



**Content in Nordic Pupil Narratives in  
Instructed EFL:  
A Norwegian Perspective**

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## Acknowledgements

Ever since studying English literature at the University of Tromsø and mass communication and media at the University of Bergen and later becoming a lecturer in EFL literature in teacher training, I have wanted to find out more about how pupils create their stories. In the 1990s, I taught composition at the University of Tromsø and worked with process-writing among university students. Later on, the step by step processing of texts in school became a research focus, and at first, I collected pupil texts in the local schools for my project. But when the opportunity to participate in the TALE project was introduced to me in 2002, a solid supplier of relevant and intriguing texts on a large scale was within reach. When I was offered the Norwegian seat in the management team of the project, a unique opportunity to explore such texts was at hand. The Faculties of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Tromsø granted funding from 2003, and consequently, this project was made possible. I want to thank the University of Tromsø for this opportunity to develop both professionally and personally. In my doctoral programme, I have participated at conferences in the TALE project at the University of Southern Denmark and at the University of Akureyri in Iceland. I wish to express my gratitude to the TALE partners for their rewarding and pleasant companionship. I have shared my work with research colleagues at conferences and seminars, at the Carn conference at the National College for School Leadership in Nottingham, at the Nera conference at Åbo Academy University, at the Department of Behavioural Sciences at the University of Helsinki and at two seminars at *Centre de coopération franco-norvégienne en sciences sociales et humaines* at the *Centre École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris. I have also visited the University of Nottingham on several occasions. The universities in Bergen and Oslo have provided adequate courses and seminars. I am deeply grateful for the response, critique and encouragement from people I have met at these various institutions.

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.2	PUPIL PRODUCED NARRATIVE CONTENT .....	8
1.2.1	Why study pupil produced content.....	8
1.2.2	The foreign language text.....	9
1.2.3	A Norwegian perspective on Nordic EFL narratives .....	11
1.2.4	Pupils' written texts.....	11
1.3	PRECISION OF TERMS .....	12
1.3.1	English.....	13
1.3.2	Content .....	14
1.3.3	Discourse .....	14
1.3.4	Identity .....	15
1.3.5	Narrative.....	15
1.3.6	Intertextuality .....	16
1.3.7	Novel .....	16
1.4	RESEARCH ISSUES .....	17
1.4.1	Preceding studies of Nordic pupil EFL narratives .....	17
1.4.2	Research approach.....	19
1.4.3	Research questions .....	19
1.5	THE FORTHCOMING THESIS CHAPTERS .....	20
1.5.1	On chapter 2 .....	21
1.5.2	On chapter 3 .....	21
1.5.3	On chapter 4 .....	22
1.5.4	On chapter 5 .....	22
1.5.5	On chapter 6 .....	23
1.5.6	On chapter 7 .....	23
1.5.7	On chapter 8 .....	24
1.5.8	On chapter 9 .....	24
1.6	SUMMING UP .....	24
<b>2</b>	<b>THE THEORETICAL BASIS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	27
2.2	THE THEORETICAL SEARCH .....	28
2.2.1	EFL education .....	29
2.2.2	Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary EFL .....	30
2.3	PUPIL NARRATIVES AS RESEARCH DATA .....	31
2.3.1	Narratology and pedagogy .....	32
2.3.2	The narrative in different disciplines .....	32
2.3.3	The ontology and epistemology of narrative.....	33
2.3.4	The context of pupil narratives.....	34
2.4	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	35
2.4.1	The trustworthiness of the research.....	36
2.4.2	Subjectification.....	37

2.4.3	The writer's integrity.....	38
2.5	THE RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH .....	39
2.5.1	Pupil produced content and other content.....	40
2.5.2	Creating EFL narratives .....	40
2.5.3	Development in writing.....	41
2.5.4	The didactics of literature.....	42
2.6	KRISTEVIAN INTERTEXTUALITY .....	43
2.6.1	The intertextuality concept.....	44
2.6.2	Different aspects of intertextuality.....	45
2.6.3	Intertextuality and the novel.....	46
2.7	BAKHTINIAN NOVEL.....	47
2.7.1	Stratification .....	48
2.7.2	Parody and genre.....	48
2.7.3	Other-languageness .....	50
2.7.4	The low language of contemporaneity.....	50
2.7.5	Novel elements.....	51
2.7.6	The speaking subject .....	52
2.8	IDENTITY IN AN EFL PUPIL DISCOURSE .....	53
2.8.1	The identity concept .....	54
2.8.2	Foucaultian objectification.....	55
2.8.3	The pupil identity .....	56
2.8.4	The discourse concept .....	57
2.8.5	A pupil discourse.....	58
2.8.6	An EFL narrative discourse.....	59
2.8.7	Deciding the narrative content .....	60
2.9	RELEVANT APPROACHES .....	61
2.9.1	Possible approaches to pupil narratives .....	61
2.9.2	The approach in this study .....	62
2.9.3	Possible limitations of the literary approach .....	64
2.10	SUMMING UP .....	64
<b>3</b>	<b>ENGLISH LEARNING AND TEACHING IN NORWAY.....</b>	<b>67</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	67
3.2	THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOL .....	67
3.2.1	Practical English.....	68
3.2.2	The dichotomy between Latin and English.....	69
3.2.3	Early methods.....	70
3.2.4	Current methods .....	71
3.3	ENGLISH AND THE OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGES .....	72
3.3.1	The other foreign languages .....	73
3.3.2	Beginner's age and amplitude of input .....	73
3.4	THE COMMUNICATIVE CLASSROOM .....	74
3.4.1	The English teacher .....	75
3.4.2	Early start .....	76
3.4.3	Language acquisition.....	77
3.5	CULTURE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING .....	79
3.5.1	Modernist and post-modernist perspectives .....	80
3.5.2	Intercultural EFL .....	81
3.5.3	Indigenous aspect .....	82
3.6	LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING .....	82

3.6.1	Literature's role in the syllabi .....	83
3.6.2	A literary canon .....	84
3.6.3	The future of the canon .....	85
3.7	ENGLISH CURRENTLY .....	86
3.7.1	Process-oriented writing.....	87
3.7.2	Digital literacy.....	88
3.7.3	ICT classroom practice.....	88
3.7.4	Online English and pupils' writing practice.....	90
3.7.5	National tests and Common European Framework.....	90
3.7.6	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) .....	91
3.8	ENGLISH AS LINGUA FRANCA .....	92
3.8.1	Global English.....	92
3.8.2	'Norwenglish' .....	94
3.8.3	Perhaps a democratic language .....	95
3.9	SUMMING UP .....	96
<b>4</b>	<b>THE TALE NETWORK .....</b>	<b>97</b>
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	97
4.2	A NORDPLUS PROJECT.....	97
4.2.1	Groups of participators.....	98
4.2.2	Teacher education institutions.....	99
4.2.3	Meta-discussions in TALE.....	100
4.3	EXCHANGE ACTIVITY IN TALE .....	101
4.3.1	Writing in inter-Nordic triads of pupils.....	102
4.3.2	The inter-Nordic pools .....	103
4.3.3	The management team .....	105
4.4	ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES.....	105
4.4.1	EFL proficiency.....	106
4.4.2	Adjustments.....	107
4.5	A WEB-BASED PROJECT .....	110
4.5.1	Organisational structure .....	110
4.5.2	TALE and other web-based projects .....	111
4.5.3	The software provider .....	112
4.5.4	Blackboard usage .....	113
4.5.5	TALE versus classroom setting.....	114
4.6	SUMMING UP .....	115
<b>5</b>	<b>THE TALE CORPUS .....</b>	<b>116</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	116
5.2	THE TALE PUPILS' ROLE .....	116
5.2.1	The pupils' age .....	117
5.2.2	Constructing triads .....	117
5.2.3	Reader and writer .....	118
5.2.4	Initiating communication .....	119
5.2.5	The triad member .....	120
5.3	THE TALE PUPILS' FRAME OF REFERENCE .....	121
5.3.1	Contemporaneity .....	122
5.3.2	Sports reference.....	125
5.3.3	TV reference.....	127

