomes by the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001). However, the required literature component within the EFL curriculum is ill-structured. The only requirement is that teachers adhere to the following three core curriculum standards:

1. Students can recognize and distinguish literary text types and use literary terms when interpreting literary texts
2. Students can give an overview of the main events of literary history and place the studied works in this historic perspective
3. Students can report about their reading experiences of at least three literary works with clear arguments  
(Meijer and Fasoglio 2007, p. 55)

Apart from these three core curriculum standards, however, teachers have complete freedom when it comes to the choice of literary works, the amount of time spent on literature, and the way literature is taught and tested.

### 5.3.2 Procedure

The data collection for this study comprised a student survey with Likert-scale statements, which was first piloted in one secondary school class ( $n = 28$ ) in June 2015. Following the analyses of this pilot run, some items were reworded to improve comprehensibility. The final version of the questionnaire was administered in June 2016 and June 2017.

### 5.3.3 Data collection method and analysis

#### 5.3.3.1 *Measuring level of engagement and level of importance*

In order to measure the level of student engagement we used an instrument based on the student survey of the Engagement versus Disaffection (EvsD) instrument (Skinner et al. 2009). The instrument was translated into Dutch and adapted to EFL literature lessons. In the process of translation four items were deleted from the original instrument due to ambiguity. (See Appendix II for the original and which items were deleted). The students were asked to report on a scale of 1 - 4 (1 = I disagree, 4 = I agree), as in the original instrument, on their own behavioural and emotional engagement and disaffection during EFL literature lessons. Behavioural engagement was measured using 5 items that tapped students' attention and participation during the EFL literature lessons (Cronbach  $\alpha = .78$ ). Behavioural disaffection was measured using 4 items that tapped students' lack of effort (Cronbach  $\alpha = .76$ ). Students' emotional engagement was assessed using 5 items that tapped whether students felt good during the EFL literature lessons and whether they enjoyed learning new things (Cronbach  $\alpha = .84$ ). Emotional disaffection was assessed using 9 items that tapped emotions indicating boredom and discouragement (Cronbach  $\alpha = .63$ ).

In order to measure the level of importance students ascribed to EFL literature lessons, we used the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning. The students were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 - 4 (1 = not important, 4 = important) to what extent they deemed each of the underlying elements important (see Appendix III). Descriptive statistics were then calculated for each element.

#### 5.3.3.2 *Calculating relationships between engagement and importance*

To calculate the relationship between engagement and importance we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the items of the Comprehensive Approach to define the underlying structure based on the students' answers. Secondly, we employed a correlation analysis to calculate whether level of engagement is significantly related to the ascribed level of importance. The  $\alpha$  level was set at  $p < .05$ .

Based on an analysis of the distribution of mean difference and correlational effects observed in 91 meta-analyses and 346 primary studies, Plonsky and Oswald (2014) propose the following field-specific scale for interpreting and reporting effect sizes for correlation coefficients in L2 research which we will follow in



this study: small (.25), medium (.40), and large (.60). Furthermore, Plonsky and Oswald (2014) recommend taking into consideration eight additional factors when interpreting L2 effect sizes. We consider and discuss the relevant factors in the interpretation of our results below.

## 5.4 Results

### 5.4.1 Research question 1: To what extent are students engaged during EFL literature lessons?

Table 5.1 shows the descriptive statistics for the measures of emotional and behavioural engagement and disaffection.

**Table 5.1** Descriptive statistics for level of Engagement & Disaffection.

Scales of Skinner et al.'s (2009) EvsD (adapted)	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	$\alpha$ (No. of items)
Emotional engagement	351	1.00	4.00	2.71 (.78)	.841 (5)
Behavioural engagement	356	1.00	4.00	2.60 (.62)	.782 (5)
Emotional disaffection	356	1.00	3.00	1.72 (.40)	.627 (9)
Behavioural disaffection	356	1.00	4.00	2.43 (.69)	.762 (4)

We first checked whether the four scales from the EvsD instrument also formed reliable scales with our data. As can be seen in Table 5.1, the coefficients ranged from .627 (minimally reliable) to .841 (highly reliable) (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). For each of the four scales, students scored between 1 and 4, apart from emotional disaffection with a maximum score of 3. Looking at engagement first, the mean scores for emotional engagement ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) as well as behavioural engagement ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = .62$ ) can be considered moderately high. In other words, Dutch secondary school students are, on average, moderately engaged during EFL literature lessons. Furthermore, the difference between the students' emotional and behavioural engagement is significant ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = .78$  and  $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = .62$ , respectively;  $t(350) = 6.697$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $d = 0.1561$ ), indicating that students are significantly more engaged emotionally than behaviourally. With regard to the students' disaffection, results show that the students are significantly more disaffected behaviourally than emotionally ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = .69$  and  $M = 1.72$ ,  $SD = .40$ , respectively;  $t(355) = -19.523$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $d = 1.259$ ). This means that students show more disaffection in their behaviour than they appear to experience emotionally.

### 5.4.2 Research question 2: What level of importance do students ascribe to EFL literature lessons?

In order to find out how Dutch secondary school students regard EFL literature lessons, we investigated the perceived level of importance of the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach. Table 5.2 presents the descriptive statistics for the level of importance of each of the underlying elements, in descending order.

**Table 5.2** Descriptive statistics for level of importance of the underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach

Element	<i>n</i>	Level of Importance <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )
Language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)	360	3.66 (.64)
Vocabulary and idioms	359	3.41 (.73)
Personal development	361	3.34 (.79)
Grammar and syntax	359	3.24 (.91)
Literary taste	359	2.92 (.90)
Historical, cultural, and social context	361	2.85 (.86)
Literary terminology	360	2.84 (.84)
Story, plot, and theme	359	2.80 (.88)
Literary history	360	2.69 (.89)
Setting	360	2.55 (.90)
Genre	360	2.47 (.81)
Characters	357	2.36 (.86)
Language development and variety	360	2.33 (.87)
Reading experience	359	2.29 (.87)
Biographical information	359	2.11 (.81)

The results in Table 5.2 show that the students regard Language approach elements, i.e. ‘Language skills’ ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = .64$ ), ‘Vocabulary and idioms’ ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = .73$ ), and ‘Grammar and syntax’ ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) as especially important during EFL literature lessons. What also stands out is that the students valued ‘Personal development’ and ‘Literary taste’ also quite highly (respectively 3.34 and 2.92). Even though each of the 15 elements was scored throughout the range – i.e. between 1 and 4 - indicating a wide range in the way students regard the importance of the elements, ten of the fifteen elements were, on average, regarded as (somewhat) important, with a score of 2.5 or above.

### 5.4.3 Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the students' level of engagement and the importance they ascribe to EFL literature lessons?

In order to reduce the data for further analysis a principal components analysis using a Varimax rotation was performed on the 15 underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach. Based on the scree plot and the interpretability of the factor solution, a three-factor solution was selected, all with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 54% of the variance. Table 5.3 presents the pattern structure of the exploratory factor analysis, the items loading on each factor and the reliability coefficients of each factor as estimated by Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 5.3** Factor analysis of Comprehensive Approach / Loadings for three factors

No	Item	F1	F2	F3
Factor 1: Literature ( $\alpha = .855$ )				
8	Literary history	<b>0.800</b>	0.029	-0.049
7	Historical, cultural, and social context	<b>0.772</b>	0.041	0.152
3	Setting	<b>0.692</b>	-0.089	0.355
6	Biographical information	<b>0.662</b>	-0.035	0.118
4	Story, plot, and theme	<b>0.639</b>	-0.040	0.448
1	Literary terminology	<b>0.607</b>	0.428	-0.155
5	Characters	<b>0.596</b>	-0.186	0.354
2	Genre	<b>0.581</b>	0.038	0.053
15	Language development & variety	<b>0.550</b>	0.100	0.213
Factor 2: Language ( $\alpha = .721$ )				
12	Grammar and syntax	-0.054	<b>0.820</b>	0.053
13	Vocabulary and idioms	-0.014	<b>0.759</b>	0.176
14	Language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)	0.075	<b>0.741</b>	0.176
Factor 3: Personal Development ( $\alpha = .578$ )				
10	Literary taste	0.192	0.063	<b>0.794</b>
11	Personal development	-0.006	0.262	<b>0.657</b>
9	Reading experience	0.259	0.153	<b>0.511</b>

The first factor contained 9 items with factor loadings from .550 to .800 and had an eigenvalue of 4.7, which explained 31% of the total variance. We labelled this factor Literature: the items are related to the Text approach (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Context approach (Items 6, 7, and 8), and Language approach (Item 15). The second factor contained 3 items with factor loadings from .741 to .820 and had an eigenvalue of 2.2, which explained 15% of the total variance. It was labelled Language, as the items clearly relate language areas – grammar, vocabulary, and the four skills (items 12, 13 and 14 respectively). The third factor was contained by

three items (Items 9, 10, and 11), with factor loadings from .511 to .794 and had an eigenvalue of 1.2, explaining 8% of the variance. Because all three items were related to the Reader approach, we named this factor Personal Development.

The Language and the Literature factors formed reliable scales, with highly reliable coefficients of  $\alpha = .721$  and  $\alpha = .855$ , respectively. Even though the coefficient for the Personal Development factor ( $\alpha = .578$ ) can be considered unacceptably low (Cohen et al. 2011), because of its content we do use it in the analysis, realizing we have to be careful in the interpretation of the results with this factor.

Table 5.4 shows the descriptive statistics for the items loading on each of the three factors. Considering the fact that we used a 4-point Likert scale, the mean score of factor 2, Language, is considered very high ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .613$ ). This is followed by factor 3, Personal Development, ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = .642$ ); the mean score of factor 1, Literature, was the lowest ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = .584$ ) but still above the midpoint of the scale, therefore considered positive. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the mean scores for the language and literature factors,  $t(359) = 20.67$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 1.470$ ; the personal development and literature factors,  $t(361) = 8.391$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .473$ ; and the personal development and language factors,  $t(360) = -14.915$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .940$ .

**Table 5.4** Descriptive statistics for each factor

Factor	Items	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )
1. Literature	9	361	1	4	2.56 (.584)
2. Language	3	360	1	4	3.44 (.613)
3. Personal Development	3	361	1	4	2.85 (.642)

Table 5.5 reports the results of the Pearson product-moment correlations to examine the relationships between student engagement and the level of importance regarding EFL literature. All correlations between engagement (both emotional and behavioural) and the three factors Literature, Language, and Personal Development were positive and the correlations between disaffection and the three factors were negative. In other words, a higher level of engagement was associated with a higher level of ascribed importance and a higher level of disaffection was associated with a lower level of ascribed importance.

**Table 5.5** Correlation analysis of engagement and level of importance

	Importance			Engagement & disaffection			
	Language	Personal development	Literature	Emotional engagement	Behavioural engagement	Emotional disaffection	Behavioural disaffection
Language		.286**	.088	.128*	.034	-.075	-.007
Personal development			.412**	.311**	.273**	-.141**	-.241**
Literature				.588**	.482**	-.271**	-.420**
Emotional engagement					.526**	-.360**	-.467**
Behavioural engagement						-.192**	-.655**
Emotional disaffection							.315**
Behavioural disaffection							

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Of the three factors, the Literature factor showed the strongest positive significant correlation with the level of emotional and behavioural engagement ( $r = .588$ ,  $p < .000$  and  $r = .482$ ,  $p < .000$ , respectively). The Literature factor also showed the strongest negative significant correlation with the level of emotional and behavioural disaffection ( $r = -.271$ ,  $p < .000$  and  $r = -.420$ ,  $p < .000$ , respectively). Thus, of the three factors, the Literature factor has the strongest positive relation to the level of student engagement and the strongest negative relation to the level of student disaffection. This indicates that students who find Literature factor elements important generally show a high level of engagement and a low level of disaffection.

The Personal Development factor also showed small positive significant correlations with the level of emotional and behavioural engagement ( $r = .311$ ,  $p < .000$  and  $r = .273$ ,  $p < .000$ , respectively). For this factor, we also found a small negative significant correlation with the level of emotional and behavioural disaffection ( $r = -.141$ ,  $p < .008$  and  $r = -.241$ ,  $p < .000$ , respectively). The generally small significant correlations between level of engagement and the Personal Development factor suggest that students who find this factor important generally show a moderate level of engagement and disaffection.

The Language factor only showed one small significant positive correlation with emotional engagement ( $r = .128$ ,  $p < .017$ ). The general lack of significant

correlations between the Language factor and level of engagement as well as disaffection indicates that whether or not students find the Language factor important, this does not seem to have an impact on their levels of engagement or disaffection.

We also analysed whether there were significant correlations between the three factors. As Table 5.5 shows, there is a medium positive significant correlation between the Personal Development factor and the Literature factor ( $r = .412, p < .000$ ) and a small significant correlation between the Personal Development factor and the Language factor ( $r = .286, p < .000$ ). This indicates that students who find the Personal Development factor important, generally also find the other two factors important. The lack of significant correlation between the Language factor and the Literature factor indicates that whether or not students value the Language factor, it does not appear to impact how they value the Literature factor (and vice versa).

To summarise, Dutch secondary school students indicate that they believe the Language factor in EFL literature lessons is very important ( $M = 3.44$  on a scale of 1-4). These students are emotionally and behaviourally moderately engaged and disaffected during the EFL literature lessons. The correlation analysis revealed that whenever students value the Literature factor highly ( $M = 2.56$ ) they also show a high level of engagement and a low level of disaffection.

## 5.5 Discussion

In this chapter we explored Dutch secondary school students' motivation in EFL literature lessons. More specifically, we explored to what extent students are engaged during EFL literature lessons, to what extent they value EFL literature, and whether there are any relationships between these two components.

Our results indicate that the way students view EFL literature lessons differs from our interpretation, represented by the Comprehensive Approach, which was validated with Dutch secondary school EFL teachers (Chapter 2). An exploratory factor analysis resulted in three factors instead of the original four factors of the Comprehensive Approach, leading us to identify two prominent differences. The first difference is that from a student perspective, the Text and Context approaches within the Comprehensive Approach seem to be considered as one (the so-called Literature factor). Secondly, the element 'Language development and variety',

which was originally considered to be part of the Language approach, had the highest loading on the Literature factor. In other words, from a student perspective this element bears a stronger relation to elements such ‘Literary terminology’ than to elements of the Language factor such as ‘Language skills’. What is particularly important is that these results empirically underscore the tripartite frameworks based on beliefs and practitioner evidence suggested by for example Carter and Long (1991), Lazar (1993, and Maley and Duff (2007). As far as we are aware, this is the first empirical support for these frameworks. Knowing that students do not view knowledge about the development of the English language as beneficial for their language development could have implications for classroom practice. One way of making this element of EFL literature education more relevant in the eyes of students, could be for teachers to design activities in which they illustrate how knowledge about the development can benefit language learning development.

Our study supports the results of previous studies such as Martin and Laurie (1993) (see also Chapter 4), showing that students predominantly find language factor elements such as ‘Language skills’, ‘Vocabulary and idioms’, and ‘Grammar and syntax’, important in their EFL literature lessons. An argument could be made that one of the reasons why students have a pragmatic and utilitarian perspective on EFL literature is the way foreign languages are taught in Dutch secondary schools and the position of literature in their studies. The current message students probably receive is that learning a foreign language primarily means mastering language skills such as reading and writing. Within this context, it is very likely that students perceive EFL literature lessons primarily as yet another opportunity to master these language skills.

However, our results do not indicate that the students believe that language learning is only about acquiring language skills and linguistic competence, a position which Paran (2008, p. 468) calls the “isolationist position.” Both the Personal Development factor and the Literature factor hold a mean score of 2.85 and 2.56 respectively, which means that these two factors are also regarded as moderately important by the students. In comparison to Chapter 4, in which a large group of secondary school students was asked an open question about the benefits of EFL literature education, the answers in our current study seem more varied. For example, when students were asked to come up with their own answers, they did not mention Literature factor elements often. As we suggested in Chapter 4, for students to answer a single open question on the spot depends a great deal on their ability to articulate their thoughts and their willingness to elaborate their

answers in detail. However, when presented with all 15 underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach to Foreign Language literature teaching and learning in our current study, students rated these fairly high. This difference in results as an artefact of methodological choices is also valuable to the empirical body of research into the area of foreign language literature education because it shows that methodological choices have a demonstrative impact on the outcome of research.

The results also show that students scored each of the three factors between a 1 and a 4, which means that students vary greatly in what they find important. Applying these results to teaching practice, when a class is asked whether and why they want to do a certain activity (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010) a variety of answers is to be expected based on the students' subjective values. In order to establish desirable situations of congruence as well as constructive frictions (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999), teachers could benefit from language-literature instruction where the balance between the Literature, Language, and Personal Development factors plays out differently in different lessons. These results could also be of interest to policy makers working on guidelines for a more integrated language-literature curriculum.

Our study shows, unsurprisingly, that students who value the Literature factor highly generally show a high level of engagement and a low level of disaffection in EFL literature classrooms. On the other hand, whether students value the Language factor highly does not seem to have an impact on their levels of engagement or disaffection. Due to the huge differences in literature curricula and the large number of classes that participated in our study, the data we collected does not provide any insights into what is actually happening in literature classrooms, such as types of activities, how literary texts are approached, or which literary texts are used. Nevertheless, an assumption can be made that, based on the three Core Curriculum Standards, there is a strong focus on the Literature factor, resembling Paran's (2008) third quadrant, where "literature is only discussed as literature and no overt focus is paid to language development" (p. 467). For students who value the Literature factor highly, this would create a congruent instructional environment. However, it could be the case that students who value the language factor highly still find sufficient attention to language in these lessons (for example, through language practice), which could explain why there is no relation between valuing the Language factor highly and students' levels of engagement.

The lack of a significant relationship between the Language and Literature factors could suggest that Carter's (2015) observation of a dichotomy between teachers, where language teachers are mainly concerned with "relevance and utility" and where



literature teachers are mainly concerned with “literature, culture, and significance” (p. 316), is also reflected in the views of our student sample. This argument is further supported by the position of the Personal Development factor. Our results show that students value this factor as somewhat important ( $M = 2.85$ ) and we found a small but significant relation between the value for this factor and levels of student engagement. In addition, we found relations between the personal development and literature factor and between the personal development and language factor. What these findings seem to suggest is that students value either a literature-personal development approach or a language-personal development approach.

Although we were able to establish several significant correlations in our study, we must repeat that the majority of the correlations were considered small. Nonetheless, according to Plonsky and Oswald (2014), additional factors ought to be taken into account when interpreting effect sizes in L2 research. With regard to our current study, an important factor is what Plonsky and Oswald (2014) call “domain maturity and changes in effect over time” (p. 894). Since quantitative research into the sub-domain of foreign language literature education is only recently emerging (Paran, 2008; Paesani, 2011), these effect sizes should be considered acceptable. These relatively small effect sizes might increase “when the psychometric properties of instruments, the standards for which are generally lower in an emerging research area, are refined over time” (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014, p. 894).

By measuring the students’ level of engagement and disaffection during the EFL literature lessons we not only found that the students were moderately engaged but also that they were moderately disaffected. The significant difference between the students’ behavioural ( $M = 2.43$ ) and emotional ( $M = 1.72$ ) disaffection is especially interesting considering the context of our research. EFL literature lessons are mandatory for Dutch secondary school students, which means that neither EFL teachers nor students can opt out. Knowing that secondary school students show significantly more behavioural disaffection than they appear to experience emotionally is valuable information for EFL teachers.

## 5.6 Conclusion

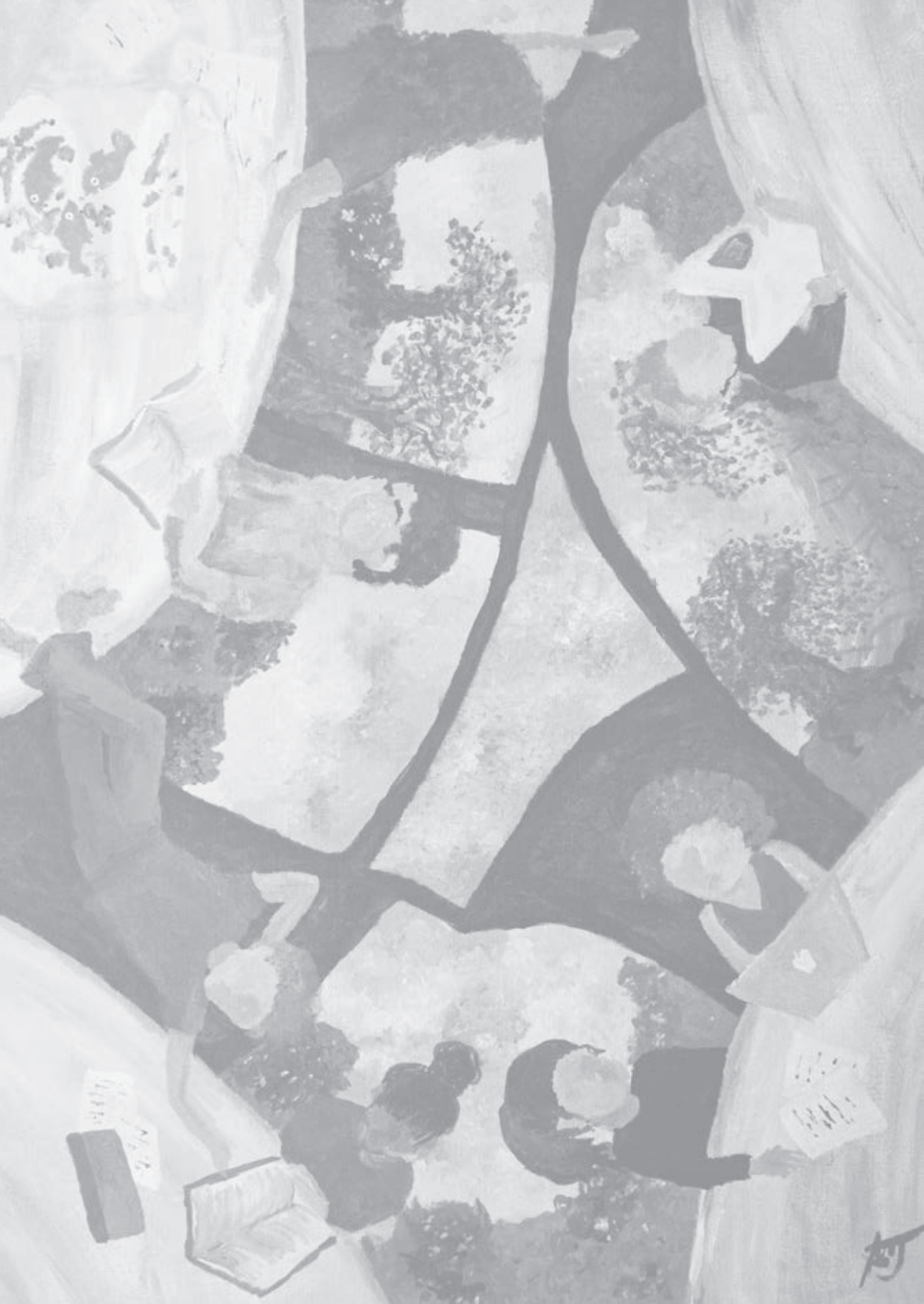
Even though the language-literature divide in foreign language teaching and learning still exists (Paran, 2008), Carter (2015) argues that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century “it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain such divisions” (p. 316). Based on our

results and the results of previous research, we can underline that “the deliberate integration of language development and literary study” (Paesani, 2011, p. 162) is the way forward for foreign language curricula. Our study has shown that students value the language component in EFL literature lessons highly but also that the literature component is valued by decidedly engaged students. Furthermore, the results show that the Personal Development factor appears to be a good fit for engaged as well as disaffected students. The results of this study also provide empirical evidence (through the students’ perspective) for the theoretical tripartite framework, which has been in place since the early 1990s.

The findings of this study should however be interpreted with caution in view of the several minimally reliable scales and the small (though significant) correlation sizes. According to Plonsky and Oswald (2014) “an increase in effect sizes might also be found when the psychometric properties of instruments, the standards for which are generally lower in an emerging research area, are refined over time” (p. 894). Therefore, future empirical research in literature-language instruction should be encouraged to improve psychometric properties of instruments and replicate research in different teaching and learning contexts.

Given the nature of quantitative data, we were unable to deduct the *why* behind the value students ascribed to EFL literature lessons. Uncovering why they generally do not value for example personal reading experiences with literary texts or biographical information will add qualitative depth to this area of research. This links in with Brown’s (2009) plea for more studies that “explore how and where students formulate their ideas about L2 teaching and learning” (p. 56), in our case, the inclusion of literature in EFL teaching and learning.

Other future directions in research in this area should include classroom observations in combination with student motivation, to establish what is actually happening in literature classrooms. Replications of this study in other educational systems would be particularly welcome, to explore whether our findings represent a particular situation in the Netherlands or whether they can be shown to exist in other countries where literature is a compulsory part of the FL curriculum (e.g. Switzerland). In addition, a qualitative analysis of teaching, classroom activities, and interaction in language-literature classrooms where students show high levels of engagement could improve our insights and therefore further research in this area.



# **CHAPTER 6**

**Evaluating the relevance  
and usefulness of the  
Comprehensive Approach in  
EFL literature lessons  
in secondary school  
contexts**



## 6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters in this thesis discussed how research on EFL literature education is slowly gaining ground in the world of Applied Linguistics research. Nevertheless, little scientific attention so far has been given to what is actually happening inside the EFL literature classroom and how teachers experience EFL literature lessons. Moreover, as has been stressed a number of times in this thesis, most research that takes place in this field focuses on higher education (Paran, 2008). In Chapters 2 and 3, we introduced the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning as a pragmatic interpretation of an integrated EFL literature teaching model where literary texts can be taught and studied through a Text-, Context-, Reader-, and a Language Approach. We then used the Comprehensive Approach as an analytical model in two studies focusing on the students (Chapters 4 and 5). We also argued that we need to obtain more detailed data at the secondary school level regarding the way literature is taught thereby taking the three elements - audience, purpose, and context - into serious consideration (section 2.5).

Therefore, in the final empirical chapter of this thesis, we report on a longitudinal multiple case study ( $n = 8$ ), which involves an intervention that focused on enriching existing EFL literature curricula through the Comprehensive Approach. We first focus on the changes in the EFL literature lessons regarding the time spent on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach by means of video recorded EFL literature lessons. We then report on the changes the teachers perceived after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year by means of interviews. The aim of this chapter is an evaluation of the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach from a teacher's perspective. In this chapter, relevance refers to how teachers experienced working with the Comprehensive Approach. Usefulness in this study refers to the applicability of the Comprehensive Approach to teachers' regular curricula and classroom contexts.

## 6.2 Background

### 6.2.1 Theory of Change

According to Desimone (2009), a conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development on teachers and students includes four interactive critical features: a teacher (1) takes part in a professional development programme

and (2) experiences changes in their knowledge, skills, and attitude; (3) these changes lead to changes in instruction, which ultimately (4) lead to increased student learning (Desimone, 2009). Furthermore, a professional development programme is sustainable when both the Theory of Change (does the new pedagogical content knowledge improve teacher knowledge and instruction?) and the Theory of Instruction (does the new pedagogical content knowledge improve student learning?) work (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014). This means that, when studying a curriculum reform, the first step is to find out whether the new pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) improves a teacher's knowledge and instruction (Theory of Change). In order to ensure a successful Theory of Change, it is essential to focus on the new PCK that teachers should learn as well as the way teachers are supported in enacting that main idea in their own teaching contexts (Kennedy, 2016). To summarise, the core of curriculum reform lies with the changes in teachers' PCK, the strategy to help teachers gain this knowledge and, eventually, how teachers translate this knowledge into their existing teaching context. This also means that the success of a curriculum reform depends largely on how teachers make meaning of the reform.

### **6.2.2 Sensemaking**

How teachers construct meaning and adapt their teaching in the context of curriculum reform is strongly determined by their views on teaching and learning in general (Clarke & Peterson, 1986), and by their views on PCK in particular (Magnusson, Krajcik, & Borko, 1999). In other words, how EFL teachers make sense of a teaching model such as the Comprehensive Approach in terms of their PCK beliefs and whether they experience this as useful and relevant has an impact on how they implement this in their existing curriculum. One of the reasons why curriculum reform is generally considered full of complexities and immensely multidimensional (Fullan, 2006) is because of the meaning of such reform as contextually determined (Coburn, 2001; Lutzenberg, van Veen, & Imants, 2013; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002).

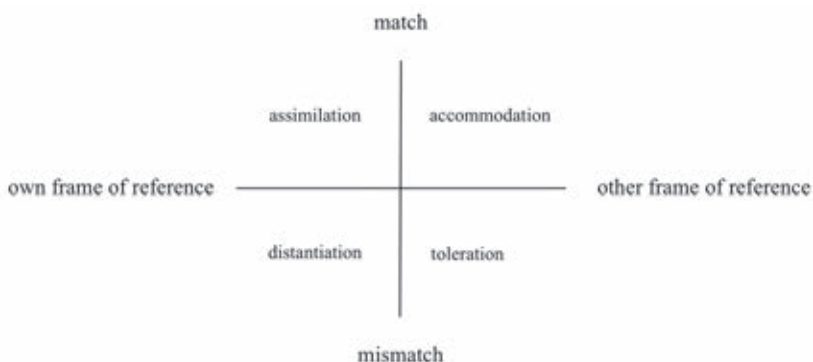
Sensemaking theory describes the process of how teachers create meaning (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). According to this theory, meaning making is not about right or wrong, but focuses instead on action verbs such as: construct, create, react, imagine, and devise (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). This makes sensemaking a central issue in educational reform, because "it is the primary site where meanings materialize that inform and constrain identity and action"

(Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). This materialization of meaning is the end-result of an iterative and circular sensemaking process. Weick (1995) explains: “To talk about sensemaking is to talk about reality as an ongoing accomplishment that takes form when people make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves and their creations” (p. 15). Making sense of new information through retrospection means that acting upon the sensemaking could precede the actual sensemaking itself. Through the continuous interaction between sensemaking and acting, teachers actively construct understandings through the lens of their pre-existing cognitive framework and practices (Coburn, 2001). Sensemaking is therefore not only highly personal, but also very selective (Spillane et al., 2002; Weick et al., 2005).

### 6.2.3 Practicality Theory

The selective nature of sensemaking often results in a heterogeneous interpretation, adaptation, or even a transformation of the initial intent of a reform (Coburn, 2001) which can be connected to the fact that the reality of daily teaching practice can have an influence on the sensemaking process. Practicality Theory (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015) describes three criteria that determine whether a reform is indeed deemed practical. The first criterion focuses on the *instrumentality* of the reform, which means that a reform should have classroom validity, i.e. a reform “must describe a procedure in terms which depict classroom contingencies” (Doyle & Ponder, 1977, p. 7). The second criterion of practicality is the *congruence* between the reform and the teacher’s own frame of reference. The level of congruence depends in part on the extent to which the teacher’s own frame of reference matches the perceived demands of the reform itself (Spillane et al., 2002; Coburn, 2001). Luttenberg, van Veen, & Imants (2013) distinguish two dimensions of attunement to examine the process of teacher sensemaking of reform (as depicted in Figure 6.1). The first dimension, the match/mismatch axis, describes the extent to which a teacher aims at a match between their own frame of reference and the initial intention of the reform. The second axis, the own / other frame of reference axis, refers to the extent to which frame of reference predominates during the sensemaking process. Superimposing the two axes at a right angle to each other creates four types of search for meaning: assimilation, accommodation, toleration, and distantiation.





**Figure 6.1.** The two dimensions and four types of teachers' search for meaning of reforms (Luttenberg et al., 2013, p. 293).

Assimilation involves the process of adapting the initial intent of the reform to fit one's own frame of reference. Accommodation describes the process of adapting one's own frame of reference to fit into the perceived intent of the reform. In other words, the result of an assimilation process is "an alternative of your own frame of reference ('I knew this already')" whereas the result of an accommodation process "leads to a transformed own frame of reference ('I learned something new')" (Luttenberg et al., 2013, p. 194). Toleration involves accepting the initial intent of the reform despite the mismatch with one's own frame of reference. The result of a toleration process is "the coexistence of clearly different frames of reference with no justice done to one's own frame of reference" (Luttenberg et al., 2013, p. 194). Distantiation is the disapproval of the initial intent of the reform allowing one's own frame of reference to predominate. This process results in a rejection of the reform and a maintenance of one's own frame of reference.

The third and final criterion in Practicality Theory is *cost*, conceptualized by Doyle and Ponder (1977) as "a ratio between amount of return and amount of investment" (p. 8). In other words, the final criterion refers to the relationship between available time, resources, and effort and the potential benefits of the reform.

#### 6.2.4 Research questions

As described in section 1.5, the primary function of PCK research is building a bridge between theory and the daily teaching practice. The reciprocal relationship between both components can be mutually beneficial due to the focus on

empirical validation. The present study is an example of PCK research because it aims to evaluate a theoretical teaching model, i.e. the Comprehensive Approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning, in realistic existing teaching contexts in terms of relevance and usefulness. In this chapter, we will examine how teachers experienced the applicability of the Comprehensive Approach in their existing EFL literature lessons and we will analyse how they experienced changes regarding EFL literature teaching. As such, we address the following three central components of PCK research: conceptions of purpose for teaching subject matter, curricular knowledge, and knowledge of instructional strategies (Grossman, 1990). In terms of sensemaking, we will explore how the teachers reacted in terms of assimilation, accommodation, toleration or distantiation, in relation to their PCK beliefs and their practical ethics in terms of instrumentality, congruence, and costs. More concretely, we will investigate the changes the teachers realized in their EFL literature lessons regarding the time spent on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach and we will investigate how teachers experienced working with the Comprehensive Approach in terms of relevance and usefulness. In order to find out how 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, we formulated the following two research questions:

- 1) Which changes in the EFL literature lessons regarding the time spent on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach did teachers realize?
- 2) Which changes regarding EFL literature teaching did teachers perceive after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year?

## 6.3 Method

### 6.3.1 Participants

For the study, a purposive sample of EFL teachers from our professional network was elected. Although purposive sampling raises issues due to researcher bias, we would like to emphasize that this study does not focus on generalizing our results but on evaluating the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach according to teachers who have worked with this approach in their own teaching context. Voluntary participation was an important factor because of the

longitudinal nature (two years), the intensity of data collection of this study, and the assumption that voluntary interventions have a higher initial buy-in, which “goes a long way to improving implementation and facilitating sustainability” (Desimone & Stuke, 2014).

The selection criteria were that the teachers hold a Master’s degree in teaching EFL and that they would teach senior pre-university level year 5 between September 2015 and July 2017. We initially approached eight teachers from eight different schools and all eight teachers volunteered to participate. When two colleagues from schools D and E heard about the participation in this research project they asked if they could also participate, to which we consented. To summarise, in September 2015 we started with ten teachers from eight different schools. One teacher withdrew from the research after a few weeks due to organizational issues at her school. Another teacher withdrew because she accepted a teaching position at a different school after one year. In the end, eight teachers from six different schools participated in this research project. Schools A, B, D, E, and F are regular Dutch secondary schools. School C, however, only offers secondary education for adults (in Dutch: *voortgezet algemeen volwassenen onderwijs*, in short, VAVO). A VAVO school offers students of 16 years or older a fast-track lane, i.e. two years in one, or the option to follow specific subjects at a certain level.

All teachers (five female and three male) held Dutch nationality and had a Master’s level educational degree in EFL teaching. The teachers had an average of 21.25 years (range 8 - 37 years) of experience as EFL teachers. Table 6.1 presents the teachers’ characteristics (all teachers’ names are pseudonyms), the average number of students per class per year (including their Mean age), and the average percentage of EFL literature lessons per year as part of the EFL curriculum. Furthermore, year 1 refers to the academic year 2015 - 2016 before the intervention and year 2 refers to the academic year 2016 - 2017 after the intervention.

**Table 6.1** *Teacher characteristics*

Teacher	School	Teacher age	Teaching experience (years)	Number of students (and Mean age) per class per year		Average % of EFL literature lessons per year
				Year 1	Year 2	
Caitlin	A	62	37	29 (16.1)	28 (15.9)	37%
Doris	B	32	10	31 (16.1)	25 (16.0)	24%
Fred	C	39	8	21 (17.9)	19 (17.9) <sup>2</sup>	42%
Harry	D	56	32	26 (16.2)	25 (16.2)	8%
Liz	D	58	31	28 (16.1)	27 (16.1)	6%
Ralph	E	57	24	24 (16.2)	23 (16.3)	14%
Sarah	E	35	8	23 (16.3)	23 (16.3)	21%
Ysabel	F	46	20	21 (16.2)	14 (16.5)	18%

**Table 6.2** *Texts taught as part of the EFL literature curriculum per school between 2015 - 2017*

Teacher	School	Texts included in the EFL literature curriculum between 2015 - 2017
Caitlin	A	<i>Macbeth</i> (Shakespeare)   extracts from <i>Utopia</i> (More)   <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (Harper Lee), <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (George Orwell), <i>Brave New World</i> (Aldous Huxley), <i>The Circle</i> (Dave Eggers)
Doris	B	<i>Macbeth</i> (Shakespeare)   a selection from: <i>The Help</i> (Stockett), <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (Harper Lee), <i>A Time to Kill</i> (John Grisham), <i>Naughts and Crosses</i> (Malorie Blackman), <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (Toni Morrison), <i>Black Boy</i> (Richard Wright)
Fred	C	<i>Beowulf</i> (Anon.)   <i>The Husband's Message</i> (Anon.)   <i>Against a Dwarf</i> (Anon.)   <i>Bryd one Brete</i> (Anon.)   extract from <i>The Pardoner's Tale</i> (Chaucer)   <i>Alisoun</i> (Anon.)   <i>Go, Lovely Rose</i> (Waller)   <i>Amoretti LXXV</i> (Spenser)   <i>On the Death of my First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips, born the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, and died the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1655</i> (Philips)   <i>One and Twenty</i> (Johnson)   <i>On Opening a Place for Social Prayer</i> (Cowper)   <i>Ode on Solitude</i> (Pope)   <i>Ozymandias</i> (Shelley)   <i>A Poison Tree</i> (Blake)   <i>Where's the Poet?</i> (Keats)   <i>It was a Hard Thing to Undo This Knot</i> (Hopkins)   <i>Duet</i> (Tennyson)   <i>The House of Life: 41. Through Death to Love</i> (Rossetti)   <i>Dulce et Decorum Est</i> (Owen)   <i>Silhouette</i> (Hughes)   <i>Whispers of Immortality</i> (Eliot)   <i>Psalm IV</i> (Ginsburg)   <i>How to Meditate</i> (Kerouac)   <i>For all</i> (Snyder)   <i>I Google Myself</i> (Nichols)   <i>Bridled Vows</i> (Duhig)   <i>The British – serves 60 million</i> (Zephaniah)
Harry	D	<i>Hamlet</i> (Shakespeare)
Liz		
Ralph	E	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (Fitzgerald)   <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> (Mohsin Hamid)   <i>Girl in Translation</i> (Jean Kwok)   extracts from <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> (Chaucer)   Sonnet 18 and 130 (Shakespeare)   <i>To His Coy Mistress</i> (Marvell)   extracts from <i>A Modest Proposal</i> (Swift)   extracts from <i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i> (Coleridge)   <i>Annabel Lee</i> & <i>The Tell Tale Heart</i> (Poe)   extracts from <i>Jane Eyre</i> & <i>Wuthering Heights</i> (Brontë)   extracts from <i>Oliver Twist</i> (Dickens)   extracts from <i>Tess of D'Urbervilles</i> (Hardy)
Sarah		
Ysabel	F	<i>King Lear</i> & <i>Macbeth</i> (Shakespeare)   <i>The Notebook</i> (Nicholas Sparks)   <i>The Talented Mr Ripley</i> (Patricia Highsmith)   extracts from <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> (Chaucer)   extracts from <i>The Tragical History of Dr Faustus</i> (Marlowe)   Sonnet 65 & 43 (Shakespeare)   <i>Death be not Proud</i> & <i>Song</i> (Donne)

Participation in this longitudinal study was voluntary and teachers and students were assured that information they shared would be treated with strict confidentiality and

used only for research purposes. All teachers signed a consent form in which they were informed about the nature and duration of the study. None of the teachers were granted extra time from their respective schools to participate in this research project.