5.3.4	Modern lifestyle reference .....	129
5.4	PROCESSING NARRATIVES IN TALE .....	130
5.4.1	Pre-writing.....	130
5.4.2	Text composition and revision .....	131
5.4.3	Response and editing.....	134
5.4.4	Evaluation and publication.....	139
5.5	THE FORMULAIC TALE NARRATIVE.....	140
5.5.1	TALE's definition of narrative.....	141
5.5.2	A predefined topic .....	142
5.5.3	A chain story .....	146
5.5.4	A predefined setting .....	147
5.5.5	The modern fairy tales.....	150
5.6	SUMMING UP .....	154
<b>6</b>	<b>METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>156</b>
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	156
6.2	A CORPUS OF NARRATIVES .....	157
6.2.1	The size of the material .....	157
6.2.2	A narrative in this context .....	158
6.2.3	The length of the narrative text .....	158
6.2.4	Narratives with pupil produced content .....	159
6.3	SELECTING BETWEEN OPEN AND CLOSED FORMULAS .....	160
6.3.1	Presentations of pupil biographies and hometowns .....	160
6.3.2	Predefined topics .....	161
6.3.3	Chain stories .....	161
6.3.4	Predefined settings .....	163
6.3.5	Modern pupil fairy tales .....	164
6.4	SELECTING INDIVIDUAL PUPIL FAIRY TALES .....	165
6.4.1	First editions.....	165
6.4.2	Qualitative and quantitative selection .....	166
6.4.3	Reduction of target texts and gendered representation .....	167
6.4.4	Linguistic inadequacy .....	168
6.4.5	Linguistic adequacy.....	170
6.4.6	Divergence .....	171
6.5	APPROACHING TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALES AS INTERTEXTS.....	172
6.5.1	The fairy tales' development.....	173
6.5.2	Functions and laws in traditional fairy tales.....	175
6.5.3	Femininity and masculinity in traditional fairy tales .....	176
6.5.4	Psychoanalytical approaches to traditional fairy tales .....	177
6.5.5	The process of individuation in traditional fairy tales.....	178
6.6	SOME TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALE CHARACTERS .....	180
6.6.1	The hero.....	181
6.6.2	The anti-hero .....	182
6.6.3	Prince and princess/brother and sister .....	183
6.6.4	Grown-ups .....	185
6.6.5	Dwarfs .....	186
6.7	SOME TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALE MOTIFS .....	186
6.7.1	Numbers .....	187
6.7.2	A trail in the wood.....	187
6.7.3	Cottage .....	188

6.7.4	Sleep .....	189
6.8	STUDYING THE PUPIL FAIRY TALES .....	190
6.8.1	Novel pupil narratives .....	190
6.8.2	The layout of pupil narratives .....	191
6.8.3	Font and colour.....	192
6.8.4	The role of the researcher.....	194
6.8.5	How the pupil fairy tales will be read .....	194
6.8.6	Validity in text interpretation .....	195
6.8.7	Reliability .....	196
6.8.8	Teacher interference .....	197
6.8.9	The interpretative practice.....	198
6.9	SUMMING UP .....	199
<b>7</b>	<b>THE LITERARY INTERPRETATIONS OF FIFTEEN PUPIL NARRATIVES</b>	<b>202</b>
7.1	INTRODUCTION.....	202
7.2	DIVERSIFIED FIGHTERS .....	202
7.2.1	The ugly princess .....	203
7.2.2	The superworm.....	207
7.2.3	The karate dog.....	210
7.3	VILLAINOUS CREATURES .....	213
7.3.1	Pou’s comeback.....	213
7.3.2	The three bugs .....	216
7.3.3	The three bears .....	219
7.4	SIBLINGS .....	221
7.4.1	The witch as lifesaver.....	221
7.4.2	The boy and the magic word.....	224
7.4.3	The fairytale about the big fat boy .....	230
7.5	SPECIES OF ALL KINDS .....	232
7.5.1	The hippo.....	233
7.5.2	Philip the fox .....	235
7.5.3	The biggest battle .....	237
7.6	VILLAINS.....	241
7.6.1	A day in the school.....	241
7.6.2	Hero - monster.....	244
7.6.3	The three trolls .....	246
7.7	SUMMING UP .....	249
<b>8</b>	<b>CONTENT IN PUPIL PRODUCED NARRATIVES IN TALE .....</b>	<b>252</b>
8.1	INTRODUCTION.....	252
8.2	IDENTITY IN SOCIETY.....	252
8.2.1	Global identity.....	253
8.2.2	Popular culture .....	253
8.2.3	National identity.....	254
8.2.4	Local identity.....	256
8.3	RELATING TO OTHERS .....	256
8.3.1	Parents .....	257
8.3.2	Siblings.....	258
8.3.3	Friendship.....	259
8.4	THE INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY .....	260

8.4.1	Gender .....	261
8.4.2	Sexuality .....	261
8.4.3	Heroes.....	262
8.5	CRITICAL VOICES .....	263
8.5.1	The beauty and thinness ideal .....	263
8.5.2	The good-bad motif .....	264
8.6	SUMMING UP .....	265
<b>9</b>	<b>CONCLUSIVE REMARKS.....</b>	<b>266</b>
	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>274</b>
	<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>294</b>

# 1 Introductory outline

## 1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 outlines the subject matter of the thesis, which studies Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL. The data have been collected in the Nordic experimental text exchange project TALE, The Teaching and Learning of English, which facilitated virtual contact in groups of three with pupils whose first languages are not the same.<sup>1</sup> The pupil narratives were exchanged during a period of two years (2002-2004). This thesis investigates the content of such narrative texts and sees them as forming a discourse of pupil produced content in English as a first foreign language. The study approaches the Nordic narratives from a Norwegian perspective, and the possible communication of identity in pupil narratives is traced through literary interpretation of fifteen fairy tales by twelve to fourteen-year-old Nordic pupils. Kristeva's concept 'intertextuality' (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) is central to how the pupil narratives are interpreted, and the analysis attempts to identify Bakhtinian 'novel' (Bakhtin, 1981) elements in such narratives. In conclusion, the possible bearing that the findings of the study of narratives have on EFL education is considered.

TALE utilised a commercially available learning and teaching platform provided by Blackboard Inc. for several of its basic functions, including the protection of the TALE corpus and according to the security policies specified for TALE. Access rights to the corpus are granted by the University of Southern Denmark to the TALE partners, depending on the stated purposes of the access. Because of the deviation in the submission procedures applied in TALE, a collection of 45 TALE pupil fairy tales are enclosed in the appendix of this thesis. They constitute a quantitatively selected quarter-part of a total (178) of the estimated number of pupil fairy tales in TALE. The genre of pupil fairy tales has been qualitatively selected from the corpus of narrative texts in TALE, as accounted for in chapters 5 and 6. Twelve texts are used as illustrations to the argumentation in chapters 5 and 6. Fifteen texts are subject to literary interpretation in the analysis in chapter 7.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.hum.sdu.dk/projekter/ipfu/uk/TALE/presentation.htm>. (Accessed 23 April 2003)

## **1.2 Pupil produced narrative content**

In foreign language (FL) education, the content that is included is of different quality and comes from various sources. The FL class is exposed to a variety of material as the teacher communicates content from textbooks and other media. However, a substantial part of the content in EFL lessons is produced by the pupils themselves. Thus the ‘communicative function’ (van Ek, 1975) of language is accentuated. The emphasis on ‘communicative competence’, which has influenced FL learning and teaching during the last decades, has made the pupils’ role constantly more active (Savignon, 2000). The focal point of communicative competence in Norway and the other Nordic countries is on language proficiency as the ability to communicate in a range of contexts that are authentic and real; the focus is on what the pupils “can do” (Hasselgreen, 2003). It is difficult to estimate the size of the share of content produced by the pupils. The pupils participate in the formulation of the content in Instructed EFL, and they contribute both as speakers and writers of EFL content. Broadly speaking, one currently demands creative and authentic contributions from Nordic pupils to the communicative act in EFL. Communicative language usage in general, and also the language used by pupils in an EFL setting, is both oral and written; this thesis centres on the written text in the narrative genre. In the pupils’ written texts, the content which is clearly the pupils’ own contributions is studied in this thesis.

### **1.2.1 Why study pupil produced content**

When studying content in Instructed EFL, one can, for example, carry out studies of syllabi or textbooks, but to study the content that the pupils produce themselves, one needs to observe conversation in the classroom, pupils’ oral texts or presentations or pupils’ written text production. This thesis studies the latter and focuses on the narrative text type, as opposed to shorter written exercises in the target language. Based on the assumption that the pupil produced content tells something which is different from the content of the EFL syllabi or textbooks, this study examines the meaning of what pupil narratives communicate. The study presupposes that it is possible to find something else in the pupil produced content, something which is not accessible and documented in the EFL syllabus or in textbooks. To study the

thematic content of their English texts may provide vital information about parts of the discursive content that the pupils themselves bring into the communicative EFL classroom.