Due to the high level of curricular freedom regarding the design of the EFL literature component (see Chapter 2), the way this component was organized at the six schools varied to a high extent. Table 6.1 shows that the average percentage of EFL literature lessons per year as part of the EFL curriculum varied between 6% for Liz and 42% for Fred. This high level of variety was also visible in the literary texts that were part of the literature curriculum of each school (see Table 6.2).

### **6.3.2 Intervention**

The focus of the intervention was enriching existing EFL literature curricula through the Comprehensive Approach. Part of the intervention consisted of a professional development programme that took place between May 2016 and September 2017 (between year 1 and year 2) and consisted of approximately 12 hours divided over four sessions per school (see Table 6.3). In addition, individual planned and spontaneous coaching sessions took place throughout year 2 whenever there was time or demand. The design of the professional development programme was based on several key studies based on which we selected the following set of core features:

- (1) PCK focus within teachers' own context (Borko, 2004; Little, 2012; van Veen, Zwart, Meirink, & Verloop, 2010)
- (2) Active participation (Borko, 2004; Desimone, 2009; van Veen et al., 2010),
- (3) Ownership and co-construction (Hawley & Valli, 1999)
- (4) Sustained duration (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014; Knapp, 2003; Verloop, 2003), and
- (5) Collective participation (Desimone, 2009; Little, 2012; van Veen et al., 2010; Verloop, 2003)

In terms of the first aspect of Kennedy's (2016) Theory of Action, the Comprehensive Approach constituted the main idea that teachers should learn in terms of content as well as how to implement it in existing curricula. In terms of the second aspect, i.e. the strategy that helps teachers translate this main idea into their own teaching context, we took several additional decisions in designing the professional development programme.

The first decision was to focus on enriching existing curricula. Desimone and Stuke (2014) argue that the key to sustainable development involves “helping teachers become adaptive planners capable of making good decisions over time” (p. 13). Furthermore, because of the nature of the EFL literature curriculum in Dutch secondary education, the existing modules of work are often designed by the teachers themselves and have been part of the curriculum for years (see section 2.4 on curricular heritage). In addition, respecting teachers’ design work, it is also more realistic to assume that teachers will be able to adapt existing modules of work, based on new PCK, more easily than replace them completely.

The second decision concerned the fact that each of the six schools followed the CPD programme onsite. Although van Veen et al. (2010) conclude that the location (i.e. onsite or offsite) of a professional development programme has no relation to the quality of the programme, we decided to offer the programme onsite in order to minimize the burden on the participants. In other words, each of the sessions was held at the participant’s school at days and times convenient for them. An additional advantage for the teachers was that, in most schools, other foreign language teachers joined the participants during the sessions, creating a context of collective participation.

The third decision involved a systematic way of working based on the Backward Design Principle (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In other words, the teachers first designed learning objectives based on their own ideas about EFL literature education, we then discussed how these learning objectives can best be assessed, and finally we looked at materials and lesson design. This interpretation of curriculum (re)design is in line with Cohen’s (1987) understanding of instructional alignment and the Model of Constructive Alignment by Biggs & Tang (2007) and dates back to Tyler’s (1949) rationale for investigating educational curricula. Throughout the sessions, the teachers compared their new insights with their existing curricula, thereby focusing on enrichment.

The fourth and final strategy decision involved a balance between theoretical input and practical translation. In each session the participants were asked to read theoretical background information on for example the Comprehensive Approach, designing learning objectives (e.g. Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and assessing EFL literature (e.g. Carter & Long, 1990; Paran, 2010; Spiro, 1991). This background information was then discussed and translated into instructional behaviour. According to Neuman and Cunningham (2009) “professional development that contains both content and pedagogical knowledge may best support the ability

of teachers to apply literacy knowledge in practice” (p. 534). This active and experiential way of working (Borko, 2004) prevented a theoretical overload and ensured that each session was pragmatic and resulted in tangible output.

Table 6.3 summarizes the activities and the focus of each session.

**Table 6.3** *Overview of the focus of the professional development programme per session*

Focus per session	
Session 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe personal view regarding the EFL literature curriculum</li> <li>2. Summarize personal views into a shared vision</li> <li>3. Background information on the Comprehensive Approach</li> <li>4. Revise shared vision</li> </ol>
Session 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background information on how to formulate learning objectives</li> <li>2. Translate shared vision into learning objectives</li> </ol>
Session 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background information on EFL literature assessment</li> <li>2. Analyse current EFL literature assessment</li> <li>3. Enrich current EFL literature assessment based on ‘new’ learning objectives</li> </ol>
Session 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background information on EFL literature lesson activities and materials</li> <li>2. Analyse current EFL literature activities and materials</li> <li>3. Enrich current EFL literature activities and materials based on ‘new’ learning objectives and enrich assessment</li> </ol>

### 6.3.3 Data collection and analysis

To do justice to the inherent complexity of the goal of this study, an instrumental multisite multiple case study was conducted. In a multiple case study, the researcher “explores real-life, contemporary multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswel & Poth, 2018, p. 96) (see also Yin, 2014). We selected multiple cases because we were interested in the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in naturalistic settings through the eyes of different teachers. Because EFL literature curricula are generally unique and therefore differ per school, we opted for multiple sites.

Within this multiple case study, we applied a mixed-method design, advocated in the literature for purposes of triangulation, development, complementarity, and confrontation (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Moss & Haertel, 2016). Furthermore, we chose an empirical quasi-experimental design to evaluate the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in EFL literature lessons. An experimental condition was established within the quasi-experimental design by comparing the teachers to themselves before (year 1) and after (year 2)

the intervention. For this reason, when the teachers volunteered to participate, they were only informed that the study included two years, that it included an intervention, that the focus of the study was the EFL literature curriculum, and that the data collection involved interviews, student surveys, and video-recording all literature lessons for two years. We did not inform them that our research focused on the way they approach literature. We also asked the teachers to minimize the changes in the literary works that were part of their EFL literature curriculum as well as the number of literature lessons taught per year.

### ***6.3.3.1 Research question 1: Which changes in the EFL literature lessons regarding the time spent on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach did teachers realize?***

In order to find out which changes in the lessons regarding the time spent on the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach the teachers realized (i.e. the Theory of Change), we recorded and analysed EFL literature lessons before and after the intervention. Lesson observations can provide inclusive insights into what actually occurs in the EFL literature classroom. Because this unbiased form of data collection can become distorted when only a selection of lessons is observed, we decided to record and analyse all literature lessons taught by the participating teachers between September 2015 and July 2017 at pre-university level year 5. The literature lessons were videotaped, for which we used a mounted camera positioned at the front of the classroom. This resulted in 276 video-recorded EFL literature lessons, 122 lessons in year 1 and 154 lessons in year 2. The researcher was present during approximately 25% of the lessons and managed the recordings. For the remaining 75%, the teachers recorded the lessons themselves with a camera provided by the researcher. Due to factors such as camera deficiency, sudden change of classrooms or timetables, 3.5 % of the EFL literature lessons taught were not recorded.

We used Mediacoder, a programme designed for time-stamping analyses by the University of Groningen. The 15 underlying elements of the Comprehensive Approach (see Table 4.5) were imported into Mediacoder to serve as the coding scheme. Although designed as conceptually separate, the four approaches and the 15 underlying elements were regularly combined by teachers in their lessons. Whenever this was the case, these instances were double-coded. Because of the variation in lesson duration and number of literature lessons per year per teacher as part of the EFL curriculum (see Table 6.1), we calculated percentages of the



coded lesson time, which allowed for a comparison per teacher as well as between teachers.

Due to the nature of the data, we were only able to code explicit instruction. This means that whenever a teacher did not verbally explicate the intention of the lesson through providing a lecture, an explanation, or assignments, we used the code 'unknown'. The overall average lesson time that was coded this way was 31.6% (range 9% - 47%) in year 1 and 16.8% (range 3% - 33%) in year 2. In other words, we were able to code 68.4% of the total lesson time spent on literature in year 1 and 83.2% in year 2.

Because we only coded explicit instruction that was visible and audible on video, we were unfortunately unable to code the Language approach element 'Language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing)'. For example, the video-recorded data did not provide any insights into whether students were writing in English or in Dutch. Furthermore, only coding direct instruction leaves out any implicit foreign language learning. One of the attempts to empirically investigate Language approach element 'Language skills' in the foreign language literature lessons can be found in a paper by Wolthuis, Bloemert, Tammenga-Helmantel and Paran (under review), entitled "A curriculum in transition: TL/L1 use in Dutch EFL literature lessons." This paper exemplifies how Language approach element 'Language skills' can be investigated as well as the issues and limitations it poses. The study, for example, only included spoken language by teachers and students. We are fully aware of how the decision to leave out this underlying element of the Language approach has an impact on the interpretation of our results, and this issue is further addressed in sections 6.5.

We first calculated the average lesson time spent per teacher per year. We then calculated the difference in time spent on the four approaches from an assumed even distribution. This second step was included because in previous chapters we argued that the four approaches of the Comprehensive Approach function as a unified whole and that an EFL literature curriculum in which all four approaches are addressed in an interrelated way is likely to support high quality teaching and learning. In following this assumption, for the purpose of analysis we assumed an even distribution between the four approaches, which resulted in a division of 25% per approach of the coded lesson time. Although the division of 4 x 25% is a simplification of the underlying notion of the Comprehensive Approach, it allowed us to compare teachers regarding how they spend time on the four approaches (see section 6.5 for a discussion regarding this methodological decision).

The videos were coded by three researchers. The coding instructions were first carefully discussed in order to resolve any discrepancies. The three researchers together coded several parts of lessons by different teachers by going through the coding manual step by step. Then a random lesson was selected and coded individually by one researcher. The coding generated a total of 212 time-stamps (units). The Mediacoder output was transferred to an xls file and the codes were deleted leaving only the time stamps. These time stamps were given to the other two researchers who independently coded each of the 212 time-stamps. An appropriate measure of intercoder agreement for more than two raters is Krippendorff's alpha, which takes into account the possibility of chance agreement and the magnitude of disagreement (Neuendorf, 2002). This was computed using a macro created for SPSS (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007), with the analysis revealing a modest degree of reliability ( $\alpha = .78$ ,  $n = 212$ ). After this procedure, the three researchers discussed any discrepancies and the coding instructions were amended where necessary.

### ***6.3.3.2 Research question 2: Which changes regarding EFL literature teaching did teachers perceive after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year?***

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the eight teachers at the end of year 2 (between May and September 2017) in order to investigate which changes the teachers experienced regarding EFL literature teaching after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Dutch by the same researcher and lasted on average 45 minutes (range between 34 and 53 minutes). The interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim by an independent research assistant.

All transcripts were subjected to a qualitative, inductive analysis in which we followed the coding procedure as defined by Saldaña (2013) as first and second cycle coding methods. During a first reading of the transcripts, emerging impressions were recorded in memos and were used to distinguish specific themes. This was followed by a process of in-vivo coding (first coding cycle) where the data were further analysed to specify these themes, which resulted in initial codes. We selected in-vivo coding because, according to Saldaña (2013), in-vivo coding is appropriate for studies “that prioritize and honour the participants' voice” (p. 91).

In the second cycle, the data were analysed further by re-examining the initial codes through pattern- and focused coding. Whereas pattern coding “develops the category label that identifies similarly coded data”, focused coding “categorizes

coded data based on thematic or conceptual similarity” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209). The analyses of this second cycle resulted in a final list of six themes. As a final step, the themes were mapped in order to be able to answer the research question. During both cycles, memo writing was used as an analytical technique to support the coding procedure. Because the collected data was in Dutch, the analysis was also conducted in Dutch.

Considering the subjectivity and contextual ramifications in qualitative research, we took various measures to maximise validity and reliability from a qualitative perspective (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Yin, 2016). First of all, each of the participants received the interview manuscript for a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, the examples we provide in the results section were only translated when we came to a first full draft of this study in order to ensure staying as close to the initial utterances as possible. To increase the validity of the analyses, the initial coding was verified by an external researcher after the first coding cycle. Discrepancies between the analyses were discussed until full agreement was reached. This process of triangulation was repeated after the second coding cycle.

## 6.4 Results

### 6.4.1 Results research question 1: Time spent on the four approaches

Table 6.4 shows the average percentage of coded lesson time spent on each of the four approaches before and after the intervention. In both year 1 and year 2, most of the lesson time was spent on the Text approach (respectively 63% and 52%) and least of the lesson time was spent on the Language approach (respectively 6% and 10%). When analysing the change the lessons underwent, average time spent on the Text approach was reduced by 11% and time spent on the Context, Reader and Language approach was slightly increased (respectively 1%, 6%, and 4%). So, in comparing the average percentage of lesson time the eight teachers spent on each of the four approaches, we can conclude that after the intervention less time was spent on the Text approach and more time was spent on the Reader and Language approach (and to a very small extent on the Context approach).

**Table 6.4** Average coded lesson-time spent on four approaches before and after the intervention

	Text	Context	Reader	Language
Year 1	63%	18%	13%	6%
Year 2	52%	19%	19%	10%

Although when looking at the group as a whole we saw a small movement towards a greater balance between the four approaches, an analysis by teacher revealed a large variation. Table 6.5 presents an overview per teacher per year of the coded lesson time in percentages spent on each of the four approaches, as well as the change in percentages per approach between year 1 and year 2 ( $\Delta$ ).

**Table 6.5** Coded lesson-time and difference in percentages per teacher spent on average on the four approaches before and after the intervention

Teacher	Year	Text approach		Context approach		Reader approach		Language approach	
		Average	$\Delta$	Average	$\Delta$	Average	$\Delta$	Average	$\Delta$
Caitlin	1	59	- 5	12	0	22	6	7	- 1
	2	54		12		28		6	
Doris	1	58	-21	17	19	19	6	6	- 4
	2	37		36		25		2	
Fred	1	41	7	39	- 9	19	- 1	1	3
	2	48		30		18		4	
Harry	1	69	-13	2	1	11	8	18	- 6
	2	56		13		19		12	
Liz	1	94	-28	3	- 2	1	20	2	10
	2	66		1		21		12	
Ralph	1	58	10	21	- 5	13	- 1	8	- 4
	2	68		16		12		4	
Sarah	1	73	-19	17	2	8	12	2	5
	2	54		19		20		7	
Ysabel	1	54	-24	34	- 12	8	5	4	31
	2	30		22		13		35	

A comparison between year 1 and year 2 per teacher shows that, for each of the eight teachers in both years, most of the coded lesson time was spent on the Text approach (ranging between 41% - 94% before and 30% - 68% after the intervention). Comparing the percentage of lesson time spent of the Text approach in year 1 and year 2, this percentage increased for Fred and Ralph (respectively 7% and 10%) and decreased for the other six teachers, ranging between a reduction of 5% for Caitlin and 28% for Liz. At the other end of the spectrum, for the majority of the teachers in year 1 and year 2 least of the lesson time is spent on the Language

approach (ranging between 1% - 18% in year 1 and 2% - 35% in year 2). Time spent on the Language approach did increase in year 2 for four teachers with a noteworthy increase of 31% for Ysabel. The Context and Reader approach showed equally diverse but on average less radical changes. Time spent on the Context approach increased for three teachers (ranging between 2% - 19%), decreased for four teachers (ranging between 2% - 12%) and stayed the same for Caitlin. Time spent on the Reader approach showed a similar movement: an increase in time for six teachers (ranging between 5% - 20%) and a decrease in time for two teachers (ranging between 1% - 10%).

We then calculated the deviation of the four approaches from the assumed even distribution of 25% lesson time per approach. Table 6.6 presents the deviation of each of the four approaches as well as the total deviation from the assumed even distribution. It also presents the difference between the total deviation before and after the intervention ( $\Delta$ ).

**Table 6.6** Deviation of four approaches in percentages from the assumed even distribution of 4x25% per teacher per year

Teacher	Year	Text approach	Context approach	Reader approach	Language approach	Average deviation	$\Delta$
Caitlin	1	34	13	3	18	17	1
	2	29	13	3	19	16	
Doris	1	33	8	6	19	17	5
	2	12	11	0	23	12	
Fred	1	16	14	6	24	15	1
	2	23	5	7	21	14	
Harry	1	44	23	14	7	22	6
	2	31	12	6	13	16	
Liz	1	69	22	24	23	35	14
	2	41	24	4	13	21	
Ralph	1	33	4	12	17	17	- 5
	2	43	9	13	21	22	
Sarah	1	48	8	17	23	24	9
	2	29	6	5	18	15	
Ysabel	1	29	9	17	21	19	12
	2	5	3	12	9	7	

Before the intervention, on average, the eight teachers deviated between 15% - 35% from the assumed even distribution. This deviation was reduced after the intervention to 8% - 22%. Looking at the changes made by individual teachers, the largest change in deviation between year 1 and year 2 was made by Liz, with a reduction from 35% to 21%. The smallest difference in deviation was made by both Caitlin and Fred with 1%. Furthermore, before the intervention, Fred's

lessons showed the smallest deviation from the assumed even distribution (15% deviation), whereas after the intervention this was the case for Ysabel's lessons (8% deviation). In other words, the changes in time spent on the four approaches between year 1 and year 2 was realized in different ways by the eight teachers. Even though for most of the teachers the deviation from the assumed even distribution was smaller after the intervention, their lessons show that there was a considerable difference between the size of the change per teacher.

#### **6.4.2 Results research question 2: Perceived changes regarding EFL literature teaching**

Each of the eight teachers reported on perceived changes regarding EFL literature teaching after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year. An analysis of the interview transcripts revealed the following six themes, which will each be discussed in detail below: Reconsidering the EFL literature curriculum; Structure and variety; Including students; Rise in energy, confidence, and pleasure in teaching EFL literature; Language approach; and Implementation reality.

##### **Reconsidering the EFL literature curriculum**

Teachers considered the Comprehensive Approach as a framework for EFL literature teaching an eye-opener (accommodation). The Comprehensive Approach allowed them to look at their literature curriculum *“from a broader perspective”* (Doris). Sarah explicitly mentioned that *“looking at [my] curriculum this way is more enjoyable”* and Fred emphasized that he *“firmly believed that you should not be allowed to approach literature from a single perspective.”* An alternative reason was mentioned by Ysabel, for whom it was a revelation *“to link the different approaches to each other and to the texts. Because oh boy how long are we teaching literature from A to Z chronologically? Well, the Context approach we did, such as ‘What happened in the Middle Ages?’ ‘What did the world look like?’ only we did not link that to the texts.”* Caitlin, on the other hand, did not experience the Comprehensive Approach as an eye-opener but as a legitimization of her current teaching practice *“where it can now grow and flourish”* (assimilation). This possibility of elucidation was especially important to her regarding literature teaching at her school, because now *“it is not something that depends only on me anymore but it can really circulate, like a vision of our school on literature education.”*

Learning about the Comprehensive Approach also helped the teachers to become more aware of their literature curriculum. Harry explained how the

Comprehensive Approach allowed him to think about his curriculum, *“the way you work with students, the moment you offer something, and the requirements you set.”* He also explicitly mentioned that identifying learning objectives was an *“eye-opener, in the sense of ‘What do I do and why?’ Why is an oral exam in Year 5 constructed the way it is? What I have learned above all, through those intended learning objectives, is to also look at the way in which you finish it, which you then call assessment.”*

Sarah also mentioned that she really enjoyed thinking about *“how you offer the literature lessons, what you offer, and why you offer it.”* To her, this insight *“made more sense than merely telling students ‘you have to read this’ ... that you don’t do something merely because you have been doing it for the previous ten years.”* This point was also emphasised by Doris who argued that she became aware of implied underlying ideas. *“We were always more concerned with implementation. But why? Because, in retrospect, I think that if we had really thought about our curriculum, we would never have done this just like that.”* Gaining awareness of and insight into the curriculum for Caitlin was more related to explicating her intuition. For her, the Comprehensive Approach enabled her to be more conscious of *“the invisible part between a concrete story and how you respond to this story [...] because you are able to specify it.”* She furthermore explains that she felt contented that what she had always done was now labelled, which *“allows you to see what you are doing instead of doing things haphazardly”* (Caitlin).