The situation for the EFL pupil text has changed. The gap between English and the other foreign languages widens. When the language proficiency is at a beginner's level and somewhat above, the aim of any pupil textual production is first and foremost to ensure language practice (Tornberg, 2000; Ytreberg, 1993). As the language proficiency increases, the substantial content of the pupils' texts attains extended attention. What the pupils write about becomes interesting in a different way. Even though the compositions that pupils write are not necessarily as extensive as in their mother tongue, the content of their text production has increased value. Their written narrative content may be seen to communicate meaning and identity. Thus the substantial content of pupils' texts requires a closer study.

Within the paradigm of communicative language learning, this study can provide insights into the role pupil produced content may take on in Instructed EFL. This thesis sets out to study the meaning of what is expressed in the narrative content of pupils' texts within the given generic frame of the fairy tale. The development of communicative competence in EFL writing is seen as part of the greater educational-pedagogical question of how pupils may communicate meaningful content in EFL.

### **1.2.2 The foreign language text**

Traditionally the FL written text's main purpose is to provide language practice. The learners practise, for example, new vocabulary and rules for syntax in the written mode. The receiver of the text is usually the teacher who reads it mainly to observe the language competence of the learner. In conventional composition writing, the mistakes that pupils tend to make related to grammar and spelling will be noted, and cohesion and coherence will be important criteria in the evaluation of the text, and with regard to the substantial content, the idiomatic usage and the communicative ability will be evaluated; the structure of the text will be assessed. The conventional underlying expectations of texts written in the lessons and as homework in EFL have been discussed by, for example, Tornberg (2000), Korsvold (2000), Simensen (1998)

and Ytreberg (1993). Tornberg (2000: 132)<sup>2</sup> says the following about the difference between mother tongue and FL writing:

In Swedish – (- and Norwegian -) learning and teaching, one has always worked with text production and with language as a means to express thoughts, beliefs and emotions. In foreign language learning and teaching, the main point has been the actual process of finding the linguistic modes of expression, i.e. one has accentuated the technical side of language proficiency and consequently concentrated on this in the writing process.<sup>3</sup>

In the school setting, writing has different purposes in the different languages. The quality of the contribution that pupils are able to make varies considerably between L1, which is the mother tongue, L2, which is the second language, learned after L1, and L3, the third language learned after L1 and L2. In Norway, L2 is usually English, and L3, the second foreign language taught in school (Simensen, 1998: 11). Heimark (2007: 9) argues that the distinction between L2 and L3 learning is significant and requires different approaches in the classroom. The second foreign language is French, German, Spanish or Russian. Currently proficiency in English is supposedly advancing among the total population.<sup>4</sup> Consequently the narrative practice and the methods of English are to a greater extent separable from those of the other foreign languages in the Norwegian and other Nordic schools.

This thesis does not focus on a comparison of the situation in the individual Nordic classroom practice or the different national curricula. Neither does it compare narratives by Norwegian pupils to narratives by other Nordic pupils. Nevertheless, the wider Northern perspective is considered relevant to a discussion of the situation for the learning and teaching of foreign languages in Norway. The Nordic countries, which took part in the TALE project, are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

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<sup>2</sup> Quotes will be given in English when the original text is non-English. The original texts will be presented in a footnote. When the English translation is provided by me, the quote will be succeeded by a parenthesis, stating that it is my translation.

<sup>3</sup> [I svensk- (- og norsk-) undervisningen har man alltid arbeidet med tekstproduksjon og med språket som et middel for å uttrykke tanker, oppfatninger og følelser. I fremmedspråksundervisningen har imidlertid tyngdepunktet ofte ligget på selve veien til de språklige uttrykksmidlene. Det vil si at man har lagt mest vekt på den rent tekniske siden av språkferdigheten og følgelig konsentrert seg om dette når det gjelder skrivingen.] (my translation)

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Graddol (1997) and Ibsen (2004). Whether this is actually the case is a relative question depending, for example, on what part of the population is included and on how the proficiency is assessed.

### **1.2.3 A Norwegian perspective on Nordic EFL narratives**

Although English usage is a worldwide activity, this thesis approaches Instructed EFL mainly from a Norwegian perspective, and the situation in Norway is emphasised and seen as part of a Nordic context. The TALE project involved the five Nordic countries, which cooperate closely in a number of fields both within education and other realms of society. But many features of the five Nordic countries are different. The Finnish language (Finno-Ugric) is generally not comprehensible to the other Scandinavians. The Icelandic language is also dissimilar from the other Scandinavian languages although it belongs to the Old Norse group of languages. Nevertheless, EFL education in the Nordic countries has many points of resemblance. To some extent, Nordic countries share cultural and linguistic heritage, and to treat the Nordic countries as a unit with much in common with regard to English in school is relevant in this context.<sup>5</sup> In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, English is developing into a second language (Graddol, 1997: 11). In Norway, the proficiency of the learners varies considerably especially in the writing skill; a small group of pupils struggle to attain a functional command of English by the end of the eleventh year in school, while others develop second language proficiency at the lower secondary level (European Network of Policy Makers and the Evaluation of Education Systems, 2002: 147). This difference in the pupils' proficiency is evident in the pupils' written texts.

### **1.2.4 Pupils' written texts**

This thesis studies the pupils' written texts. Greater importance can generally be attached to a written text compared to an oral one; “[...] because written utterances can be more deliberately shaped and reshaped than spoken ones, writing lends itself to the development of craftsman-like skills not normally found in speaking” (Bereiter, 1980: 75). The meaning that the writer puts to his/her own utterance becomes fixed when it is presented in the written mode. As Simensen (1998: 197) puts it, “Writing is permanent in comparison to speaking”. Ricoeur (1981: 145) goes even further and claims that “[...] a text is any discourse fixed by

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<sup>5</sup> This does not imply that the differences between the individual countries in the North are insignificant. For example, Finland and Iceland are not included in Graddol's (1997: 11) listing of countries in transition from EFL to ESL status.

writing”. Although this thesis acknowledges the oral text as text, it is justifiable to assume that the meaning of written compared to oral language is more notable because of its relatively static nature. The written text has qualities which make it traceable and constant; however, the producer of a written text may also continue the alterations and the writing process after the text has been presented. As Drew and Sørheim (2004: 68) point out: “Sometimes the writer and the reader are the same person”. An important aspect of writing is to organise thoughts and ideas, thus the writing process supports the thinking process and helps the individual to form a meaningful text which can be altered and developed. When the writing process is concluded, the text constitutes a fixed statement, which can be presented to other receivers; and “[...] to achieve real-world purposes” (Drew and Sørheim, 2004: 71) becomes an aim. Thus the writing activity is not only an exercise which supports the thinking or ensures language practice in the target language but also a means of communicating with other people. In this study, the pupil narratives are written on computers and exchanged in the TALE network. The pupils’ written performance and written response are situated in digital portfolios and constitute a stable material.

### **1.3 Precision of terms**

The thesis attempts to apply a multidisciplinary vocabulary that can be intuitively understood by professionals who work within the fields of FL education and pedagogy. When different disciplines are involved, the positioning of the thesis may shift from being zoomed in on the development of knowledge in one particular discipline into studying the interdisciplinary range of the new or supplementary knowledge that the thesis may produce. An interdisciplinary approach does not necessarily provide adequate room for considerable and detailed reports of the development of knowledge in the various research areas involved, and an emphasis is put on choosing terms that will be perceived as relevant to diversified disciplines, terms that are comprehensible without becoming inaccurate or vague.<sup>6</sup> The terms may thus reflect the interdisciplinary position of the thesis within the social sciences and the humanities and within these broad fields, the disciplines of literary theory and pedagogy. The concepts applied in this thesis will be explained consecutively when they are introduced, but

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<sup>6</sup> But sometimes the vagueness of a term is required and selected on purpose to suggest an ambiguous denotation.

in the following, some terms that are frequently applied will be explained: ‘English’, ‘content’, ‘discourse’, ‘identity’, ‘narrative’, ‘intertextuality’ and ‘novel’.

### 1.3.1 English

The term ‘English’ is used in a number of different connections in the thesis. When English is studied outside English-speaking countries, or by foreigners inside English-speaking countries, it is usually referred to as ‘English as a foreign language’ (EFL).<sup>7</sup> In this connection, the terms ‘EFL’ and ‘Instructed EFL’ will be applied to denote the language as it is studied in school in non-English speaking areas. Different acronyms refer to English usage in various settings; the most important one in this context is English as a second language (ESL).<sup>8</sup> When English is discussed as a lingua franca, the term ‘ELF’<sup>9</sup> is applied. The terms ‘English’ or ‘Global English’ are applied when English is referred to as a world language. ICT-influenced English is often referred to as Online English (Crystal, 2001). The name of the school subject in Norway is English.<sup>10</sup> Foreign language education, English education, and EFL education are used to denote the field of FL and EFL pedagogy.<sup>11</sup> The term ‘foreign language’ may connote the kind of estrangement which is no longer relevant in the case of English as an international language. In some research literature in this field, second and foreign language education are referred to as the learning of languages other than the mother tongue (Stern, 1983: 2; Mitchell and Myles, 2004: 5-6). In a global view, the concept ‘foreign’ seems somewhat unproductive, at least when it is applied to English, and in the current curriculum in Norway one has chosen to separate English from the other foreign languages taught in school to attend to this distinction. The term, ‘another language’, which Lund (2001) launches, can be understood as an attempt at redefining the role of EFL to accommodate this change. However, English is not just another language; English is English; it has a unique position with its worldwide and multithreaded applicability.