For Harry and Ysabel, reconsidering their EFL literature curriculum took an introspective direction. Harry explains how he became more aware of the congruence between his intentions and actions in the literature lessons: *“It could, of course, be that something does not really work out, that there is a kind of incongruity between what you ask of them and how you behave. That in the way I say and do things in class, I may behave very differently from the assignments I give them. When you are confronted with it, you can also analyse it yourself if you look closely at the things that belong to the different approaches. Then you can determine for yourself whether you think that something of a certain approach happens too much or too little. It may also be that you have a preference for something, which is inevitable. It may be that you find the readers’ response the most essential and that students have freedom and can think divergently. Thinking about this is sensible.”*

### Structure and variety

The Comprehensive Approach provided “a clear structure for current activities as well as future ones” (Liz) allowing for a “stronger, more comprehensive design of the curriculum” (Fred). Doris experienced the use of the Comprehensive Approach as helpful, especially with regard to learning objectives. She explains: “You have an idea of learning objectives such as, with literature you want to increase reading experience or reading pleasure and you want them to understand aspects of a literary text, you want them to get acquainted with things from the history of England. You want many things at once but in the end, it is not always very structured. With the Comprehensive Approach you can place these objectives in a clear framework.” Interestingly, according to Ralph, the learning objectives “should have been identified years ago, but in fact it is still pretty new. What we wrote down, those goals and such, we had not yet formulated that.” For Fred, it was not only the learning objectives, but the entire structure of Backward Design as part of the professional development programme, that he experienced as “major gain.” Fred explains: “it helps me in creating a lesson plan and I think it helps the students as well.”

Teachers observed a change in being able to apply their newly acquired knowledge about structure. Harry commented that he was now able “to stick to a tight schedule” in his lessons. “I was a lot more organized to design the lessons. They were now clear in terms of structure.” Similarly, Ysabel was also more structured in her lessons, especially when showing video fragments. “I was always like, oh just watch the video fragment, it’s nice.” In year 2 she managed to implement this intention by designing assignments for each video fragment she showed in class. Fred, on the other hand, explained that he always knew what he wanted to achieve with his lessons, but he confessed that he “occasionally skipped a few steps” in the design. Moreover, he mentioned that for him the most important aspect was being explicit about the learning objectives: “Previously I tried to do this frequently, but this year I was explicit about the learning objective in every single lesson” (Fred). Sarah, however, was less successful in applying her knowledge about structure. At the start of year 2, she shared an overview of the learning objectives with her students and although she intended to remind her students of these objectives throughout the year, she managed to do this only once.

The Comprehensive Approach made the teachers see that there are a lot of options for literature teaching, allowing for “ways to do it differently” (Fred). The aspect of variety was further emphasized by Liz who argued that it is now clear for her how she wants to teach literature: “Every lesson has to be surprising. I want to



*add more variety in approaches to my lessons. That is going to be my starting point. That is what I am going to focus on and explore how I can play with that concept. You could even consider taking one approach per lesson” (Liz). Ralph experienced a richer repertoire in his teaching methods, allowing him to improvise more in class and being able to play around more with interpretations and tasks. “I found it very playful for myself. Also, that I could decide, on the spot, I’m going to do something different now. I can still teach those texts by heart, but I can now do it in a different manner. I now regularly start a lesson thinking about which new things I can tackle. I enjoy that” (Ralph). Ralph explained in more detail what the content of playfulness looked like, again focusing on variety: “What I used to like a lot, was to include a wide variety of topics in my lessons. Music, paintings, photographs, clothing. That part of me has woken up again. And the idea about linking the texts to current affairs. That is also a bit of a cultural change, because it was always like, ‘just read in silence’. But now it is more about involving the students, which can be done in many other ways. You could also involve drama.”*

### **Including students**

The teachers noticed that in year 2 they were more aware of the rationale for their curriculum, which helped them in sharing with their students why they wanted them to work on certain tasks. For Caitlin this sense of sharing focused on the overall purpose of the literature curriculum: *“I think I knew better this year, I could make clearer why literature, why reading is so important or what it can give you.”* Ralph and Sarah, who both actively included their students’ perspectives in year 2, experienced a different interpretation of the inclusion of students. Whereas Ralph was more focused on asking the students how they feel about a certain text and how they interpret it, Sarah included their perspective by focusing on the relevance of the literary texts and connecting literary texts to contemporary issues. *“That you ask them how they see certain themes from literary works in today’s society and the role this could have played in how they interpret the world. We included, for example, the following question in our exam: Do you think Byronic heroes are still relevant in present or modern day fiction or films? I think that using literary texts in this way is very cool. I actually think this is the most noticeable step we have taken this year” (Sarah).*

### Rise in energy, confidence, and pleasure in teaching EFL literature

The teachers mentioned that working on their literature curriculum through a Comprehensive Approach gave them a boost, which was explained by Sarah who felt she could “*finally do something new with an exhausted curriculum.*” Liz commented that it was a gratifying situation “*to be, for once, a student again.*” Ysabel experienced a rise in energy especially on a cognitive level: “*It is wonderful, my brain is alive again!*” Learning about the Comprehensive Approach triggered her to conduct her own background research: “*I also thought it was great to dive into it again, I learned that again myself. That you think, oh yes, that is what those brains are there for, that you have to dig for a while in order to be able to teach well. I remember that at one point I was completely consumed in Hadrian’s Wall and one thing led to another and another, which I really enjoyed. Then a colleague asked me “Are you still here?” “Oh” I told him “I am going crazy because I am enjoying this so much!” I have got the feeling I am studying again and I really want to. Simply wonderful!*” (Ysabel). Although perhaps less exuberant, Ralph also felt that he “*is starting to wake up again*”. Fred’s engagement was sparked by an internal drive “*to become a better teacher*” by for example creating and “*a better and more effective curriculum.*” According to Fred, “*teaching the literature lessons has really become easier and more pleasurable because I can now justify my curriculum and how I teach.*” Doris shared Fred’s pleasure sentiment: “*I think I enjoy teaching literature more now because I knew where I was heading.*”

### Language approach

Implementing the Language approach appeared to be somewhat complicated. The teachers remarked that they hardly spent any time on the Language approach. One reason why it was not part of their curriculum was provided by Fred who explained, “*the Language approach requires the most work from me.*” For Caitlin the reason was the Language approach itself which she felt was “*tricky to implement*” in her literature lessons. She also mentioned that the lack of time she has for literature did not allow her to expand on her established repertoire. Interestingly though, Caitlin did comment, “*I only have two lessons a week and I am already happy when they [the students] have actually read the text.*” For Caitlin, apparently, reading a literary text is not part of the Language approach.

Indeed, although the majority of the teachers mentioned hardly spending time on the Language approach, they did however increase the use of the target language and they did use literary texts in order to practice the students’

speaking-, listening-, reading- and writing skills. Four teachers used literary texts in order to practice their students' writing skills by either integrating essay writing or creative writing in their literature curriculum. After discussing Swift's *Modest Proposal*, Sarah for example decided that she wanted her students to create a link between the literary text and today's world to which end she asked them to write a contemporary modest proposal. "Several students did not get the gist and wrote about the terrible situation of FC Groningen [football club] whereas other did understand. One group wrote about the greenhouse effect and that it was so nice and warm now." The teachers also provided their students with assignments in order to practice their listening skills whenever they watched a video fragment in class. Sarah remarked that providing her students with listening assignments "really forced them to listen carefully instead of just like 'oh chill a movie'" A clear difference between having the knowledge that you can integrate language and literature and being able to implement this in your lessons was mentioned by Ralph: "These are things you already know, but sometimes you need somebody to flip the switch."

### **Implementation reality**

The teachers considered year 2 to be a pilot year. "It is merely initiated. It is a kind of floating thing that was first under water and now it has come to the surface but it has to come up even more. It is a kind of five-year-plan" (Caitlin). Only two teachers indicated to be more or less content about their literature lessons in year 2. Lack of time and lack of enthusiasm from colleagues were arguments why teachers were less content about their literature curriculum in year 2 than they expected to be. Liz was somewhat disappointed with the fact that she felt the lessons had not changed at all. However, she also mentioned that she needed this pilot year to come to terms with the Comprehensive Approach: "I have the feeling that I am only now ready to do it in my own way. A combination of what I've learned, looking at those different perspectives, and that I really want to do something different, make something different". A different explanation was provided by Sarah and Ralph. Both mentioned that it is quite difficult to change things when you are stuck in a set routine. Sarah acknowledged: "I occasionally reverted to what I already knew and what I already did." Ralph compared working from this set routine with a conveyor belt, "you crawl into a certain mode, a syrupy routine" from which it takes time and energy to break free. Nevertheless, Ralph did feel that they are "very well on their way to a different way of dealing with literature in the lessons, although it is still in its infancy."

### 6.4.3 Results summarized

In sum, the Comprehensive Approach was experienced an eye-opener, either allowing them to look at their curriculum through a different perspective or making them realize that different approaches can be linked to each other and to the texts (accommodation). One teacher (Caitlin) regarded the Comprehensive Approach as a legitimization of her current practice (assimilation) and none of the teachers tolerated or rejected the Comprehensive Approach. The growth in awareness and insight regarding the literature curriculum varied between the reasoning behind curriculum choices, being able to label current intuitive practices, and self-evaluation.

The teachers experienced that they were not only able to translate their insights into the rationale behind their curriculum into their lessons but also were they able to explain this to their students and include their students' perspectives more in the lessons. Interestingly, whereas most teachers mentioned that the Language approach was not really part of their literature curriculum, most did increase the use of the target language and integrated language-learning activities in their literature lessons. Furthermore, some teachers were explicit about the implementation of their newly acquired knowledge of structure, which resulted in a tighter organization and clearer direction in the lessons

The teachers experienced the Comprehensive Approach as a catalyst to reassess their literature curriculum, either because it helped them to break their routines or, for one teacher (Ysabel), because her passion for literature itself was sparked. Some teachers also experienced a boost in their practical and cognitive energy as well as a rise in confidence, caused by their ability to justify their curriculum and having a system in place. Nevertheless, only Doris and Ysabel were content about their literature lessons in year 2 and most felt that they were only getting started. Being stuck in a set routine (instrumentality), lack of time (cost), and lack of enthusiasm from colleagues were provided as arguments why they felt they could have done more.

### 6.4.4 Individual teacher portraits

In the following section we present teacher portraits of each of the eight teachers in which we summarize the results.

**Caitlin (School A, 37 years teaching experience)**

Caitlin felt that the Comprehensive Approach legitimized her teaching practice (assimilation) because it explicated her somewhat intuitive literature didactics, making it altogether more visible. The awareness she gained increased her confidence when teaching literature and she felt more capable to explain to her students why literature was part of the curriculum. But, most of all, Caitlin experienced the Comprehensive Approach as a confirmation of how she had always taught literature. Caitlin indicated that the Language approach was not part of her regular repertoire and due to lack of time was not really part of her lessons. Despite this experience regarding time spent the Language approach, the Language approach played a part of her literature lessons, albeit small (7% in year 1 and 6% in year 2). Caitlin did indicate that she was more conscious of her use of the target language in year 2. The differences between the time Caitlin spent on the four approaches in year 1 and year 2 was, in fact, small for each of the approaches (average of 3% difference). In both years, about half of her lesson time was spent on the Text approach and a quarter of the time was spent on the Reader approach

**Fred (School C, 8 years teaching experience)**

Although Fred was convinced about the Comprehensive Approach, which he felt allowed for a strong and integrated curriculum, the most insightful aspect for him was enriching his literature curriculum via learning objectives (assimilation). Even though he was aware of the importance of referring to learning objectives at the start of each lesson already in year 1, he did so consciously in year 2 every single lesson. This way of enriching his lessons had a positive effect on his attitude towards literature teaching in the sense of confidence and ease because he felt he could now really justify his curriculum. Participating in this research project contributed to his inner drive to become a better teacher and to have a more efficient programme. Fred's focus on structure instead of increasing variety was, not surprisingly, also visible in the time spent on the four approaches: the difference between

year 1 and 2 can be considered minor. Nevertheless, even though the average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 15% in year 1 and 14% in year 2, there was a balance between the Text-, Context-, and Reader approach. In other words, regarding these three approaches, Fred's curriculum was already quite comprehensive. Furthermore, similar to Doris, not including the Language approach element 'Language skills' was also considerably important in our understanding of Fred's lessons. Although Fred argued that implementing the Language approach was rather complicated, he did emphasise his students' English language development in year 2 by really enforcing the use of the target language by his students, by asking them to write poetry in English, and by connecting his lessons to can-do statements from the CEFR.

### **Harry (School D, 32 years teaching experience)**

The Comprehensive Approach offered Harry a framework through which he could analyse his current practice in terms of requirements and how he works with his students (assimilation). Keywords in his sensemaking process include self-awareness and self-evaluation. Through the lens of the Comprehensive Approach, he was able to critically analyse his current curriculum and, more specifically, his intentions with this curriculum. Similar to Fred, working with learning objectives as a starting point helped him improve the structure and direction of his lessons. Although Harry was explicit in his learning objectives that students were allowed to use the Dutch language, in year 2 he did integrate writing skills in his literature lessons by asking students to write a composition based on *Hamlet*. Furthermore, Harry was also one of the teachers who was extremely conscious in using the target language, believing that the literature lessons are just another way of improving the students' English language skills. Interestingly, the time Harry spent on the Language Approach decreased from 18% in year 1 to 12% in year 2. Again, this could be the result of not including the 'Language skills' element. Nevertheless, on the whole, the balance in time spent on the four approaches increased slightly in year 2, visible in a decrease in deviation from the assumed even distribution from 22% to 16%.

**Ralph (School E, 24 years teaching experience)**

For Ralph, the keyword in his process of sensemaking of the Comprehensive Approach was variety. He emphasised, however, that it was not so much a new way of looking at the curriculum but more of a wake-up call (assimilation). He felt that he had been stuck in a certain routine and the Comprehensive Approach opened his eyes again to a richer didactic repertoire in his literature lessons including other arts such as music, fashion, and photography. Ralph enjoyed this richer repertoire, which increased his ability to improvise and be more playful in his lessons. Nonetheless, Ralph also emphasised that this year was only the beginning of enriching the literature curriculum. For him, breaking free from the set routine took a lot of time and energy, which caused him to revert to the 'regular way' of doing things. Despite this experience of relevance, Ralph's lessons moved further away from a Comprehensive Approach in year 2. Whereas in year 1 the average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 17%, in year 2 this was 22%. Although we only coded 4% Language approach in year 2, Ralph, like Fred and Doris, was more conscious about integrating students' English language development in his literature lessons. Ralph, for example, provided his students with listening assignments whenever they watched a video fragment in class and he asked the students to translate extracts of a literary text in class.

**Sarah (School E, 8 years teaching experience)**

Sarah's enriched literature curriculum centred on her students. The Comprehensive Approach offered her a framework, which enabled her to be more aware of and therefore explicit in the reasoning behind why she teaches literature in a certain way (accommodation). She felt that she was now better able to justify her curriculum and communicate this to her students. Analysing her curriculum through this lens sensitised her towards including the Reader approach. For her this meant that she emphasised the relevance of literary texts by connecting them to contemporary issues. The increased emphasis on the Reader approach was also visible in the lessons, which showed an increase in

time spent from 8% to 20%. In working this way, Sarah experienced a boost of energy because she had the feeling that she could finally revise the exhausted curriculum she had been working with for years. Although Sarah remarked that she had hardly spent any lesson time on the Language approach, she did include several listening and writing assignments. Despite the fact that we did not include the Language approach element 'Language skills' and therefore did not include these language skills activities in our coding, the lesson time Sarah spent on the Language approach did increase with 5%. Overall, Sarah's curriculum showed a large change towards a more Comprehensive Approach with a decrease in the average deviation from the assumed even distribution of 24% in year 1 to 15% in year 2.

#### **Doris (School B, 10 years teaching experience)**

Doris felt the Comprehensive Approach was an eye-opener, allowing for a multiple-perspective view on her curriculum (accommodation). The Comprehensive Approach inspired her to think of different ways to teach literature, especially adding variety to her lessons. Doris enjoyed receiving pedagogical input, which helped her in stepping out of her comfort zone and seeing things from a different perspective. One theme that emerged very strongly with Doris was her growing awareness of the rationale behind her curriculum. The Comprehensive Approach provided her with a framework through which she could analyse her literature lessons. Being able to explain this rationale to her students increased her enjoyment in literature teaching. These changes were also visible in her lessons in year 2. There was a considerably greater balance between the Text-, Context-, and Reader approach in year 2. The fact that we did not include the underlying element 'Language skills' of the Language approach in our analysis is particularly important in our understanding of Doris's lessons. In year 2, for example, Doris completely changed her *Macbeth* module, focusing on students' language development by having them read aloud parts of the play in small groups and offering them a modern translation of the text as well as the original version, asking them to make comparisons. Overall, Doris was satisfied with the changes she experienced in year 2.



**Liz (School D, 31 years teaching experience)**

For Liz, the idea of variety in her lessons through implementing different approaches was an eye-opener. The Comprehensive Approach provided a clear structure as well as a different perspective through which she could look at her literature curriculum (accommodation). Similar to Doris, Liz enjoyed receiving input. Altogether, this resulted in a rise in confidence in her literature teaching and a vision in which she expressed that every lesson should be surprising. Nevertheless, Liz felt that the way she approached the literary texts in year 2 was not any different from year 1. According to her, she needed time to come to terms with the Comprehensive Approach and how this way of looking at the literature curriculum could have an impact. At the end of year 2, she arrived at the conclusion that she wanted to implement some radical changes and that now she felt ready for this. Interestingly, Liz's experience of her lessons was not in line with what she actually did in the lessons. Even though she still had a large average deviation from the assumed even distribution in year 2 (22%) this was a huge decrease compared to year 1 (35%).

**Ysabel (School F, 20 years teaching experience)**

For Ysabel the Comprehensive Approach was a revelation in the sense that she became aware of the possibility of linking the four different approaches but also of the possibility to link these to the literary texts (accommodation). Looking at her literature curriculum through the lens of the Comprehensive Approach made her aware again and ignited a vibrant cognitive energy. Ysabel was the only teacher who made the conscious decision to implement each of the four approaches in her lessons, which resulted in an even distribution of two lessons per approach. Because of this, she invested a lot of time doing background research, which revived her personal interest in literary history. This investment in time and energy energised her because she felt she was finally using her brain again. She was also the only teacher who introduced the Comprehensive Approach to her students, explaining the different ways in which they were going to study

literary texts, and questioning them about their preference in approaches. The way Ysabel made sense of the Comprehensive Approach and was able to operationalise this in her lessons resulted in an average deviation of the four approaches from the assumed even distribution of only 8% in year 2 (compared to 19% in year 1). Similar to Doris, Ysabel indicated she was content with the way she approached the literary texts in year 2, despite the fact that she also indicated it to be a pilot year.