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<sup>7</sup> The acronym EFL is an abbreviation for both ‘English as a foreign language’ and ‘English as foreign language’. In this thesis the two terms are taken to mean the same.

<sup>8</sup> The acronym ESL is an abbreviation for both ‘English as a second language’ and ‘English as second language’. In this thesis the two terms are taken to mean the same.

<sup>9</sup> The acronym ELF is an abbreviation for both ‘English as a lingua franca’ and ‘English as lingua franca’. In this thesis the two terms are taken to mean the same.

<sup>10</sup> In upper secondary school in Norway the subject “Internasjonal Engelsk” [International English] has been introduced from 2007.

<sup>11</sup> The concepts are discussed briefly in chapter 2.

### **1.3.2 Content**

When the present thesis applies the broad term ‘content’; what is meant is the thematic content as opposed to the linguistic content, or ‘the language content’ (Simensen, 1998: 36), of the pupil text. The thesis applies the term ‘content’ to denote the type of content which is not included for the purpose of practising the language per se. Thus the substantial message or the genuine theme of the narrative is called ‘content’ to denote the type of thematic content, which is not only educational language practice, but which is loaded with meaning in a similar way that mother tongue language might be. In this thesis, the term ‘pupil produced content’ is meant to cover the phenomenon of pupil contributions in school. The term ‘pupil’ is equivalent to the Scandinavian term ‘elev’ and is separable from the term ‘student’. Broadly speaking, the pupil attends primary or secondary education, whereas the student studies at college or university. In this research connection, the pupil contribution in the written narrative is subject to study. ‘Pupil narrative content’ is the narrative content that pupils produce in the school setting in the narrative form. In any written task, in this research connection, for instance, the fairy tale genre, there will be confinements related to the task itself which determine part of the content. The contribution in the task that can be defined as the pupil’s own is focused on here; what is expressed in such content?

### **1.3.3 Discourse**

The term ‘discourse’ is here applied to denote the phenomenon of language usage in communication. Within the paradigm of communicative language learning, for example, Tornberg (2000: 90) emphasises the communicative purpose of discursive texts. The interdisciplinary aspect of the present thesis becomes evident in its appliance of the term ‘discourse’. In this thesis, the term ‘discourse’ is not applied in its strict definitions within literature studies or linguistics. In literature studies, the term ‘discourse’ often refers to the way a narrative is told, as opposed to the plot. In linguistics, the term denotes, for example, the study of linguistic phenomena in sentences. The present thesis leans upon the concept ‘discourse’ as it is defined in social science as an institutionalised way of communication

(Foucault, 1977; 1986).<sup>12</sup> The genre of the text and the role of the writer may be examples of such institutional aspects which, for example, may help shaping the discourse. Pupil narratives may in this view be seen to form a discourse made by young people who are in the role of Nordic EFL pupils when they write their English texts in TALE in the narrative genre. The concept ‘discourse’ will be discussed further in chapter 2.

### **1.3.4 Identity**

The term ‘identity’ is used in this thesis to denote both the psychological and the social identity. The concept ‘identity’ is widely applied in research in a multitude of contexts in psychology (Erikson, 1959) and sociology (Goffman, 1956; Giddens, 1991) and defined for classroom purposes by, for example, Hawkins (2004) as being in a state of flux. The concept is ambiguous; it denotes the ego-identity of individuals in psychology (Eriksson, 1959: 22), but in some sociological studies identity is to be understood “[...] not as the core of an individual’s being, or as a set of fixed characteristics, but as changing, fluid and multiple” (Hawkins, 2004: 18).<sup>13</sup> Within this latter view, identity can be perceived as something which is both constructed and negotiated in language. Both formation and communication of identity are seen as multidimensional processes which are intrinsically linked. The concept ‘identity’ will be discussed further in chapter 2.

### **1.3.5 Narrative**

In this thesis, the Aristotelian notion of narrative as being tripartite and involving a beginning, a middle and an end is endorsed; the term ‘narrative’ is often used synonymously with the noun ‘story’ but is also used as an adjective which specifies the type of content in question. “From earliest times, various kinds of narratives have existed: myths, fairy tales, fables, apologues, epics” (Dupriez, 1991: 294). The narrative genre is capable of renewal; “And narrative, which includes novels of all kinds, short stories, biographies, historical

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<sup>12</sup> The concept will be discussed further in chapter 2.

<sup>13</sup> The concept will be discussed further in chapter 2.

reconstructions, newspaper stories, etc. is still one of the most diverse genres” (Dupriez, 1991: 294). But the concept ‘narrative’ conveys different connotations in a research context and will be discussed in chapters 2 and 5.

### **1.3.6 Intertextuality**

The term ‘intertextuality’ is understood as the impact that texts have on each other (Kristeva, 1974; 1980). In this research connection, the term ‘intertext’ refers to the texts that the pupil narratives allude to or refer to. Any text is informed by at least one other text, which thus becomes the intertext of the text. An intertext may be another text, but also textual fragments, which the writer’s text alludes to. The intertextual relationship between texts often involves several intertexts, and the possibility for narrating a story from a different position. The mutual relationship between text and intertext are involved in influences the understanding of the content of the narrative. The theoretical implications of the term are discussed further in chapter 2.

### **1.3.7 Novel**

The term ‘novel’ is synonymous to the adjective ‘new’ and the noun which denotes the literary genre, novel. The dual meaning of the term points to the understanding of the concept ‘novel’ in some fields of literary theory. Although the term is used in its everyday denotation in this thesis, it is first and foremost used as a theoretical concept; novel can be understood as a force which operates in language to renew it; in literature studies it may denote a revitalised generic style (Bakhtin, 1981). The theoretical notions of the concept ‘novel’ are discussed further in chapter 2.

## **1.4 Research issues**

The present study of content in Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL is based in the research field of foreign language education in the humanities and social science. The discussion in this thesis is text-oriented, that is the focus is on the pupil content as textual content. The primary objective here is to discuss what is dealt with in such narrative texts. Apparently the study of content in Nordic EFL pupil narratives is a new field of research, at least when substantial content is concerned. Thus the study of such content is not a well documented field. Although teachers, students and lecturers in teacher education study EFL narratives in their practical approaches to pupil texts, there is a scarcity of research into pupil produced substantial content of narratives in Instructed EFL. To determine whether the content can be seen to form a discourse (Foucault, 1977; 1986), and if it does, what aspects of identity this discourse expresses, is essential. But first it is relevant to look at how Nordic pupil EFL narratives have previously been approached.

### **1.4.1 Preceding studies of Nordic pupil EFL narratives**

As the following account demonstrates, most of the studies that have been carried out; the NORDWRITE project, plus several small-scale studies, and TALE, concentrate on the formal aspects of writing where the linguistic aspects, as opposed to the meaning of the genuine content of pupil EFL texts, are examined.

The Nordic project NORDWRITE, which was operative in the late 1980s, studied discourse development in Nordic EFL pupil texts. Findings from this project were reported, for example, in Albrechtsen, Evensen, Lindeberg and Linnarud, 1991. Discussions of the various aspects of pupil writing with regard to discourse-level properties, such as superstructure and cohesion, were emphasised. In a subsequent study, Lee (2003) compares NORDWRITE pupils' and Chinese ESL students' discourse development and finds a consistent pattern of superstructure although their first languages are different.

In a Swedish study of vocabulary in EFL texts, Linnarud has analysed Swedish upper-secondary level texts and claims that poor knowledge of the vocabulary is to blame when

Swedish pupils write “[...] dull and uninteresting compositions with repetition of high frequency lexical items and a simple unelaborated theme” (Linnarud, 1986: 42). In the Nordic-Baltic *Bergen ‘Can do’ project* (Hasselgreen, 2003), assessment skills regarding writing were developed. The project refers to content as one out of seven categories to assess when evaluating written texts (Hasselgreen, 2003: 38) and sets out to develop assessment criteria also for the content, for example, of the topic ‘intercultural competence’ (Hasselgreen, 2003: 24-55). These criteria apply mainly to oral English, facial expressions and body language, but some of them may be transferred to written texts, as well. In a recent study, Guldal and Raaen (2007) have studied some characteristics of Norwegian seventh graders’ written English. Although the meaning of what is communicated is not necessarily subordinate to the linguistic aspects, fluency and accuracy are accentuated in most of the literature in this field.