## 6.5 Discussion

In this final empirical chapter, we investigated the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in naturalistic teaching contexts through a teacher perspective. In this investigation, we followed Desimone's (2009) conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development on teachers and included three of the four interactive critical features, i.e. a teacher 1) takes part in a professional development programme and (2) experiences changes in knowledge, skills, and attitude, 3) which leads to changes in instruction. In other words, central in this study was the Theory of Change (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014): whether the new pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. the Comprehensive Approach) improved teacher knowledge and instruction. By analysing the EFL literature lessons in both years, we were able to determine whether there were any changes in time spent on the four approaches between year 1 and year 2. Interview data informed us about the perceived changes the teachers experienced regarding EFL literature teaching after working with the Comprehensive Approach for one year.

With regard to changes in instruction, the average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 21% in year 1 and 15% in year 2: in the second year less time was spent on the Text approach and more time was spent on the Reader and Language approaches and to a very small extent on the Context approach. Furthermore, the average deviation also appeared to be less extreme in year 2; in year 1 the four approaches deviated between 15% - 35%, whereas in year 2 this ranged between 8% - 22%. Although the lessons of all eight teachers underwent some kind of change with regard to the time spent on the four approaches, the differences between teachers were considered substantial. On one end of the

spectrum were Caitlin and Fred, whose average deviation from the assumed even distribution changed with 1%, whereas on the other end was Liz, whose average deviation changed with 14%. In order to interpret these results, several factors should be considered.

First, in year 2, the teachers were knowledgeable about the Comprehensive Approach and they were aware of the focus of our observations. The teachers indicated that through the Comprehensive Approach they got a clear insight into the *why*, *how*, and *what* of their curriculum which helped them in structuring their lessons and being able to include their students. Because they experienced the Comprehensive Approach as a useful framework that made them more aware of their literature teaching practice, this heightened awareness could have caused them to be more explicit in their teaching practice. This might also be the reason why we were able to code 15% more lesson time in year 2 compared to year 1 and why teachers, on average, taught more literature lessons in year 2 (122 lessons in year 1 and 154 in year 2). Additionally, the actual video recording could have served as a so-called implementation driver (Hulleman & Cordray, 2009), creating a situation in which teachers are more likely to embrace the curriculum reform to a higher extent (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014).

Second, multiple studies have hypothesized the reasons for the variation in the extent to which teachers implement educational reform (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014). One of these reasons is the so-called implementation dip which refers to the fact that because “change involves grappling with new beliefs and understandings, and new skills, competencies, and behaviours, changes will not go smoothly in the early stages of implementation” (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005, p. 56). That “teacher and student performance can get worse before it gets better” (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014, p. 19) could also be caused by a lack of accountability pressures. According to Desimone and Stuckey (2014), “power exerted through the pressure of rewards or sanctions can alter teacher behaviour, but such changes are usually not as long-lasting as behaviour changes that result from self-motivation or buy-in” (p. 14). In other words, because there was no external obligation including rewards to participate in our study, some of the teachers perhaps did not feel the pressure to comply. Other reasons for the variation in extent of implementation include the previously mentioned mediating and moderating influences (Desimone, 2009), or so-called ‘noise’ (Kennedy, 2010) such as student characteristics, contextual factors at classroom level (e.g. social dynamics and interaction patterns), and contextual factors at

school level (e.g. revised assessment policy). Such influences could have an effect on the extent of the implementation.

Third, the nature of the Comprehensive Approach as a descriptive and not a prescriptive PCK model for EFL literature teaching and learning plus the focus on enriching existing curricula, created a certain amount of freedom regarding the extent of enrichment. This decision in the design of the current study could have had an impact on how teachers dealt with the cost aspect of the Practicality Theory, i.e. the “ratio between amount of return and amount of investment” (Doyle & Ponder, 1977, p. 8). The difference in extent of enrichment regarding how literary texts are approached ranged between a complete remodelling of the curriculum on the one hand and only having an awareness of the options on the other. Also, some teachers experienced a rise in confidence, energy, and/or pleasure in teaching literature which enabled them to invest more time in enriching their curriculum. Others experienced a lack of time and/or lack of enthusiasm from colleagues, which was not helpful in pulling them out of the set routines. For this second group the cost of the investment was mainly too high due to external factors. The fact that teachers were not granted extra time from their respective schools to participate in this research project could also be seen as an influencing cost factor. Indeed, according to Luttenberg et al. (2013), “the design, interpretation, and operationalization of reforms are strongly influenced by the on-going dynamic interaction of various processes and factors at the levels of the school and the individual teacher” (p. 291). Interestingly though, regardless of extent of implementation, teachers indicated that they regarded this year as a pilot year where the Comprehensive Approach either had to sink in and assimilate with existing frames of reference or where they regarded the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach as an experiment.

A somewhat different factor that should be considered in interpreting the extent of implementation is how teachers made sense of the Comprehensive Approach. Although the act of sensemaking is highly personal and selective (Spillane et al, 2002; Weick et al, 2005), we found several commonalities in how the eight participating teachers made sense of the Comprehensive Approach. As mentioned previously, most teachers regarded the Comprehensive Approach as a useful framework providing structure and awareness of the literature curriculum as well as variety through looking at the curriculum from a broader perspective. In addition, all eight teachers experienced a match between and their own frame of reference (Luttenberg et al., 2013) and the PCK. Where teachers differed

mainly concerned whether the Comprehensive Approach was primarily new PCK (accommodation) or whether it primarily confirmed current teaching practice providing teachers with a common language through which they were able to explain the *how*, *what*, and *why* of their curriculum (assimilation). In terms of the matrix of Luttenberg et al. (2013), the extent to which the Comprehensive Approach led to a transformed own frame of reference or an adaptation of the Comprehensive Approach to fit the teachers' frame of reference varied between the teachers.

Ysabel and Caitlin can be regarded as two examples for respectively accommodation (adapting one's own frame of reference to fit the initial intent of the reform) and assimilation (adapting the initial intent of the reform to fit one's own frame of reference). Ysabel adapted her own frame of reference to fit the initial intent of the Comprehensive Approach (accommodation). For her, the relevance of the Comprehensive Approach was primarily as an eye-opener, which triggered her to consciously teach the literary texts through all four approaches thereby aiming to link the approaches to each other and to the texts. While being cautious of causality, Ysabel's transformed own frame of reference could possibly be an explanation of the transformation with regard to the time spent on the four approaches: her average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 19% in year 1 and 7% in year 2. Caitlin, on the other hand, adapted the Comprehensive Approach to fit her own frame of reference (assimilation). For her the relevance of the Comprehensive Approach centred on legitimizing her existing EFL literature teaching and being able to frame it. It provided her with a language through which she could now explain her intentions with the literature curriculum. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that the difference between the time spent on the four approaches when comparing year 1 and year 2 for Caitlin was minimal: her average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 17% in year 1 and 16% in year 2. Such a difference between teachers is in line with Luttenberg et al. (2013) who argue that "reforms may be hard to predict or steer not because teachers are unwilling rather because of their search for coherence between the demands of a reform in relation to their own frames of reference" (p. 290).

Although in the previous paragraph we provided a description of two example cases of accommodation and assimilation with a possible connection between the act of sensemaking and the changes in how literary texts were approached, these cases are, however, not representative of the entire group. Take for example Liz, for whom the Comprehensive Approach provided a clear structure for her

lessons, inspiring her to add more variation in approaches (accommodation). She did however indicate that she had needed year 2 to come to terms with this new structure adding that she felt the lessons in year 2 were not any different compared to the lessons she taught in year 1. Interestingly, through the process of accommodation, Liz did in fact approach the literary texts in a more comprehensive manner in year 2. Where in year 1 her average deviation from the assumed even distribution was 35%, this deviation was reduced to 21% in year 2. To summarise, because teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach differently, variation in the operationalization appears to be inevitable.

A final point of discussion regarding the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach concerns the Language approach. On the one hand, considered through the lens of Practicality Theory (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015), teachers indicated that implementing the Language approach was time-consuming, the Language approach was “tricky to implement,” (Caitlin) and hardly a part of their literature curriculum. Teachers also mentioned the high cost in terms of time to enrich their existing curriculum with this approach. However, they also said that they were more focused on using the target language and integrating practising language skills, such as writing or listening, in their literature curriculum in year 2. The reason for this dichotomy could be how teachers made sense of the Language approach. Apparently, teachers were not consciously aware that a writing or listening assignment based on literature constitutes a Language approach. Additionally, they did not regard the use of the target language during EFL literature lessons a Language approach. Furthermore, despite several attempts, we came to the conclusion that we were not able to code the Language approach element, ‘Language skills.’ Our video data did, for example, not reveal whether students were writing in English or speaking in English when working in pairs or small groups. Another reason could be the position of the literature curriculum in foreign language teaching in Dutch secondary education (section 1.2). In the 1990s exam regulations prescribed the use of L1 in EFL literature exams and a separation of testing EFL literature and language skills (Kwakernaak, 2016). These regulations had a wash back effect on EFL literature lessons, which were – and still are – increasingly taught in L1 (Hulshof et al., 2015). Therefore, the fact that the literature component in the EFL curriculum is often regarded as detached from students’ English language development, could be connected to how teachers make sense of the Language approach in connection to EFL literature teaching.

Finally, it should also be noted that the coded time spent on the Language approach does not represent the actual time spent on this approach. Leaving out the Language approach element ‘Language skills’ in our coding and analyses was a very unfortunate decision we had to make. Historical changes in the position of the literature curriculum (Chapter 1), the importance students ascribe to this particular element (see Chapters 4 and 5), and the interpretation of the Language approach by teachers (Chapter 6), make the Language approach of key importance as well as a key issue. In the next section, we will discuss this limitation as well as future implications of this decision in more detail.

## **6.6 Conclusions, limitations, and future research**

Evaluating theoretical teaching models such as the Comprehensive Approach through empirical validation is essential in PCK research, which focuses on building a bridge between theory and the daily teaching practice. Through an instrumental multisite multiple case study, which involved an intervention, eight teachers, and 276 video-recorded EFL literature lessons over the course of two years, we were able to evaluate how teachers experienced the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in their existing EFL literature curriculum. Based on these results, several conclusions can be drawn and several limitations should be highlighted.

Not only do historical changes regarding the position of EFL literature show the uneasy relationship between content and language (see section 1.2), the results of this final empirical study show that this uneasy relationship is also tangible in the EFL lessons. Leaving out Language approach element ‘Language skills’ was an unfortunate decision we had to make, as this element was deemed beneficial and important by students (Chapters 4 and 5) and was consciously implemented by several teachers in year 2 (section 6.4.2). The fact that the Language approach, and especially the above-mentioned underlying element, appeared an issue is, in a way, representative of the complexity of integrating content (i.e. literature) and language development in the EFL curriculum. This is 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) where content is generally the means through which foreign language development can take place (de Graaff, 2018). Moreover,

foreign language related content in Dutch secondary education “hardly receives any attention” (de Graaff, 2018, p. 17). That foreign language related content such as literature and foreign language development should be integrated in the foreign language curriculum has become subject of interest in recent curriculum development discussions (e.g. Curriculum.Nu, 2018; Meesterschapsteam MVT, 2018; Schat, de Graaff, & van der Knaap, 2018). The question for future research then remains how both components can be integrated and taught in such a way that they are mutually beneficial in a situation where mutual exclusivity is considered out-dated.

In line with the role and position of content as well as foreign language development within an integrated curriculum, our decision to calculate changes in the way the eight teachers approached the literary texts needs to be considered. In section 6.3.3 we mentioned that for the purpose of analysis we assumed an even distribution between time spent on the four approaches. Although this decision allowed us to compare any changes between the two years of the eight teachers with each other, it does raise a few issues. There is no theoretical or empirical justification for this even distribution, apart from our belief that the four approaches function as a unified whole and that when addressed in an interrelated way is likely to support high quality teaching and learning. It could be argued that in a teaching and learning situation where content and language are integrated, the Language approach should feature a lot more compared to for example the Context approach. Another argument could be that the balance between approaches should depend on the learning objectives. For example, when a teacher wants their students to be able to analyse how the historical, cultural, and social context of the literary text enhanced their intercultural awareness, one could imagine that the Context approach would feature often in the lessons. A different scenario could be where a teacher wants their students to be able to use language from the literary texts their students studied in their own language production, through for example a writing task. In such a case, the Language approach would be a more prominent feature. To summarise, our decision to assume an even distribution enabled our analysis but should be taken into serious consideration in future research.

How the teachers made sense of the Comprehensive Approach could be connected to the changes the teachers made in terms of time spent on the four approaches. For teachers who experienced a process of accommodation, the time spent on the four approaches changed rather drastically when comparing year 1 and year 2. However, for teachers who experienced a process of assimilation, the



time spent on the four approaches did not change that much between year 1 and year 2. According to Desimone and Stuke (2014), a key factor in realizing the Theory of Change is the teacher's fidelity of implementation (see also Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992), i.e. the extent to which a teacher follows the key principles of the reform. However, analysing the operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach through the lens of sensemaking to a certain extent diminishes the significance of the distinction between high-fidelity and low-fidelity teachers, because the discussion is not about right or wrong. Indeed, sensemaking focuses on action verbs such as create, imagine, and devise (Weick et al., 2005), and therefore allows a highly personal and selective process of assimilation and accommodation. We would like to argue that looking at the implementation of educational reform from the point of view of sensemaking and the Practicality Theory, is more open-minded, truer to reality, and more respectful of teachers. In light of these insights, how we analysed the data in this chapter only shows a limited side of the complex teaching reality. Future research could take these results as a starting point in analysing the breadth of the impact of new teaching models thereby keeping an open mind in teacher variation.

Regardless whether teachers assimilated or accommodated, making sense of the Comprehensive Approach led to a heightened sense of awareness and therefore a rethinking of the *why*, *how*, and *what* of the EFL literature curriculum. For most teachers, besides providing a relevant framework and adding to their pedagogical content knowledge, it especially provided a meta-language, such as terms, definitions, and frames of reference. This meta-language made what was perhaps already known become articulated more clearly and tightened up in terms of underlying mechanisms. These results are in line with Verloop's (1991) interpretation of educational research, which should provide empirically and theoretically based insights and coherent frames of references, which can be relevant for teachers to gain a better understanding of their teaching practice and their students learning and well-being. This tells us that, although the initial practices of the teachers (i.e. before the intervention) could be considered somewhat intuitive, this does not mean that these views of literature education are any less valuable. We would suggest that these initial views need to be acknowledged at the start of PCK research and should be part of the foundation of any professional development programme and educational reform.

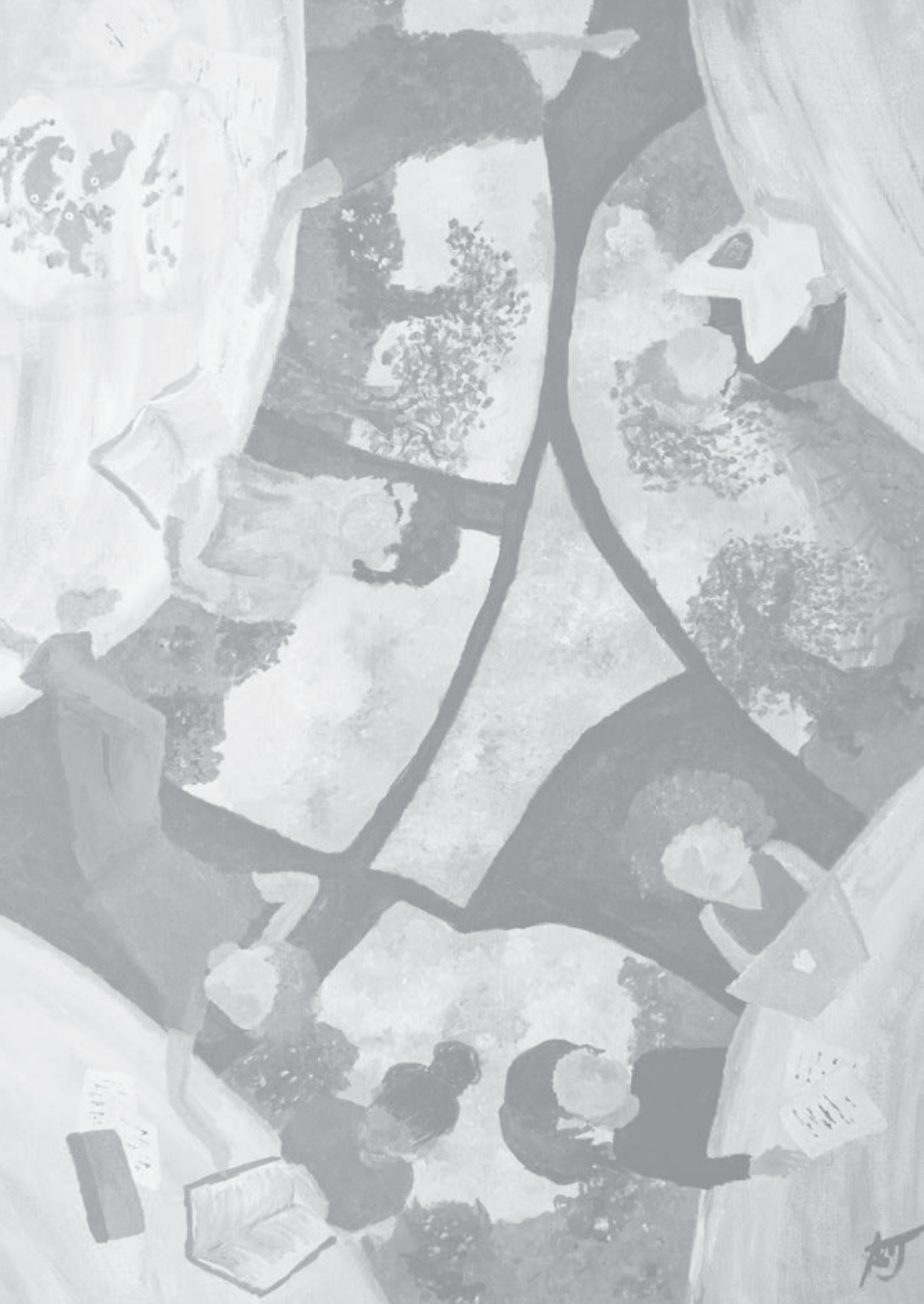
Due to the design of our a multiple case-study through a quasi-experimental design and the fact that the intervention focused on "helping teachers becoming

adaptive planners capable of making good decisions over time” (Desimone & Stuke, 2014, p. 13) the key question in internal validity, i.e. whether observed changes can be attributed to the Comprehensive Approach, can only be answered with caution. However, we were not so much interested in causal relationships and effectiveness of the professional development programme. Instead, we were interested in the evaluation of the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach in real-life teaching contexts where teachers have full ownership of their EFL literature curriculum. That such a methodological decision also adds to the sustainability of PCK research can be argued through an evolutionary perspective (consistent with Practicality Theory), because, “as with evolution of organisms, practical solutions proceed by slight variations rather than completely new sequences of actions, and these variants are selected because they are considered an improvement over the previous sequence of action” (Janssen et al., 2015, p. 6). Having said this, according to Desimone’s (2009) conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development, professional development should eventually lead to increased student learning (i.e. the Theory of Instruction). Although we are of the opinion that our exploration of the Theory of Action (i.e. the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach according to teachers) was essential in preceding any studies that focus on the improvement of student learning, we would also like to argue that, however complicated, such studies are necessary in PCK research.