The TALE project, from which the present study is derived, may lead to several studies of EFL writing. The aesthetics of the thematic content is briefly considered in two studies mentioned here. Firstly, Flognfeldt (2005) discusses lexical chunks in pupil narratives. Flognfeldt finds, for example, that “[...] there is a great chance for a pupil to learn idiomatic English if he or she internalises chunks like *make a mistake* and *What does \_\_\_ [NP] look like?* as functional wholes rather than through item-by-item processing” (Flognfeldt, 2005: 86).<sup>14</sup> Secondly, Backlund (2005: 59) studies gender contrasts in the use of adjectives. She states that the TALE pupils “[...] improved in their ability to write descriptively”. In this example, the assessment of substantial content may be implied in the study’s focus on vocabulary building.

Thus these examples all verge on the topic ‘content in Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL’. Broadly speaking, one may claim that the linguistic aspects, as opposed to the meaning of content, the genuine content of EFL texts, are examined. Apparently analysis of substantial content of pupil texts in EFL is not a well documented field outside the Nordic countries either. Within a foreign language paradigm, the focus on linguistic content, and not substantial content, is prevalent.

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<sup>14</sup> Other finds from the TALE project are discussed in chapter 5.

### **1.4.2 Research approach**

The meaning of the content of pupil narratives will be studied in this thesis. And the focus of the present research within FL education makes a content analytical perspective an appropriate theoretical position. The content can be viewed as text and approached from the text analytical angle, based in the traditions of the humanities and social science (Ricoeur, 1977; Fish, 1980; Bakhtin, 1981; Jefferson and Robey, 1986; Jensen, 2004). But this is not the only possible way to approach such texts. Within some fields of education and cognitive psychology, for instance, (Port and van Gelder, 1995; Scardamalia, 2003; Bereiter, 1980), the processes leading to the production of the actual text will be discussed; the functioning of the cognitive faculties that are involved will be studied. Such perspectives are highly relevant to the understanding of how the pupil narratives are created. The focus, in this research connection, on the substantial meaning of the narratives, would make a textual approach equally adequate. The texts may be seen to form a discourse which gives voice to aspects regarding the identity of its writers (Foucault, 1977; 1986). The content can be viewed as text and approached from the text analytical angle as literary contributions (Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1974; 1980). The textual focus renders literary text analytical methods possible for the study of the pupil produced narrative content.

### **1.4.3 Research questions**

The thesis focuses on pupil narratives in English, and the narratives are studied with an emphasis on substantial content. The focus is on the first edition of the publicised text. It is important to distinguish between the text and the writer and to clarify what the object of the study is: The pupil's narrative text is interpreted. Although this does not imply that the writer of the text is insignificant to the study, the focus is on his/her text. When pupils write narrative texts, they are indirectly influenced by other texts. Because pupils often write rehearsed phrases to practise chunks in the target language, the possibly pupil produced content of their narratives may be difficult to identify. To ensure that the pupil texts can be viewed as something more than language practice, that is as pupil produced content, a method for identifying such content is developed. A literary interpretation which identifies the novel elements of pupil texts - compared to their intertexts - is chosen. The primary objective is to

discuss what is dealt with in such narrative texts. To determine whether the content can be seen to form a discourse (Foucault, 1977; 1986), and if it does, what aspects of identity this discourse expresses, is essential. At the social level, the pupils are members of a local society; they live in a particular part of the world. The discourses related to national identity could, for instance, be voiced in texts that they exchange with TALE pupils from other countries; or a global identity could be more dominant, or other aspects of identity could be expressed in such narratives. The personal and social identity of the pupil is marked by all these different contexts and discourses that the individual belongs to. The age group that is focused on here is twelve to fourteen, (i.e. pubertal) and in psychology, this period is characterised, for example, by the oedipal liberation from the parents (Freud, [1917] 1992: 275; 1958). In psychological notions of the term ‘identity’, the personal identity of the pupil is marked by the traits of this particular stage in their development. The relationships to family members like parents and siblings are developed in various discourses, the relationship to friends and schoolmates likewise. At the personal level, the gender-roles and sex-roles are explored in various discourses. This study wants to find out what aspects of identity are given voice to in the narrative texts in TALE. The thesis addresses the following questions:

1. What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives?
2. What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse?

In conclusion, the thesis discusses briefly the possible bearing of this study of narratives on the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school.

## ***1.5 The forthcoming thesis chapters***

The following presentation provides an overview of the structure of the thesis into nine chapters where the second chapter outlines the theoretical basis; the third chapter discusses the school context of pupil narratives. The fourth and fifth chapters account for the empirical data from TALE. Chapter 6 discusses the methodological aspects of the study. The seventh chapter gives the literary interpretation of fifteen pupil narratives. Chapters 8 and 9 discuss the finds of this study.

### **1.5.1 On chapter 2**

In chapter 2, the theoretical foundation of the thesis is discussed. In the thesis' ethical basis, the discursive pupil produced content is put on the same footing as other content. A resonance of this view on pupil produced content is found in a Bakhtinian approach to language. The dialogical nature of language, which Bakhtin (1981; 2004) points to, forms the basis of this view. The pupil contribution is equalised to other sources of content in EFL. Kristeva's concept 'intertextuality' (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) is applied to discuss the aesthetics and the communication of meaning and identity in pupil narratives. A literary interpretation of the narratives could clarify the relationship between the text and its intertexts. The Bakhtinian concept 'novel' (Bakhtin, 1981) is central in this respect. In the novel content, the pupils' own contributions become evident. Thus the novel or new content that pupils construct in their texts will hypothetically provide information about the discourse (Foucault, 1977; 1986) of pupil narratives and those aspects of identity that this discourse expresses.

### **1.5.2 On chapter 3**

Chapter 3 accounts for the organisational context of the pupil produced content. The development of the programme for EFL learning and teaching in the Norwegian school system is discussed. The Norwegian syllabus for English prescribes an early start for EFL and emphasises oral language practice related to topics in other school subjects for the early beginners. The communicative approach to language learning and teaching makes the pupils' own contribution meaningful in a new way. His/her narrative production takes on traditional mother tongue qualities of self-development, and the content of the pupil produced narrative in EFL gains importance. The possible role of literature and culture studies in EFL is considered in this connection. The pupil narratives in TALE are created in a school context, and whether, or to what extent such contextual frames may co-determine the content of pupil texts is considered.

### **1.5.3 On chapter 4**

In chapter 4, the Nordic project which launched the Internet-based network for exchange of narrative texts is presented. TALE, Teaching and Learning English, was established in 2002 to exchange narrative texts among 12-14 year-old pupils. Approximately 400 pupils were involved during a period of two years. In Larsen (2005), the content of their text production is interpreted with a focus on “[...] *what* the pupils say in English, as opposed to focusing on, for instance, their range of vocabulary, their grammar or their spelling” (Larsen, 2005: 121). The pupils write their texts in a specific context, in school, as part of the activities in their English lessons, whereupon they exchange texts in communicative units consisting of three pupils. The TALE pupils’ narrative production is supervised by student teachers and class teachers. Their narrative writing is set in a joint endeavour, involving teacher education institutions and researchers.

### **1.5.4 On chapter 5**

In chapter 5, the TALE pupils’ narratives are studied more closely. The focus is on identifying narrative text tasks that contain a high level of pupil produced content. Legible texts are seemingly produced by all pupil participants in the project, regardless of their language proficiency in EFL. In their textual production, their digital competence is challenged, and the narrative text production comprises tasks where the pupils practise different skills. Their communicative ability is tested in their e-mail exchange with pupils from other countries. Their aptitudes related to providing adequate feedback to other pupils’ work is developed. The TALE pupils’ production comprises a wide variety of texts. In this research connection, such shorter messages in connection with the exchange of narrative texts are briefly commented upon, but the main focus is on the actual narrative texts. Fifteen different pupil narratives from TALE, whereof nine are taken from the genre of pupil fairy tales, are used to illustrate various aspects regarding the pupil texts in TALE.

### **1.5.5 On chapter 6**

In chapter 6, the different text types of TALE are evaluated to select the textual contributions where the level of pupil produced content is high. In the qualitative selection of narrative text types for further interpretation, the fictional narratives provide more pupil produced content than the biographical narratives and the fairy tales more than the chain stories. Pupil fairy tales are qualitatively selected for closer reading. From an estimated total of 178 texts, submitted in the fairy tale genre, fifteen<sup>15</sup> pupil texts from the fairy tale genre are quantitatively selected for further study. The traditional fairy tales constitute the primary intertexts to pupil fairy tales. The conventional interpretation of the traditional fairy tales constitutes part of the intertextual reference. Thus the frequent motifs and characters of the traditional genre are discussed. Pupils' intertextual reference involves a new or novel mode of expression of, for instance, motifs and characters. The method developed attempts to identify novel elements as the interface between text and intertext(s). The novel elements are seen to provide insights into the content of the pupil produced contribution in the narrative.

### **1.5.6 On chapter 7**

In chapter 7, fifteen texts and their intertextual references are presented. The study of these texts and intertexts discusses how the narratives construct meaning. The interpretations of the pupil texts show how their narratives may communicate identity. In the literary interpretations of a small sample of pupil narratives, the pupils' use of narrative elements - that are prevalent in the traditional narratives that they are seen to echo - is discussed. The text and the intertext(s) operate side by side in the construction of the pupil narratives. By identifying the novel elements that pupils bring into the traditional genre, the pupil produced content in the narratives is interpreted. This collection of narratives is seen to form a discourse, a Nordic TALE pupil EFL discourse.

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<sup>15</sup> Four of them have previously been discussed in Larsen, 2005.

### **1.5.7 On chapter 8**

Chapter 8 discusses the findings of the literary interpretation of pupil narratives. What characterises these examples is discussed. Supposedly pupil texts address topics of importance to the pupil writers although the genre standards influence their texts substantially. Popular cultural references are frequently applied to establish a basis for the exploration of identity in pupils' narratives especially if the genre renders such reference possible. National and local distinctiveness are played down even if the genre does not rule them out. The global popular culture and personal sphere are explored in the pupil narratives in TALE.

### **1.5.8 On chapter 9**

The final chapter draws parallels between the findings of the literary interpretation and EFL education. Nordic pupils are constantly exposed to English as a global language, and to consider global content in English is necessary at the same time as cultural diversity is accepted. Pupils write within an international setting in international exchange programmes. As the proficiency increases, English develops characteristics that distinguish it further from other FL learning and teaching. The literary interpretations suggest how personal and so-called glocal aspects are emphasised in the pupil fairy tales. The pupils seem to make English into their other tongue, a language which is not their mother tongue, but which still provides them with a different position for the exploration of identity.

## **1.6 *Summing up***

Chapter 1 outlines the structure and the subject matter of the thesis, which consists of nine chapters. As the title states, this thesis interprets the narrative content of texts written by Nordic pupils in English. The second chapter outlines the theory foundation of the thesis' focus on pupil narratives. The third chapter discusses the context of such narrative production and presents the development of English as a school subject in Norway. Chapters 4 and 5

present the material that is applied. In chapter 6, the methodological questions related to the selection and interpretations of pupil narratives in the material are discussed. Chapter 7 presents the literary interpretation of fifteen pupil narratives. In chapter 8, the findings of chapter 7 are discussed further with regard to the content of pupil narratives in TALE. Chapter 9 gives conclusive remarks on the work with narratives in EFL.

The thesis addresses the following questions:

1. What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives?
2. What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse?

In conclusion, the thesis considers the possible bearing of this study of narratives on the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school.



## **2 The theoretical basis**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

In this chapter, a discussion of the pupil produced narrative content in EFL is put forward in a theoretical frame. A theoretical basis, which takes the research topic ‘content in Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL’ into consideration, may involve multidisciplinary research areas where it becomes relevant to integrate perspectives from different disciplines. The theoretical foundation of the thesis needs to question the very nature of EFL narrative writing and whether research into such texts is worthwhile. To question whether pupils can write something in EFL which can be subject to content analysis is vital. The epistemology and ontology of the narrative may suggest that the intertextuality of pupil texts is central to how they may be interpreted. The study of pupil narratives would provide an alternative kind of knowledge. Such texts could be seen to contain relevant information about the pupil produced content. Some poststructuralist theories which see language as intertextual and dialogic (Kristeva, 1974; 1980; Bakhtin, 1981) and which see discourse as institutionalised practices in communication (Foucault, 1977; 1986) is seen as relevant to the study of pupil narratives. In principle, it is possible to approach texts written by pupils in EFL as any other textual contribution. Given that the approach one chooses takes into account that the writer is in the role of pupil and that s/he writes in EFL, the substantial content of the pupil narrative can be interpreted. An ethical assessment would need to discuss whether pupil narratives can be interpreted as meaning-constructive texts when they have been written as EFL language practice texts where the value of meaning is conventionally seen as subordinate to correctness. The composite relationship between the text and its writer and reader is multifaceted, and the complexity of this relationship is stepped up when the writers are pupils who write in EFL, as opposed to mother tongue. The notions of text versus intertext (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) complicate this picture. A Bakhtinian perspective on language allows the identification of the novel in pupil texts; the novel is seen as a force which operates in language. An identification of the novel may illuminate the thematic content that pupils communicate. Based on the research methods of literary analysis, a literary interpretation, with elements of narratology and psychology, is applied. To consider possible adjacent theory is relevant; the theories on developmental writing which see the relationship between the

competences involved in writing as being in a state of flux (Bereiter, 1980; Scardamalia, Bereiter and Fillion, 1981) may be relevant in this connection. It may also be relevant to consider the didactics of literature (Susegg, 2003; Vogt, 1973; Vestli, 2008) to discuss the literary competence (Vestli, 2008) that the pupil writers may develop. Thus the interdisciplinary approach to Nordic pupil narratives presented in this thesis chiefly involves pedagogy and literature studies.

## **2.2 *The theoretical search***

The theoretical approach of a study within foreign language education of EFL texts suggests a theoretical position within certain disciplines. As a university subject in the Nordic countries, the pedagogy of EFL, here referred to as EFL education, combines several subjects within the humanities and social science. EFL education is a multidisciplinary subject and may be seen as an interdisciplinary subject where, for example, pedagogy, and literature studies co-exist and merge. A study of thematic content in pupil narratives may point in the direction of narratology and pedagogy respectively. These two research subjects deal with important aspects related to the analysis of narratives that pupils have written. Pedagogy, which involves psychology, sociology and philosophy,<sup>16</sup> may enhance the knowledge about various aspects of the contextual framework of the pupil narratives and the complex relationship between the pupil writer and the writing process. The language practising potential of such texts has usually been emphasised within EFL education. To substantiate the content-wise meaning of such narratives may seem somewhat unusual, and this may be seen to reflect the relative novelty of the research topic ‘content in Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL’. Literary theory may provide adequate methods to investigate the thematic content of texts; the concept of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) may be central to the study of pupils’ texts. Thus an interdisciplinary approach, based in pedagogy and narratology, may provide a theoretical framework for the study of the texts within the research field of EFL education.

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<sup>16</sup> See, e.g. Kvernbekk’s (2001) discussion of the disciplines within pedagogy in the Norwegian tradition.

## 2.2.1 EFL education

In teacher education, the subject ‘EFL education’ in the Nordic and Norwegian context is often taught as part of a general course in foreign language education. Foreign language education and EFL education are the terms used to denote this field in the present thesis; the terms ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ FL/EFL are also used. Whereas the Norwegian school subject ‘English’ is examined in chapter 3, as it illuminates the setting and context of pupil narrative writing, the subject ‘EFL education’, as a subject in teacher education and as a research field, point to specific research areas within the humanities and social science. The concept ‘didactics’ is applied in Norway to denote the educational aspects of the various subjects in school.<sup>17</sup> In *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2000), didactics is defined as “the art or science of teaching”, whereas neither *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2005), nor *Oxford Thesaurus of English* (2004) recognises the term. This illustrates the deviating use of the term.<sup>18</sup> The word perfect translations of the Norwegian names of the subjects are ‘foreign language didactics’<sup>19</sup> and ‘English didactics’<sup>20</sup> respectively.

The demand for proficiency in a language other than the mother tongue distinguishes FL theory and methods from those of the other school subjects. That the pupils are supposed to learn to communicate in a foreign language requires special approaches in the classroom (Heimark, 2007; Tornberg, 2000). English constitutes a considerable part of foreign language education both due to the size of the target language in school and worldwide. The difference between EFL learning and teaching and that of the other foreign languages, such as French, German, Spanish, and Russian, is currently increasing (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007; Simensen, 2003). That the proficiency in the target language is higher in English, which generally is L2 in Norway, than in the second foreign language, which is usually L3, changes the pedagogical subject ‘foreign language education’.<sup>21</sup> Studying pupil narratives in English is different from studying such narratives in the second foreign

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<sup>17</sup> The subject ‘didactics’ [didaktikk] is discussed, for example, in Sjøberg (2001). The English terms ‘foreign language pedagogy’, ‘foreign language education’ and ‘foreign language learning and teaching’ seem to denote the subject ‘foreign language didactics’ in the Norwegian tradition. Simensen (1998: 9) applies the term ‘foreign language didactics’ together with the term ‘foreign language pedagogy’.