To conclude, we would like to finish with several limitations and suggestions for future research. Firstly, sustainable curriculum development should include several curriculum levels such as described by Goodlad (1979) and van den Akker (2006), especially from the perspective of curricular alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Due to the scope of our research, we only focused on the lessons, which resulted in a limited view of the relevance and usefulness of the Comprehensive Approach. Secondly, sustainable curriculum reform is ideally truly longitudinal in order to find out whether outcomes persist over time (Desimone & Stuke, 2014). In our study, we were able to analyse the changes the eight teachers perceived regarding EFL literature teaching after one year of working with the Comprehensive Approach, but not whether these changes persisted or faded away and the reasons why. Finally, instrumentality and cost are influenced by “important and underappreciated” conditions that are outside a teacher’s control, such as class size, planning time, school infrastructure, and “reform clutter” (Kennedy, 2010, p. 593). In measuring any effect in PCK research, these key mediating and

moderating influences, or so-called *noise* (Kennedy, 2016), need to be considered. In our case, this could lead to questions such as; Did the fact that Ysabel had 14 students in her class in year 2 and Caitlin 28 have an impact to the level of change in their curricula (see Table 6.1)? Did the difference between the average of 6% EFL literature lessons per year for Liz compared to the 42% of Fred have an impact on the level of change (see Table 6.1)? Did the difference in text choice (see Table 6.2) have an impact on how teachers approached EFL literature? In order to further develop PCK research in the field of EFL literature education, these questions and many more need to be carefully considered as well as included in future research, thereby addressing the following dichotomy: effectiveness studies in PCK research ask for a quantitative approach but in order to conduct this type of research thoroughly, sensemaking as well as the educational noise needs to be considered, therefore asking for a qualitative approach.





# 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).

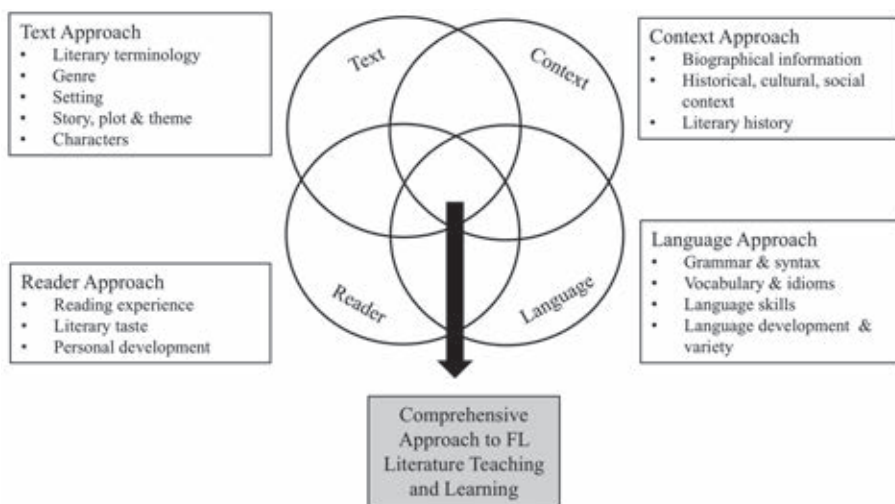
Within the Context approach, literature is considered to be a collection of texts that reflect the cultural, historical, and socially rich diversity of our world (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). This diversity, contextualized in a literary work, often represents a foreign world for the student including 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),

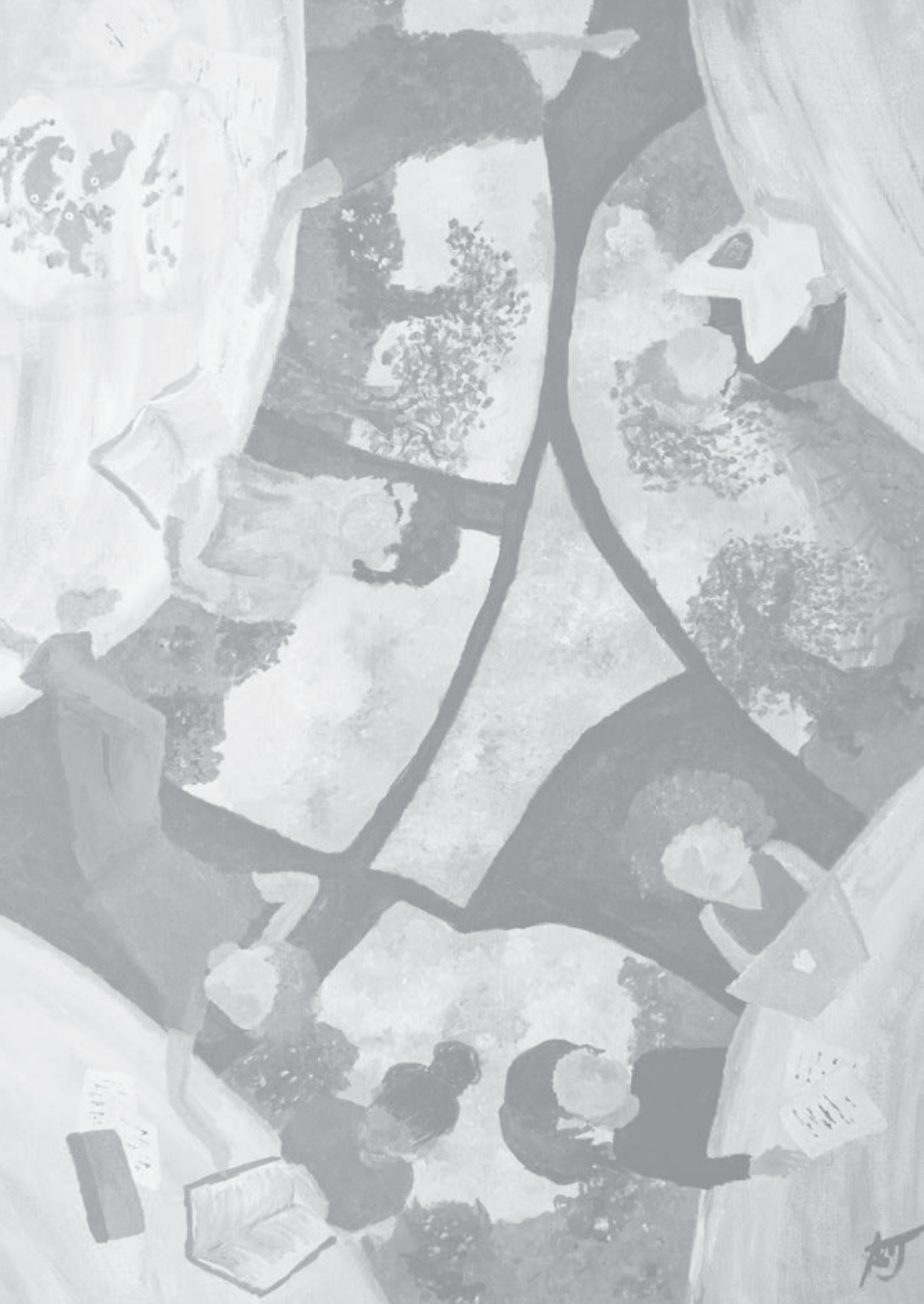
we suggested approaching literary texts through a combination of approaches. Depending on the learning needs of students, teachers need to, for example, decide which approach is emphasised or with which approach a lesson starts. This, in turn, requires teachers to be aware of the learning needs of their 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.





# CHAPTER 8

**Summary in Dutch**

**Samenvatting**

## Summary in Dutch

### Samenvatting

Het schoolvak Engels heeft een prominente positie in het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs en werd verplicht gesteld voor elke leerling in 2013. Hoewel het grootste deel van het curriculum voor Engels betrekking heeft op taalvaardigheden (lezen, spreken, luisteren en schrijven) speelt ook literatuur een belangrijke rol in de bovenbouw van HAVO en VWO. Het is echter opmerkelijk dat sinds het curriculum voor Engels in 1863 werd geformaliseerd, voortdurende discussies hebben plaatsgevonden over de positie, relevantie en focus van de literatuurcomponent, zoals onder andere beschreven in de Melker (1970), Wilhelm (2005) en Hulshof, Kwakernaak en Wilhelm (2015). Deze discussies vinden ook plaats op internationaal niveau. Studies van bijvoorbeeld Sage (1987), Lazar (1993), Paran (2008) en Paesani (2011) komen tot dezelfde conclusie als de studies die de Nederlandse context beschrijven, namelijk: de positie van literatuur in het moderne vreemde talen (MVT) curriculum lijkt een *principium tertii exclusi* - wet van het uitgesloten midden – waarbij de focus verschuift tussen enerzijds de literaire tekst en anderzijds de taalontwikkeling. Een historisch overzicht van discussies, meningsverschillen en beleidsveranderingen over de positie van literatuur binnen het MVT-onderwijs laat zien dat deze verschuiving al meer dan 150 jaar centraal staat.

De huidige internationale situatie laat een heropleving zien in het gebruik van literatuur in het MVT-curriculum (Paran, 2008). Deze heropleving kan gezien worden als een reactie op een aantal internationale en nationale ontwikkelingen. Allereerst het rapport van de Modern Language Association (2007) waarin de commissie aanbeveelt om de traditionele tweeledige structuur van programma's voor MVT in het hoger onderwijs in de Verenigde Staten te vervangen door een meer samenhangende structuur waarin literatuur en taal worden samengevoegd. De tweede belangrijke internationale ontwikkeling betreft de veranderingen met betrekking tot de positie van literatuur in het aangescherpte Europees Referentie Kader (Raad van Europa, 2018). Terwijl in de editie van 2001 sporadisch naar literatuur of literaire teksten werd verwezen, bevat de 2018-editie de volgende drie aspecten die relevant zijn voor creatieve teksten en literatuur: lezen als een vrijetijdsbesteding; een persoonlijk antwoord geven op creatieve teksten; en analyse en kritiek op creatieve teksten (Raad van Europa, 2018). De meest recente nationale ontwikkeling is Curriculum.nu (gestart in 2018) waar ontwikkelingsteams van

leraren en schoolleiders, onder toezicht van Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling, negen leergebieden hebben geformuleerd. Het primaire doel van Curriculum.nu is het ontwerpen van een voorstel voor de herziening van de huidige kerndoelen en eindtermen. Een van de negen leergebieden is Engels/moderne vreemde talen en een van de innovatieve voorstellen is een meer holistische benadering van het leren van vreemde talen waarbij het leren van talen meer is dan het trainen van taalvaardigheden. De positie van literatuur in deze meer holistische benadering wordt gezien als geïntegreerd in het leren communiceren in een vreemde taal.

Deze recente ontwikkelingen lijken te breken met het eerder beschreven *principium tertii exclusi*. Echter, wat is de huidige positie van het literatuuronderwijs binnen het schoolvak Engels op VWO-niveau en hoe wordt dit ervaren door docenten en leerlingen? Het doel van dit vakdidactisch promotieonderzoek was om meer inzicht te krijgen in bovenstaande vragen. Specifiek is er onderzocht hoe literatuur in de les benaderd wordt, hoe leerlingen tegen literatuuronderwijs bij het vak Engels aankijken en hoe docenten het ervaren om literaire teksten op een meer holistische manier in te zetten in de les waarbij er rekening wordt gehouden met de leerling, de context en de literaire tekst (Paran, 2008). Om dit doel te realiseren zijn de volgende onderzoeksvragen geformuleerd:

1. Hoe ziet een model voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs eruit dat rekening houdt met verschillende aspecten van de leerling, de context en de tekst?
2. Wat kan de bijdrage zijn van leerlingen aan het collaboratieve en co-constructieve proces van validering van een dergelijk model?
3. Hoe ervaren leerlingen de literatuurlessen bij Engels?
4. Hoe wordt literatuur bij Engels momenteel benaderd in het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs?
5. Hoe ervaren docenten de relevantie en de bruikbaarheid van een dergelijk model voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs wanneer het wordt toegepast in een naturalistische setting?

Het proefschrift bestaat uit vijf empirische studies. Centraal staat de ontwikkeling van een model voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs waarbij rekening wordt gehouden met de leerling, de context en de literaire tekst (studie 1 en 2). Dit model is vervolgens gebruikt om te onderzoeken hoe leerlingen de literatuurlessen bij Engels ervaren (studies 3 en 4). De laatste stap bestond uit een interventie waarbij docenten het model leerden toepassen op hun bestaande onderwijspraktijk en



onderzochten we hoe acht docenten Engels de relevantie en bruikbaarheid van het model ervoeren nadat ze er een jaar mee hadden gewerkt.

### **Studie 1: De ontwikkeling van een model voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs**

Recente hervormingen op het gebied van MVT-onderwijs laten een sterke beweging zien naar een integratie van literatuuronderwijs en taalverwerving. In studie 1 (Hoofdstuk 2) hebben we deze recente ontwikkeling als uitgangspunt genomen. Een synthese van het onderscheid van Maley (1998) tussen twee primaire doelen voor het onderwijzen van literatuur (de studie van literatuur en het gebruik van literatuur als hulpmiddel), Paran's (2008) kruising van taalfocus en literatuurfocus en een selectie van eerder ontworpen categorisaties van benaderingen van MVT-literatuuronderwijs, leidde tot een eerste ontwerp van een model voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs dat we de 'Meervoudige Benadering MVT-literatuuronderwijs' hebben genoemd. Tijdens het ontwerpproces was de primaire vraag die we ons stelden: op welke manieren kunnen literaire teksten nuttig zijn voor leerlingen in moderne vreemde talenonderwijs? Bij het beantwoorden van deze vraag kwamen twee categorieën naar voren, namelijk een focus op de literaire tekst en een focus op de leerling.

Wanneer de primaire focus van de literatuurles de literaire tekst is, kan een onderscheid worden gemaakt tussen een Tekstgerichte benadering en een Contextgerichte benadering. De Tekstgerichte benadering houdt zich bezig met de formele elementen van de literatuur, waarbij leerlingen bijvoorbeeld leren hoe het gebruik van literaire termen een effect kan hebben op de interpretatie van de tekst. Andere aspecten van deze aanpak zijn kennis van het genre, literaire stijlen en soorten tekst. Binnen de Contextgerichte benadering wordt literatuur beschouwd als een verzameling teksten die de culturele, historische en sociaal rijke diversiteit van onze wereld laat zien. Deze diversiteit, gecontextualiseerd in een literair werk, vertegenwoordigt voor de leerling vaak een vreemde wereld met onderwerpen als identiteit, politieke macht, etniciteit en religie. Daarnaast zou kennis over literaire bewegingen en historische en biografische elementen van een literaire tekst verder kunnen bijdragen aan deze contextualisering.

Wanneer de primaire focus van de literatuurles de leerling is, kan een onderscheid worden gemaakt tussen een Lezersgerichte benadering en een Taalgerichte benadering. De focus van de Lezersgerichte benadering ligt op de leeservaring, de literaire smaakontwikkeling en de algemene ontwikkeling van de leerling. Literatuur nodigt leerlingen uit om uit hun comfortzone te stappen, te

experimenteren met een kritische blik op (on)bekende situaties en te leren dat hun positie als lezer niet los kan worden gezien van de betekenis van de tekst. De Lezersgerichte benadering moedigt studenten aan literaire teksten vanuit meerdere perspectieven te bestuderen en om te analyseren hoe en waarom mensen bijvoorbeeld kunnen verschillen in hun overtuigingen of verlangens. De Taalgerichte benadering is gericht op het gebruik van taal in literaire werken, de eigen taalontwikkeling van de leerling en het bewustzijn van de leerling van de ontwikkeling van de vreemde taal. Literaire teksten in een vreemde taal zijn een potentieel rijke bron van taalkundige input: het biedt leerlingen een grote verscheidenheid aan authentieke en gecontextualiseerde taal die de taalontwikkeling van leerlingen kan ondersteunen.

De dataverzameling van studie 1 bestond uit een vragenlijst voor docenten Engels (n=168). Een confirmatieve factoranalyse toonde aan dat de vier benaderingen één onderliggend construct vertegenwoordigen, wat onze interpretatie van de Meervoudige Benadering bevestigde. In deze studie hebben we ook onderzocht (1) hoe docenten Engels literatuur benaderen in de bovenbouw van het vwo en (2) welke factoren verband houden met het gerapporteerde gebruik van de vier benaderingen.

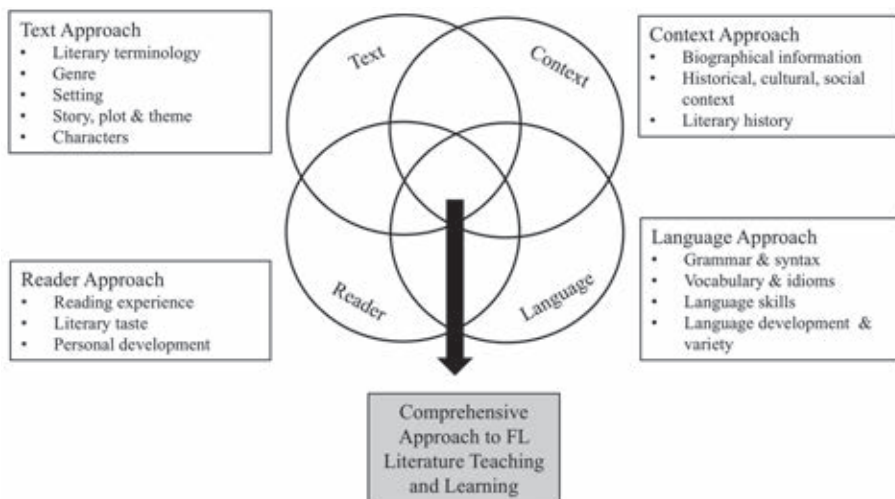
De resultaten laten een grote variatie zien tussen de manieren waarop docenten Engels literatuur benaderen. De resultaten laten ook zien dat de meeste tijd besteed wordt aan de Tekstgerichte benadering, gevolgd door de Lezersgerichte en Contextgerichte benadering en tot slot de Taalgerichte benadering. Het verschil tussen de vier benaderingen was echter klein. Correlatieanalyses en t-toetsen geven aan dat curriculaire factoren significant verband houden met de manier waarop literatuur wordt benaderd. Demografische factoren van docenten zijn over het algemeen niet significant gerelateerd zijn aan de manier waarop literatuur wordt benaderd. Het kan eerder worden toegeschreven aan curriculaire erfgoed of de manier waarop MVT-curricula zijn ontworpen.

## **Studie 2: De bijdrage van leerlingen aan de ontwikkeling van de Meervoudige Benadering**

Een belangrijk aspect van vakdidactisch onderzoek is het perspectief van leerlingen (Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005). In studie 2 hebben we eerst onderzocht op welke manieren leerlingen constructief betrokken kunnen worden bij de verdere ontwikkeling en valorisatie van de Meervoudige Benadering. Dit resulteerde in een indeling die de volgende drie perspectieven omvat: leerlingen

als gegevensbron, leerlingen in dialoog en leerlingen als initiatiefnemers. Op basis van deze indeling hebben we een multidimensionaal dialoogproces ontworpen waarbij 268 leerlingen van drie verschillende scholen betrokken waren in een van de volgende drie activiteiten: geschreven reflectie, ongebeide focusgroep en het beantwoorden van één open vraag. De activiteiten vonden achtereenvolgens plaats waarbij er na iedere stap een discussie plaatsvond tussen de onderzoekers. Deze discussies resulteerden in een aanscherping van de Meervoudige Benadering die vervolgens als input werd gebruikt voor de volgende activiteit. De combinatie van deze drie activiteiten en discussies zorgde niet alleen voor convergerende en divergerende inclusieve vormen van dialoog (Burbules, 1993) maar gaf ook gehoor aan de stem van zowel de individuele leerling als aan de groep van leerlingen.

De opbrengsten van de drie activiteiten resulteerden in verschillende toevoegingen en wijzigingen in de onderliggende elementen van de Meervoudige Benadering. In feite ondergingen bijna alle 20 onderliggende elementen van het oorspronkelijke model zoals gepresenteerd in hoofdstuk 2 een kleine of soms grotere verandering. Terwijl de meeste veranderingen resulteerden in een reductie van onderliggende elementen (van 20 naar 15) of vereenvoudiging van de beschrijving van het element vanwege een dubbelzinnig onderscheid of omdat elementen te uitgebreid of te kort waren, werden de belangrijkste veranderingen gevonden waar we woorden of een geheel nieuw element toevoegden. Figuur n1 toont de uiteindelijke versie van de Meervoudige Benadering, inclusief de 15 onderliggende elementen.