<sup>18</sup> The adjective ‘didactic’ [didaktisk] is used to connote aspects of learning and teaching in the Norwegian, whereas this neutral appliancance of the concept is lost in the English denotation of ‘didactic’, which connotes something morally instructive, or that something is done in an instructive way.

<sup>19</sup> [Fremmedspråksdidaktikk.]

<sup>20</sup> [Engelskdidaktikk.]

<sup>21</sup> The discussion of EFL education in Norway is continued in chapter 3, where also the differences between L2 and L3 are debated.

language, and different from studying such narratives in the mother tongue. Firstly, one can expect the narratives to include sufficient pupil produced content of interpretable quality, and secondly, one can expect the proficiency in the target language to be sufficiently well developed to make it relevant and worthwhile to interpret this content as substantial content. Earlier pupil texts have generally been read for their linguistic and communicative, rather than their literary or meaning-constructive properties. For the study of content in such narratives, to consider the research field of EFL education is relevant in order to establish a theoretical basis.

### **2.2.2 Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary EFL**

The theoretical foundation of the study of narratives within EFL education may be seen as multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. An approach within literature studies to narratives could suggest a study of the text where the aesthetics of the text itself determines the theoretical basis and methodological approach and where the text speaks on its own terms.<sup>22</sup> An approach within writing pedagogy would focus on the process in which the text is processed.<sup>23</sup> The principle of letting the data inform the researcher's choice of method is relevant in both fields although the distinctions between the two fields of research are readily crossed in an approach like this. To be able to remodel step by step in order to develop method in the process would also be relevant (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 1994; 2000). In the study of pupil narratives in EFL, it would imply letting the characteristics of the narratives determine what method to apply. To integrate practices, methodology and theory within several disciplines is a demanding task. The foundation for such interdisciplinary work is laid in EFL studies, which include literary, cultural and linguistic studies. Brøgger (1992: 137) argues that the competence accomplished through EFL studies in the Nordic context "[...] is distinctive because of its multiple disciplinary perspectives, which should offer the best possible point of departure for interdisciplinary work". In the research field English education, the multidisciplinary organisation of EFL is combined with pedagogy. This means that the presence of the four subjects: 1) pedagogy, 2) linguistics, 3) culture and 4) literature constitutes the research field of EFL education. Thus there are numerous options available

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<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Jefferson and Robey, 1986. To make a corresponding view applicable within social science would perhaps point in the direction of content analysis or grounded theory (see, e.g., Strauss and Corbin, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., Bereiter, 1980.

with regard to the epistemological foundation of organising a field of research on Nordic pupil EFL narratives. In such a conglomerate of versatile research areas, the study of pupil narratives may possibly be based in most of them. A linguistic study of EFL narratives could, for example, study what type of mistakes the Nordic pupils tend to make or what discourse properties they apply. A cultural study could focus on how they present their hometown or how they describe each others' hometowns. A literary approach could interpret the thematic content or discuss how pupils construct their texts within the methodological apparatus that narratology puts forward. Since the object of the present study is pupil narratives, and more specifically, such narratives studied from a content perspective, where the focus is on the thematic content of such texts written by pupils, the pedagogical considerations related to narrative writing must be considered. Thus literary and pedagogical theories seem to constitute the theory foundation for the study of such texts in the present thesis.

### ***2.3 Pupil narratives as research data***

In this research connection, the actual text is analysed with a clear focus on its substantial content; the literary concept 'theme'<sup>24</sup> may denote the type of content that the interpretation attempts to identify. The ideas or topics which are developed in the pupil discourse are studied. The theoretical position in this research context involves the research fields of pedagogy and literature studies, and it is necessary to develop a method for the study of narratives which takes into consideration that the narratives are written partly to practise foreign language and partly to communicate narrative content, both the writer and the process are relevant to the study of narratives. The wider context of the pupil narrative is also significant to the interpretation. The relevant research on writing and on pupils - based in pedagogy - helps to clarify the relationship between the writer, the writing process and the text. But in this study, the text that is actually communicated is emphasised. The narrative text is the object of study (Jensen, 2004). The study of the text is based in literary theory, and within this broad field of study, in narratology.

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<sup>24</sup> “[...] the theme is an idea repeated frequently (motif\*, leitmotif), or a basic idea” (Dupriez, 1991: 453).

### 2.3.1 Narratology and pedagogy

The study of the narrative and the narrative structure where the narreme<sup>25</sup> is considered to be the basic unit is referred to as narratology. Todorov (1969) initially launched the French term ‘narratologie’, and theoretically it may refer to any systematic study of narratives. In literary theory, the term presupposes a distinction between the concepts ‘histoire’ and ‘discours’, (story and discourse) or ‘fabula’ and ‘sjuzhet’<sup>26</sup>, to apply the Russian formalist concepts. To simplify excessively, the dichotomy between the two accounts for the delicate difference between the deeper narrative essence, the deep structure, the fabula, shared by all versions of a given narrative, and the sjuzhet, that is its discursive representation of the actual actions or events narrated. When the concept ‘narrative’ is connected to the concept ‘pupil’, the narrative is situated in the particular context of education. Although it is probably possible to carry out stringent narratological studies of pupil narratives, narratology as method, may be somewhat too strict in its literary scope to suit pupil narratives in EFL.<sup>27</sup> In this connection, it is relevant to consider the context in which the narratives are made. The narratives are written as part of pupils’ language practice, and not primarily in order to address a literature-interested public. The narratives are studied in this thesis to provide information about pupil produced content in English as a first foreign language in school. Thus a pedagogically founded narratological focus on substantial content is required.

### 2.3.2 The narrative in different disciplines

The concept ‘narrative’, as defined in the Norwegian pedagogical tradition by, for example, Kvernbekk (2001a), is given different function and meaning. The narrative may be seen as a method, as the results of a method, as a way to explain the meaning of human life or as a phenomenon. Within Norwegian literature education and semiology, Skardhamar (2001), for

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<sup>25</sup> Comparable to the basic unit of morphology being the morpheme and the basic unit of phonology being the phoneme.

<sup>26</sup> Although the meanings of these concepts have shifted, the terms were coined by Tomashevski in 1925, see, e.g., Lemon and Reis (1965: 61-98), cited in Lassen, 1998, for further discussions of fabula and sjuzhet.

<sup>27</sup> An example of narrative method applied in L1 is given by Torsen (1999), who analyses Norwegian pupil texts. The semiological study focuses on the sign and its denotative and connotative meaning. She refers to Propp’s work with fairy tales and presents Greimas’ structures. Instead of using Greimas’ more known actant-model, she presents the contract-model and the S-model. She uses a short text written by a pupil as an example of Greimas’ S-model, also called the butterfly model. The contrast pair in the text is safe-afraid.

instance, emphasises the significance of the meaning attached to the denotations of the sign as well as the connotations and claims that the grammar of the narration is central to the structure. This underlying dichotomy is just one out of many contradictory issues with regard to the concept 'narrative'. The two-sided understanding of narrative as either fiction, or fact is discussed, for example, in Fay (1996). Novels, fairy tales or myths are examples of the former, biographies of the latter. Within some fields of hermeneutics, narratives may be understood as biographies, as individuals' narratives about themselves (Ricoeur, 1984). In McEwan and Egan (1995), the distinction between the *fabula* and the *sjuzhet* of the narrative is maintained in their application of the concept in pedagogy and learning and teaching methodology. Other studies in FL point in the direction of a more imprecise conception of narrative and a focus on the thematic content. Westin (2006), for example, has studied the narrative sequence used in dialogue and compared the differences between native and non-native speakers of French in the production of narrative sequences where topics related to cultural and historical events are dealt with. The thematic content is emphasised. This is also the case in the present study where the thematic content is given priority.