**Figuur n1.** De Meervoudige Benadering MVT-literatuuronderwijs

### Studie 3: Het nut van literatuuronderwijs volgens leerlingen

In de derde studie (hoofdstuk 4) rapporteerden we over de opvattingen van een grote groep leerlingen (n=635) van 15 verschillende scholen over hun ideeën over de voordelen van de literatuurlessen bij Engels. Een tweede vraag waar we in geïnteresseerd waren, was of we verschillen konden vinden tussen de perceptie van leerlingen van verschillende scholen. Data werd verzameld aan de hand van de volgende open vraag: Wat zijn volgens jou de voordelen van literatuurlessen bij het vak Engels? We ontvingen in totaal 2361 antwoorden van de leerlingen die we eerst kwalitatief geanalyseerd hebben en vervolgens hebben gekwantificeerd.

De belangrijkste bevinding van deze studie is dat de meerderheid van de leerlingen de literatuurlessen bij Engels door de lens van hun taalontwikkeling ziet; in totaal 74% van de leerlingen noemde de Taalgerichte benadering als een voordeel van de literatuurlessen bij Engels, dus dat je er beter Engels van leert. Iets meer dan de helft van de leerlingen (56%) noemde de Contextgerichte benadering minstens één keer en 47% van hen gaf aan het onderliggende element 'historische, culturele en sociale context' hierbij belangrijk te vinden. De twee benaderingen die veelal afwezig waren in de antwoorden van de meerderheid van de leerlingen waren de Lezersgerichte benadering (waarbij 33% van de leerlingen een van de elementen noemde) en de Tekstgerichte benadering (waar slechts 12% van de leerlingen een van de elementen noemde). Het enige onderliggende element van deze twee benaderingen dat door een relatief groot aantal leerlingen werd genoemd (27%, wat voor een element een groot percentage is) was 'persoonlijke ontwikkeling'.

Hoewel de meerderheid van de leerlingen (61%) meer dan één aanpak noemde, gaven slechts acht leerlingen (1%) antwoorden die in alle vier benaderingen vielen. Met andere woorden, deze groep van 635 middelbare scholieren beschouwde literatuurlessen bij Engels niet op een manier zoals wij Meervoudig definiëren. De bevindingen laten ook zien dat er verschillen zijn in de manier waarop leerlingen van verschillende scholen de voordelen van literatuurlessen bij Engels waarnemen. Hoewel voor de meerderheid van de scholen de Taalgerichte en Contextgerichte benadering het meest vaak genoemd werd, is het opmerkelijk dat in een derde van de scholen de combinatie van de meest genoemde benaderingen verschilt. Bovendien kan het verschil tussen scholen als substantieel worden beschouwd in welke mate de benadering genoemd werd door leerlingen: Tekstgerichte benadering (0 - 21%), Contextgerichte benadering (29 - 78%), Lezersgerichte benadering (10 - 63%) en de Taalgerichte benadering (21 - 95%).

#### **Studie 4: Leerlingmotivatie tijdens de literatuurles**

Omdat de perceptie van leerlingen een impact kan hebben op hun prestaties (Brown, 2009), is het niet alleen belangrijk om erachter te komen wat ze belangrijk vinden, maar ook hoe dit verband houdt met hun mate van betrokkenheid tijdens de literatuurlessen bij Engels. In de vierde studie van dit proefschrift hebben we een vragenlijst afgenomen onder 365 leerlingen. De resultaten van de vragenlijsten hebben we gebruikt om te onderzoeken in hoeverre de leerlingen betrokken zijn tijdens de literatuurlessen, hoe belangrijk de leerlingen de literatuurlessen vinden en mogelijke relaties tussen deze twee. Om dit te onderzoeken hebben we gebruik gemaakt zowel van een bestaande vragenlijst van Skinner, Kindermann en Furrer (2009) die we hebben aangepast voor de huidige studie als ook de Meervoudige Benadering.

De resultaten werden geanalyseerd door middel van een exploratieve factoranalyse en correlatieanalyses. Dit resulteerde in vier belangrijke bevindingen. Ten eerste hebben we op basis van de antwoorden van de leerlingen in totaal drie factoren gevonden, die we de Literatuur-factor, de Persoonlijke ontwikkeling-factor en de Taal-factor hebben genoemd. De oorspronkelijke Tekst- en Contextgerichte benaderingen worden door de leerlingen als één beschouwd, wat we de Literatuur-factor hebben genoemd. Bovendien beschouwden leerlingen het oorspronkelijke onderliggende element van de Taalgerichte benadering 'Ontwikkeling van de Engelse taal' als een onderdeel van de Literatuur-factor.

Ten tweede konden we de bevindingen van studie 3 bevestigen: leerlingen gaven aan overwegend taalontwikkelingselementen belangrijk te vinden in de literatuurlessen bij Engels. De resultaten wezen er echter niet op dat de leerlingen geloven dat het leren van talen alleen gaat over het verwerven van taalvaardigheden en taalvaardigheid, een positie die Paran (2008, p. 468) de 'isolationistische positie' noemt. Zowel de factor Persoonlijke ontwikkeling als de Literatuur-factor werden door de leerlingen ook als redelijk belangrijk beschouwd. Aansluitend vonden we een significant verband tussen de Persoonlijke ontwikkeling en Taal factoren en tussen de Persoonlijk ontwikkeling en Literatuur factoren. Wat deze bevindingen lijken te suggereren, is dat leerlingen of een benadering van literatuur-persoonlijke ontwikkeling of een benadering van taal-persoonlijke ontwikkeling waarderen. Het ontbreken van een significante relatie tussen de Taal en Literatuur factoren zou kunnen suggereren dat Carter's (2015) observatie van een dichotomie bij docenten, waar het leren van taal voornamelijk betrekking heeft op "relevantie en nut" en waar het leren van taal voornamelijk betrekking heeft op "literatuur,

cultuur en betekenis” (p. 316), ook aanwezig is in de groep leerlingen die wij onderzocht hebben.

Ten derde lieten de resultaten zien dat leerlingen gemiddeld matig betrokken zijn tijdens de literatuurlessen. Daarbij vonden we een significant verschil tussen hun emotionele en gedragsmatige betrokkenheid: leerlingen zijn emotioneel significant meer betrokken tijdens de les dan gedragsmatig. Met andere woorden, leerlingen vertonen meer onvrede in hun gedrag dan ze emotioneel lijken te ervaren. Tot slot, leerlingen die de Literatuur factor als belangrijk ervaren tonen over het algemeen een hoge mate van betrokkenheid. Daarnaast hebben we geen verband kunnen aantonen tussen leerlingen die de Taal factor belangrijk vinden en hun mate van betrokkenheid.

### **Studie 5: De relevantie en bruikbaarheid van de Meervoudige Benadering volgens docenten**

In de vijfde en laatste studie van dit proefschrift hebben we onderzocht hoe acht docenten Engels de relevantie en de bruikbaarheid van de Meervoudige Benadering hebben ervaren bij de implementatie hiervan in hun eigen onderwijspraktijk. In deze studie hebben we ons gericht op de *Theory of Change* (Desimone & Stuke, 2014), d.w.z. of de nieuwe kennis en didactiek van de docenten met betrekking tot hun literatuuronderwijs van invloed is geweest. In jaar 1 hebben we alle literatuurlessen (n = 122) met video camera's opgenomen en geanalyseerd hoe de docenten de literaire teksten benaderden waarbij de Meervoudige benadering als analysekader is gebruikt. Dit werd gevolgd door een nascholingsprogramma waarin de docenten hun eigen literatuurcurriculum verrijkten via de Meervoudige Benadering, waarbij ze zich concentreerden op leerdoelen, toetsing en lesontwerp (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In jaar 2 hebben we opnieuw alle literatuurlessen opgenomen (n = 154), gevolgd door individuele interviews. Om erachter te komen hoe docenten de relevantie en de bruikbaarheid van de Meervoudige Benadering hebben ervaren na een jaar ermee te hebben gewerkt, hebben we de gegevens geanalyseerd door de lens van *Sensemaking Theory* (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) en de *Practicality Theory* (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015).

In zowel jaar 1 als jaar 2 werd de meeste lestijd besteed aan de Tekstgerichte benadering en werd de minste lestijd besteed aan de Taalgerichte benadering. Bij het vergelijken van het gemiddelde percentage lestijd dat de acht docenten aan elk van de vier benaderingen hebben besteed, kunnen we concluderen dat na de

interventie minder tijd werd besteed aan de Tekstgerichte benadering en meer tijd werd besteed aan de Lezersgerichte en Taalgerichte benadering (en in zeer kleine mate aan de Contextgerichte benadering). Hoewel gemiddeld genomen we een kleine beweging zagen in jaar 2 naar een groter evenwicht tussen de vier benaderingen, liet de analyse zien dat de verschillen tussen docenten groot waren.

In termen van relevantie ervoeren de docenten de Meervoudige Benadering als een praktisch vakdidactisch kader dat hen (weer) meer bewust maakte van hun literatuuronderwijs. De Meervoudige Benadering bood hen een gemeenschappelijke taal waardoor ze een duidelijk inzicht konden krijgen in het waarom, hoe en wat van hun literatuurcurriculum. Alle acht docenten vonden een match tussen de vakinhoudelijke kennis (d.w.z. de Meervoudige Benadering) en hun eigen referentiekader. Hoewel voor sommige docenten de vier benaderingen een *eye-opener* waren, gebruikten anderen de vier benaderingen als een bevestiging van hun huidige onderwijspraktijk. Met andere woorden, de mate waarin de Meervoudige Benadering leidde tot een getransformeerd eigen referentiekader (het accommodatieproces) (Luttenberg et al., 2013) of tot een aanpassing van de Meervoudige Benadering aan het eigen referentiekader van de docent (het assimilatieproces) varieerde tussen de docenten. Ongeacht assimilatie of accommodatie, ervoeren verschillende docenten een toename van vertrouwen en energie bij het werken met de Meervoudige Benadering.

In termen van bruikbaarheid leek de Meervoudige Benadering bruikbaar voor alle docenten, maar in verschillende mate en met een verschillende foci. De manier waarop docenten de Meervoudige benadering begrepen had invloed op hoe ze deze in hun lessen hadden geïmplementeerd. Sommige docenten omarmden de Meervoudige Benadering en verrijkten hun lessen door elk van de vier benaderingen bewust in te zetten. Andere docenten waren meer gericht op de structuur van hun lessen, op het meer betrekken van hun leerlingen in het leerproces, of op het kunnen improviseren en meer variatie in hun lessen kunnen toevoegen.

Een aspect dat zorgvuldig moet worden overwogen bij het bespreken van de bruikbaarheid van de Meervoudige benadering in het kader van de *Practicality Theory* (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2015) is de Taalgerichte benadering. Een belangrijk resultaat van deze studie is dat de historisch ongemakkelijke relatie tussen taalverwerving en literatuur tastbaar werd, niet alleen in termen van hoe docenten deze benadering interpreteerden en hoe zij de implementatie ervan als moeilijk en tijdrovend ervoeren, maar ook in termen van analyse (zie hieronder).

## Discussie

De Meervoudige Benadering stelde ons in staat om in kaart te brengen hoe literatuur momenteel wordt benaderd binnen het schoolvak Engels en hoe leerlingen deze lessen waarnemen en waarderen. Het bood ook een groep van acht docenten een gemeenschappelijke taal, waardoor ze hun eigen literatuurcurriculum konden analyseren, opnieuw doordenken en verrijken. Echter, de resultaten van de vijf empirische studies roepen ook een aantal vragen op.

Zo bleek de Taalgerichte benadering zowel praktisch als methodologisch een probleem te zijn. Docenten gaven aan dat het implementeren van deze benadering in hun literatuurlessen lastig en tijdrovend was. Een methodologische kwestie met de Taalgerichte benadering betreft de manier van meting. Hoe kun je zien wanneer een leerling nieuwe taalkennis verwerft of bestaande kennis over de taal oefent tijdens de les? Hoe meet je de taalontwikkeling van leerlingen tijdens de MVT-literatuurles?

Hoewel de vier benaderingen van de Meervoudige benadering als conceptueel gescheiden kunnen worden beschouwd, stelden wij niet alleen voor dat er een wederzijds verband bestaat tussen de vier benaderingen maar ook dat de vier benaderingen geïntegreerd aangeboden zouden moeten worden. Hoe integratie wordt geïnterpreteerd, hangt echter af van de leerdoelen, de materialen of activiteiten, of van de rol en positie van de literatuurcomponent in het MVT-curriculum. Met andere woorden, de vraag blijft welk evenwicht tussen de vier benaderingen wenselijk is om de MVT-literatuurlessen zo rijk mogelijk te maken. Breder gezien en in samenhang met recente ontwikkelingen van onder andere Curriulum. Nu blijft de vraag hoe de taalverwervings- en inhoudscomponenten zodanig kunnen worden geïntegreerd en aangeleerd in een situatie waarin het gescheiden houden van deze twee componenten als verouderd wordt beschouwd.

Resultaten van de verschillende studies in dit proefschrift laten zien dat er verschillen zijn tussen de perspectieven van leerlingen en docenten met betrekking tot literatuuronderwijs binnen het schoolvak Engels op drie verschillende niveaus. Ten eerste is er een groot verschil tussen wat leerlingen nuttig en belangrijk vinden en wat er momenteel gebeurt in de literatuurlessen. Terwijl leerlingen aangaven dat de Taalgerichte benadering bijzonder nuttig en belangrijk is, zij het in combinatie met andere benaderingen, besteden docenten Engels over het algemeen het grootste deel van hun lestijd aan de Tekstgerichte benadering en het minst van hun lestijd aan de Taalgerichte benadering. Ten tweede, vanuit een leerlingperspectief



kunnen de Tekstgerichte en Contextgerichte benaderingen binnen de Meervoudige Benadering als één worden beschouwd. En ten derde, volgens leerlingen staat het onderliggende element 'ontwikkeling van de Engelse taal', dat oorspronkelijk als onderdeel van de Taalgerichte benadering werd beschouwd, sterker in verband met elementen uit de Tekstgerichte benadering. Deze substantiële verschillen tussen leerlingen en docenten met betrekking tot hun perceptie van de literatuurlessen roept drie vragen op: Waarom zien leerlingen de literatuurlessen voornamelijk op een pragmatische manier om talen te leren? Waarom worden literaire teksten voornamelijk onderwezen via een Tekstgerichte benadering? IS het relevant om de verschillen tussen leerlingen en docenten te verkleinen?

In de studie beschreven in hoofdstuk 6 hebben we de Meervoudige Benadering als een raamwerk aan de acht docenten gepresenteerd waarmee ze hun bestaande literatuurcurriculum konden analyseren, opnieuw doordenken en verrijken. Deze actieve betrokkenheid bij de ontwikkeling van het literatuurcurriculum vereiste dat de docenten eerst het kader begrepen alvorens deze te implementeren. Omdat de manier waarop de docenten betekenis ontleenden aan de Meervoudige benadering van invloed is op hoe ze deze implementeerden, zijn de uitkomsten variabel. Hoewel deze uitkomst zeer interessant is vanuit het perspectief van de *Theory of Change*, wordt het een probleem wanneer de *Theory of Instruction* (Zorgt de nieuwe kennis tot een verbetering bij leerlingen?) wordt onderzocht. Hoewel het essentieel is in het licht van duurzaamheid om een innovatie te onderzoeken vanuit het perspectief van beide theorieën (Desimone & Stukey, 2014), vereist onderzoek naar een innovatie door verrijking in plaats van vervanging een zorgvuldige afweging van de impact van betekenisgeving op de veranderingen in het leren van leerlingen.

We eindigden het proefschrift door te stellen dat het tijd is om de beslissing te maken dat het *principium tertii exclusi* - wet van het uitgesloten midden – waarbij de focus verschuift tussen enerzijds de literaire tekst en anderzijds de taalontwikkeling verouderd is. We moeten stoppen met het rechtvaardigen van de rol, positie en relevantie van literatuur in het MVT-onderwijs. Het is tijd om een goed gestructureerde onderzoek agenda voor MVT-literatuuronderwijs op te stellen en docenten te gaan helpen met het waarom, het hoe en het wat van een vakeigen inhoudsrijk MVT-curriculum waarvan literatuur een vanzelfsprekend deel uitmaakt.

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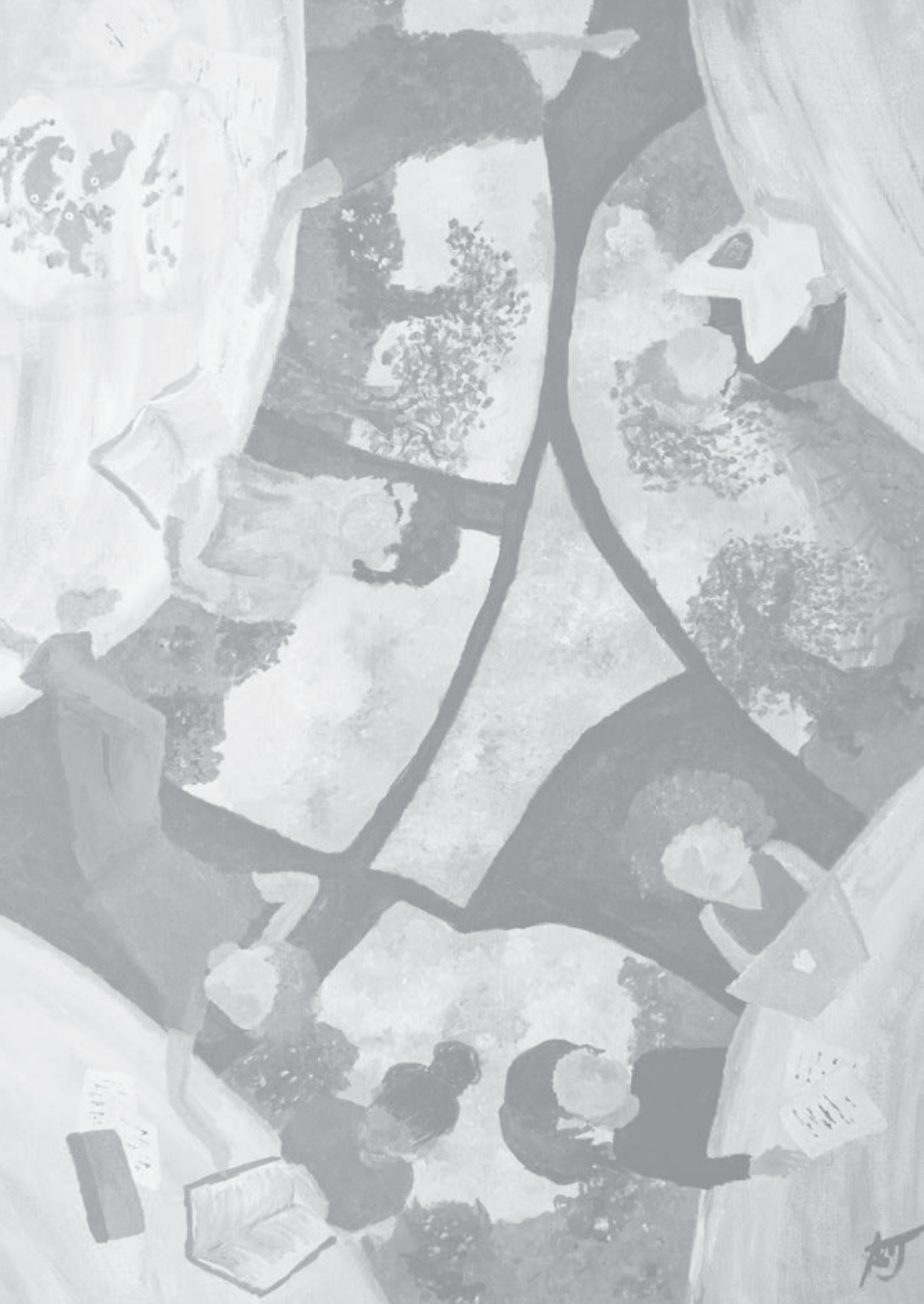


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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I

### Teacher questionnaire (Section 2.2.1)

#### Personal information:

- Age:
- Years of teaching experience:
- Gender:
- Education:

#### EFL lessons and literature:

- How many EFL lessons do students in year 4/5/6 have per week?
- How many EFL lessons do you spend per year on literature?
- What is the percentage of the literature component for the final English mark?

#### How much lesson time did you spend on the following elements?

1 = never  
2 = rarely  
3 = sometimes  
4 = regularly  
5 = often  
6 = always

Literary terminology	1	2	3	4	5	6
Recognising text types	1	2	3	4	5	6
Distinguishing text types	1	2	3	4	5	6
Storyline	1	2	3	4	5	6
Character development	1	2	3	4	5	6
Who, what and where	1	2	3	4	5	6
Literary periods	1	2	3	4	5	6
Literary history	1	2	3	4	5	6
Historical aspects of a literary work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cultural aspects of a literary work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Social and societal aspects of a literary work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Information about the author	1	2	3	4	5	6
Biographical aspects of a literary work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reading pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student's personal reaction	1	2	3	4	5	6
Critically report on reading experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6
Critical thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
English linguistic aspects in a literary text	1	2	3	4	5	6
Making reading miles to improve language skills <sup>3</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
English vocabulary in a literary text	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix II

### Student survey level of engagement (Section 5.3.3.1)

	Engagement vs Disaffection (Skinner et al., 2009)	Items in student survey (adapted for EFL literature teaching)
Behavioural engagement	1. I try hard to do well in school.	During the EFL literature lessons I try hard to do well.
	2. In class, I work as hard as I can.	During the EFL literature lessons I work as hard as I can.
	3. When I'm in class, I participate in class discussions.	During the EFL literature lessons I participate in class discussions.
	4. I pay attention in class.	During the EFL literature lessons I pay attention.
	5. When I'm in class, I listen very carefully.	During the EFL literature lessons I listen very carefully.
Behavioural disaffection	1. When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working.	During the EFL literature lessons I just act like I'm working.
	2. I don't try very hard at school.	---
	3. In class, I do just enough to get by.	During the EFL literature lessons I do just enough to get by.
	4. When I'm in class, I think about other things.	During the EFL literature lessons I think about other things.
	5. When I'm in class, my mind wanders.	During the EFL literature lessons my mind wanders.
Emotional engagement	1. When I'm in class, I feel good.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel good.
	2. When we work in something in class, I feel interested.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel interested.
	3. Class is fun.	The EFL literature lessons are fun.
	4. I enjoy learning new things in class.	During the EFL literature lessons I enjoy learning new things.
	5. When we work on something in class, I get involved.	During the EFL literature lessons I get involved.
Emotional disaffection	1. When we work on something in class, I feel bored.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel bored.
	2. When I'm doing work in class, I feel bored.	---
	3. When my teacher explains new material, I feel bored.	When my teachers explains new material during the EFL literature lesson, I feel bored.
	4. When I'm in class, I feel worried.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel worried.
	5. When we start something new in class, I feel nervous.	When we start something new during the EFL literature lessons, I feel nervous.
	6. When I get stuck on a problem, I feel worried.	When I get stuck on a problem during the EFL literature lessons I feel worried.
	7. When we work on something in class, I feel discouraged.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel discouraged.
	8. Class is not all that fun for me.	---
	9. When I'm in class, I feel bad.	---
	10. When I'm working on my classwork, I feel mad.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel mad.
	11. When I get stuck on a problem, it really bothers me.	When I get stuck on a problem during the EFL literature lessons it really bothers me.
	12. When I can't answer a question, I feel frustrated.	During the EFL literature lessons I feel frustrated when I can't answer a question.



## Appendix III

### Student survey level of importance (Section 5.3.3.1)

Four approaches	Comprehensive approach to foreign language literature teaching and learning	Items in student survey
Text approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literary terminology</li> <li>Genre</li> <li>Setting</li> <li>Story, plot &amp; theme</li> <li>Characters</li> </ol>	<p>Literary terminology (such as metaphors, personification).</p> <p>Literary text types (such as short stories, or a sonnet).</p> <p>The position of time and place in English literary works.</p> <p>The story, plot and theme(s) of English literary works.</p> <p>Characters in English literary works.</p>
Context approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biographical information</li> <li>Historical, cultural &amp; social context</li> <li>Literary history</li> </ol>	<p>The life of English literary authors.</p> <p>The context of English literary works (such as historical, cultural, or social).</p> <p>English literary history (such as the Romantic period, the Renaissance, or Modernism)</p>
Reader approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading experience</li> <li>Literary taste</li> <li>Personal development</li> </ol>	<p>Reporting on your personal reading experiences with English literary works.</p> <p>Developing a personal literary taste.</p> <p>Personal development (such as developing a critical outlook).</p>
Language approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar &amp; syntax</li> <li>Vocabulary &amp; idioms</li> <li>Language skills</li> <li>Language development &amp; variety</li> </ol>	<p>English grammar and syntax.</p> <p>English vocabulary and idiom.</p> <p>Developing English language skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing).</p> <p>The development of the English language throughout the centuries (such as language use in a certain period, region or within a certain (sub)culture).</p>

## Appendix IV

### Example of an EFL literature lesson based on the Comprehensive Approach published on the website of Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling (Section 7.5.1)

#### The opening lines of literary texts (HAVO)

Auteur: Jasmijn Bloemert

##### Essential unit question:

How can you formulate your opinion of a (literary) text through reading extracts?

##### Intended Learning Objective:

Students can explain in English and with examples from the texts how they experience reading different writing styles and genres in English.

##### Lesson summary:

Students read several extracts which are all the first few lines of English literary works. By means of guiding questions and assignments they are eventually asked about their reading experience.

##### CEFR:

###### Reading (B2)

- Can understand contemporary literary prose. (Council of Europe, 27)<sup>1</sup>
- Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms. (Council of Europe, 69)

###### Writing (B1)

- Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. (Council of Europe, 62)

###### Listening (B1)

- Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives. (Council of Europe, 66)

###### Speaking (B1)

- Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points (Council of Europe, 58)
- Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. (Council of Europe, 59)
- Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions. (Council of Europe, 59)
- Can summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail. (Council of Europe, 81)

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe. (2001). Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.



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Bron: [www.leerplaninbeeld.slo.nl](http://www.leerplaninbeeld.slo.nl)

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## Assignment 1

- a) Read the following two extracts and look up any unknown words. (L)<sup>2</sup>

## Extract A

Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard: I am a lover of America. I noticed that you were looking for something; more than looking, in fact you seemed to be on a mission, and since I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language, I thought I might offer you my services. How did I see you were American? No, not by the color of your skin; we have a range of complexions in this country, and yours occurs often among the people of our northwest frontier.

## Extract B

All this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true. One guy I knew really was shot in Dresden for taking a teapot that wasn't his. Another guy I knew really did threaten to have his personal enemies killed by hired gunmen after the war. And so on. I have changed all the names. I really did go back to Dresden with Guggenheim money (God love it) in 1987. It looked a lot like Dayton, Ohio, more open spaces than Dayton has. There must be tons of human bone meal in the ground.

- b) Where do you think extract A and B take place? Underline those parts of the text that led you to your answer. (T)
- c) Both narrators have put certain words in italics [schuingedrukt]. Why do you think they did this? (T, R, L)
- d) The way both narrators introduce their story to us is quite different if you look at the language they use, such as choice of words or the length of sentences. Based on the language these two narrators use, what kind of people do you think the narrators are? (R, L)
- e) Do you think we can trust both narrators? Explain your answer. (T, R)

## Assignment 2

- a) Read the following two extracts and look up any unknown words. (L)

## Extract C

The newspaper did not say much. People all over the country must have glanced at the paragraph with its sensational heading and felt a little spurt of anger mingled with what was almost satisfaction, as if some belief had been confirmed, as if something had happened which could only have been expected. When natives steal, murder or rape, that is the feeling white people have. And then they turned the page to something else.

## Extract D

Marais Van der Vyver shot one of his farm laborers, dead. An accident, there were accidents with guns every day of the week – children playing a fatal game with a father's revolver in the cities where guns are domestic objects, nowadays, hunting mishaps like this one, in the country – but these won't be reported all over the world. Van der Vyver knows his will be.

The two extracts are taken from the opening of two literary texts that are written by South African authors. Extract C was written in 1950 and is set in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Extract D was written in 1991 and is set in South Africa. In 1948 the National Party gained power in South Africa and the laws of Apartheid remained in effect for the better part of 50 years. (C)

<sup>2</sup> T (text approach), C (context approach), R (reader approach), L (language approach)

- a) How do the openings of these texts inform you about the social situation? Underline those parts of the text that led you to your answer. (T, C)
- b) In every literary text, authors try to evoke [opropen] certain emotions and feelings in readers. In literature, mood is a literary element that is often referred to as the atmosphere of a literary text. How do you experience the mood of both extract C and D? (T, R)

**Assignment 3**

- a) Below you will find the titles of the four extracts you have just read. Allocate the titles to the abstracts and explain how you came to your decision. (T, R)
  1. The Grass is Singing, Doris Lessing, 1950. (extract c)
  2. The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Mohsin Hamid, 2007. (extract a)
  3. The Moment before the Gun Went Off, Nadine Gordimer, 1991. (extract d)
  4. Slaughterhouse 5, Kurt Vonnegut, 1969. (extract b)
- b) Select one of the four extracts and continue writing the story. Try to copy the writing style of the extract (consider for example, sentence length and word choice). (L)
- c) Which of the four texts would you like to continue reading? Explain your choice. (R)

**Assignment 4**

- a) Read the following extract and look up any unknown words. (L)

**Extract E**

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!" he said.  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Not though the soldier knew  
Someone had blundered.  
Their not to make reply,  
Their not to reason why,  
Their but to do and die,  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

These two stanzas are the opening of the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" written by Alfred Lord Tennyson in 1854. In this poem, which was published only six weeks after the event, Tennyson describes a charge of the British cavalry against Russian forces in the Crimean War. (C)

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- a) What story is Tennyson trying to tell us with this poem? (T)
- b) What is meant by "Theirs not to make reply, / Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but o do and die"? (T)
- c) Both stanzas contain short lines and a lot of repetition. How does the way Tennyson wrote these two stanzas have an impact on your understanding of the story he is trying to tell? (T, R, L)
- d) Rewrite these two stanzas in 'newspaper-style'. In other words, stick to the facts and make sure your sentences are grammatically correct. (T, R, L)
- e) Compare the original version with your own rewritten version. Which one do you prefer and why? (R)

**Assignment 5**

- a) Read the following extract and look up any unknown words. (L)

**Extract F**

Beloved sweetheart bastard. Not a day since then  
I haven't wished him dead. Prayed for it  
so hard I've dark green pebbles for eyes,  
ropes on the back of my hands I could strangle with.

Spinster. I stink and remember. Whole days  
in bed casing Hooooooooo at the wall: the dress  
yellowing, trembling if I open the wardrobe;  
the slewed mirror, full-length, her, myself, who did this

to me? Puce curses that are sounds not words.

These are the opening lines of the poem 'Havisham' written by Carol Ann Duffy. It tells the story of Miss Havisham, a character from the novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. In the novel Miss Havisham was left at the altar, never took off her wedding dress, and hates men as a result of having been left. In this poem Duffy gives Miss Havisham a voice and she tells the story in her own words. (C)

- b) Underline all the words in this poem that you think have a negative meaning. Use a different colour and underline all the words that have a positive meaning. (L)
- c) What is the effect of so many contrasting words in this poem with regard to your understanding of how Miss Havisham must feel? (T, R, L)
- d) How do you think the poem should end? Explain your answer. (T, R)

**Assignment 6**

- a) Which of the six extracts do you find least interesting? Explain why? (R)
- b) Which of the six extracts do you find most interesting? Explain why? (R)

## Appendix V

### Example for a French as a foreign Language literature lesson based on the Comprehensive Approach published by ThiemeMeulenhoff, *Libre Service 4ème édition* <sup>9</sup> (Section 7.5.1)

<p>La Cigale et la Fourmi</p> <p>La Cigale, ayant chanté          Tout l'été,          Se trouva fort dépourvue<sup>1</sup>          Quand la bise<sup>2</sup> fut venue :</p>		
<p>1 Pas un seul petit morceau          De mouche<sup>3</sup> ou de vermisseau.          Elle alla crier famine<sup>4</sup>          Chez la Fourmi sa voisine,          La priant de lui prêter</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> helemaal zonder eten  <sup>2</sup> de noordenwind  <sup>3</sup> vlieg, *worm  <sup>4</sup> haar nood klagen</p>	
<p>11 Quelque grain<sup>5</sup> pour subsister<sup>6</sup>          Jusqu'à la saison nouvelle.          « Je vous paierai, lui dit-elle,          Avant l'août, foi d'animal<sup>7</sup>,          Intérêt et principal<sup>8</sup>. »</p>	<p><sup>5</sup> graankorrel, <sup>6</sup> overleven  <sup>7</sup> op mijn dierenwoord  <sup>8</sup> rente en hoofdsom</p>	
<p>15 La Fourmi n'est pas prêteuse :          C'est là son moindre défaut<sup>9</sup>.          Que faisiez-vous au temps chaud ?          Dit-elle à cette emprunteuse<sup>10</sup>.          - Nuit et jour à tout venant</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> gebrek  <sup>10</sup> leenster</p>	
<p>21 Je chantais, ne vous déplaîsez<sup>11</sup>.          - Vous chantiez ? J'en suis fort aise<sup>12</sup>.          Eh bien ! dansez maintenant.</p>	<p><sup>11</sup> met uw weinemen  <sup>12</sup> Daar ben ik erg blij om.</p>	

Bron: Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695).

- 3 Luister naar La Cigale et la Fourmi en lees de tekst mee (zie pagina 33).
- Wat is er met de krekel aan de hand als het winter wordt?
  - Wat vraagt ze aan de buurvrouw?
  - Wat is de reactie van de mier?
  - Wat is de moraal van deze fabel?
- 4 Vertel La Cigale et la Fourmi na. Gebruik de présent (= o.t.t.) en gebruik de volgende woorden:  
 En été – la fourmi – travailler – la cigale – chanter  
 En hiver – la fourmi – beaucoup – la cigale – rien  
 La cigale – demander – alder – manger  
 La fourmi – répondre – danser
- 5 Schrijf een brief in het Frans aan Louis XIV. Schrijf daarin wat je in hem bewondert. Maar misschien heb je ook kritiek op hem. Schrijf die kritiek ook in je brief, in nette bewoordingen. Betrek in je bewondering en/of kritiek de rol die hij gespeeld heeft in de wereld van kunst en literatuur.

<sup>9</sup> Permission was granted by ThiemeMeulenhoff to reproduce this example.



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Marjon Mark Marleen Marlies Marlijn Marnix Marthe Martijn Mats Matthijs  
Maud Maurice Max Maycon Mayra Meike Meine Melissa Merit Michael Michelle  
Michiel Mika Mike Milan Minou Miranda Mirdin Miriam Mirthe Mitchell Moise  
Moniek Myrthe Nadine Nakaa Narli Natasja Nick Niels Nienke Nina Nine Noor  
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Pim Rali Ramon Rebecca Reinier Remco Renee Renée Rens Rerwan Rianne Riben  
Rick Ridwan Rik Ritso Rob Robbert Robert Robin Rolf Romy Ronald Roos Rosa  
Rosanna Roy Rozemarijn Ruben Rusherim Ruth Safira Sam Samuel Sanne Sara  
Sarah Saskia Sean Selsela Sem Senna Sergio Sietse Sieuwert Siewert Silke Silver Sim  
Simon Simone Sjors Somine Sophie Soraya Stefan Sterre Stijn Suus Susanne Sven  
Syb Tess Tessa Tesse Teun Thembi Theo Thijs Thomas Tijn Timo Tineke Tingo  
Tirza Tobias Tom Tomas Twan Vera Vincent Vivian Waalko Wander Welmoed  
Wiekie Wietse Wilco Willem Willemijn Winke Wout Wouter Wytske Wytze Yael  
Yannick Jeremy Ysabelle Yuwai Zwanie

## About the author

Jasmijn Bloemert (1980) studied English Language and Literature from 1998 to 2003 at the University of Amsterdam where she graduated on a thesis in which she investigated the epigraphs in Eliot's *Middlemarch*. In this period she received an Erasmus Scholarship to study English Language and Literature at the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona where she specialized in classical literature. After graduation she spent several years roaming the world working as an English teacher in Japan, as a flight attendant for KLM, and she set up and managed a hotel in South Africa. In 2008 she attended teacher training at the University of Groningen where she graduated cum laude in 2010. After obtaining her teaching degree Jasmijn taught English at an international boarding school in the UK and then became programme coordinator for the Master Teacher Education in English at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences during which time she also taught at various secondary schools in Groningen. In 2012 Jasmijn started working as a subject pedagogical expert (vakdidacticus) in English teaching for secondary education at the teacher training department of the University of Groningen and two years later she received a Dudoc Alfa scholarship which resulted in the current thesis. She has presented her work at national and international conferences and educational events (e.g. USA, UK, Germany) and published several chapters in this thesis in international journals (see below). The Comprehensive Approach to foreign language teaching and learning has been adopted by SLO en ThiemeMeulenhoff. Furthermore, Jasmijn is a member of the Ethics Committee at the teacher training department of the University of Groningen and a member of the Exam Committee of the Master Teacher Education at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences. Currently, she still works as subject pedagogical expert at the University of Groningen and coordinator of the professional development programme of the teacher education department (EVN).

## Publications

### Peer reviewed publications

- Bloemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, E., & van de Grift, W. (2019). Students' perspective on the benefits of EFL literature education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(3), 371-384.
- Bloemert, J., & van Veen, K. (accepted). Teaching Shakespeare's Macbeth in a Dutch secondary school EFL classroom. In A. Paran (Ed.), *Shakespeare in the L2 classroom*. Routledge.
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- Bloemert, J., Jansen, E & Paran, A. (accepted). Student motivation in Dutch secondary school EFL literature lessons. *Applied Linguistic Review*
- Bloemert, J., Paran, A. & Jansen, E. (accepted). Connecting Students and Researchers: The Secondary School Student's Voice in Foreign Language Education Research. *Cambridge Journal of Education*.

### Under review

- Tammenga-Helmantel, M., Mossing Holsteijn, L., & Bloemert, J. (under review: minor revisions). Target language use of Dutch EFL student teachers: three longitudinal case studies.
- Wolthuis, F., Bloemert, J., Tammenga-Helmantel, M., & Paran, A. (under review). A curriculum in transition: TL/L1 use in Dutch EFL literature lessons.

### Popular publications (vakpublicaties)

- Bloemert, J. (2019). Fundamenteel én relevant. Selectiecriteria voor een betekenisvolle tekstkeuze in het mvt-literatuuronderwijs. In T. Witte (Ed.), *Lectori salutem: De veelbelovende toekomst van het literatuuronderwijs* (pp. 35-46). Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.
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- Bloemert, J. (2016). How do you teach *Macbeth*? *Literature, Media & Cultural Studies SIG Newsletter*, (48), 19-22.

### **Working papers**

- Bloemert, J., Engbrenghof, M., Gerritsen, N., Wardenier, J. & Paran, A. (working paper). Listening to students: Students' Perceptions of Learning Objectives for Foreign Language-Literature Education.
- Bloemert, J., Jansen, E.P.W.A & Paran, A. (working paper). Evaluating the Comprehensive Approach in Dutch secondary education: usefulness and relevance.
- Bloemert, J., & Cats, E. (working paper). MVT Literatuurdidactiek. In: S. Dönszelmann, A. Kaal, C. Van Beuningen & R. de Graaff (Eds.), *Didactiek MVT*. Couthino.
- Arends, E., & Bloemert, J. (working paper). Literatuurdidactiek bovenbouw. In: L. Boersma, I. Elferink & M. Mitzschke (Eds.), *Vreemdetalenonderwijs geven*. Koninklijke van Gorcum BV. Herdruk.