### **2.3.3 The ontology and epistemology of narrative**

The dichotomy between the ontological and epistemological understanding of the narrative is a basic principle of the application of the concept 'narrative'. Within French structuralism and poststructuralism, the ontological nature of the narrative is pronounced by, for example, Barthes (1996: 46), "[...] narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself". But the classroom setting of EFL points in the direction of the epistemological nature of the narrative. Thus the relationship between the human being's construction of and response to the narrative and the narrative itself is complex. One could ask whether the narrative form is something which is given as part of human existence and whether the capacity for telling and responding to narratives is of a congenital kind,<sup>28</sup> and the result of different cognitive faculties being operative in the writer's mind. This may correlate to Chomsky's theory of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) where grammaticality is seen

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<sup>28</sup> Narrative studies within the fields of psychology or neurology would perhaps address such questions in studies of the brain. The question of whether narrative capacity is innate and a product of individual consciousness or whether the narrative form is produced through intersubjective processes as part of social structure will be left open in this thesis. Perhaps future research will answer such questions in a more qualified manner.

as innate, as a feature of the human language faculty. “These abilities indicate that there must be fundamental processes at work quite independently of feedback from the environment” (Chomsky, 1959: 42).<sup>29</sup> The cognitive capacity for telling and responding to stories can be seen as both innate and culturally negotiated. This study presupposes that even if it were substantiated in future science that the narrative form may be innate, and therefore given, it is continuously being negotiated. To see the two positions in a state of simultaneity prepares for a discussion of the epistemology of the narrative. To view narrative writing as an ongoing process involves the intertext(s) as well as the text, and the narrative is seen as being in a state of flux where thematic content is developed. The epistemological implications of seeing the narrative form as being in a state of flux is perhaps to see the narrative as a result of an intertextual practice. This suggests that a narrative discourse may be developed and formed - in the narratives - to suit its writers and readers. The discourse is developed in a particular setting. The narratives are written by individual pupil writers in the particular context of the TALE project. The collection of pupil narratives can be studied as a discourse which provides information about the pupil produced content in this particular context.

### **2.3.4 The context of pupil narratives**

Pupil texts are produced in a particular context which has a certain impact on the texts as well as on how such texts are understood. But it is problematic to delimit such a wide and general term effectively since the term is used in many different ways. According to *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*<sup>30</sup>, the wider context may involve “the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea”. In the research fields of EFL education, the context concept has different appliance in the four subjects involved<sup>31</sup>. In pedagogy and literary and cultural studies, the notion of context cited above is often adopted; in a linguistic context, the concept ‘context’ often refers to the “parts that immediately precede or follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning (Soanes and Stevenson, 2004); this is clearly a more limited notion of context. According to Stern (1983), foreign language education may often deal with the linguistic aspects of a foreign language, separately from the contexts in which it can be

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<sup>29</sup> If the same applies to the narrative capacity, i.e. that one may speak of a narrative device, an ‘ND’, or an innate deep structure, so to speak, remains unclear. Such theoretical questions will not be pursued in this thesis.

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.oxfordreferences.com>. (Accessed 26 November 2006)

<sup>31</sup> Pedagogy, linguistics, culture and literature (see section 2.2.2.)

used and understood. The concept 'context', as it is used in the present thesis, denotes the wider setting in which the narrative writing is embedded. The pupil narratives in this study are written in the English lessons at school and exchanged in the TALE network. Given any instance of language, any text, the receiver will construct and interpret the situation in which the text functions (Fish, 1980). The meaning of the text is clarified when the text is understood as part of a wider context. The well-known example provided by Widdowson (1995) - the interpretation of the letter 'P', seen as a text - effectively demonstrates the significance of the context. This single lettered text makes perfect sense in the contexts where parking a car is relevant. In this study, it is appropriate to consider the influence that the wider context may have on the way in which the texts are interpreted. To account for the contexts of texts exhaustively is obviously not possible in an analysis like this, but it is necessary to increase the awareness of the impact of such contextual factors as, for instance, the school setting, the school subject, and the TALE network. The pupil narratives are written in a particular context; the pan-Nordic TALE project is situated in school as part of the education in EFL.<sup>32</sup> According to Halliday and Hasan (1985), any instance of language only makes sense when it is placed within a context. They use the term 'cycle of text and context' to suggest that the notions of text and context are inseparable so that contexts and texts are each other's contexts. This cycle thus involves the text itself and the context as well as the intertext(s).<sup>33</sup> In this study, the notion of the cyclic involvement of the text, the context and the intertext may become clarified in the interpretation of the individual text. In order to understand the theme of the pupil narratives, the researcher simultaneously interprets the context in which the narrative is embedded. Provided that the context in which the narratives are produced is considered, it is possible to interpret the theme of such texts.

## **2.4 Ethical considerations**

To study pupils' texts raises ethical questions. The researcher can hardly prove that her interpretation of pupil narratives is correct or true, but by showing the procedures for the interpretation she may substantiate that it is trustworthy. Given that the approach one chooses takes this view into consideration, such meaning-constructive interpretations of pupil EFL

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<sup>32</sup> This context will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 and onwards.

<sup>33</sup> The intertext concept is discussed in chapter 2, section 2.6.1.

texts may be ethically justifiable. A study of pupil narratives does not necessarily provide information about what the writer has intended to tell, and the text analysis is not meant to be a reconstruction of what the pupil has meant to narrate, but more what the text actually communicates as this particular researcher sees it when applying the method of interpretation developed in this study. To evaluate the relationship between the pupil narrative and the pupil writer is difficult, and an ethical dilemma is related to the information the narrative provides about its writer. Together with the knowledge the other pupil narratives give about their individual writers, the collected information gives valuable insights into what pupils communicate in their texts. The pupil narratives may be seen to provide information about a particular discourse. Rather than being perceived as informative about their individual writers, the narratives may be seen to provide information about a pupil discourse.

#### **2.4.1 The trustworthiness of the research**

The thesis tries to develop a method of interpretation which can reveal what the pupils in fact communicate in their narrative writing. The analysis is delimited and focuses on theories and methods which can disclose the thematic content. Whether the theories and methods applied here are applicable to other contexts of pupil content will not be considered in the present thesis; however, the method of interpretation developed in this thesis is meant to be applicable to other settings where pupil narrative content is approached theoretically.

According to, for example, Poppian philosophies of science, theories which have survived testing and are not-yet-falsified are the best guides for action.<sup>34</sup> A future paradigm shift is possibly inescapable if more evidence of the functions of a human narrative capacity were found. Thus a strictly scientific approach to pupil produced content is perhaps not adequate.<sup>35</sup> The view that scientific models are idealised structures which represent the world from particular and limited points of view is seemingly more relevant to the study of pupil narratives. The mental act or process by which knowledge is acquired happens from a specific

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<sup>34</sup> Scientific rationality based in formal logic. See, e.g., Popper, 1934.

<sup>35</sup> This does not imply that the possible findings in this study are invalid. The reception of this thesis will hopefully discuss and possibly determine whether what is said here is valid outside this particular context within the current paradigm.

perspective and is open to reasoning. Such a cognitive<sup>36</sup> view makes it possible to determine the fitness of an explanation, and not necessarily the truth of it, and to ensure that indirect evidence of the statements uttered can be validated in future studies.<sup>37</sup> Possible future research may find out whether what is said here is valid in other contexts where pupil EFL narratives are produced. To generalise about the findings of one study and make them valid outside their context is not uncomplicated. Presumably “[...] one will find instances from which one might seek to construct generalization” (Giere, 1988: 19). But to furnish proof of a theory is not at issue. To discuss possible recommendations towards the end of the thesis based on the findings is, however, an aim. The thesis thus positions itself within the cognitive tradition, seeing the broad major dividing lines in research between 1) the logical tradition, as represented, for example, in Popper (1934), 2) the historical tradition, as represented, for example, in Kuhn, 1962 and 3) the cognitive tradition (Giere, 1988), which is here seen to replace the logical and to complement the historical tradition in which the historical development of science is seen as a series of paradigm shifts with rejections of truths of the preceding paradigm as a consequence. In this thesis, to produce new knowledge, to describe and establish connections and to explain them would be an ideal. Whether the latter is possible in this study is accordingly a relative question. The genre of pupil narrative will develop, pupils will develop, texts and contexts will change, and paradigm shifts will challenge the ontological and epistemological bases of this study of pupil EFL narratives.

## 2.4.2 Subjectification

The primary aim of this study is to account for the substantial content in pupil narratives. The division that Foucault (1979; 1990) makes of three modes of objectification is relevant in this respect. When the subjects in question are pupils, the objectification that functions to constitute human beings as subjects is relevant to consider. Although Foucault apparently saw this tripartition<sup>38</sup> mainly as a way to make people the objects of power, his third mode,

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<sup>36</sup> Cognitive representations of the world are made by human beings, and human beings act on the basis of such representations and inform themselves based on them. The human being is seen as a cognitive agent. See, e.g., Giere, 1988.

<sup>37</sup> Validity and reliability are discussed further in sections 6.8.6 and 6.8.7 of chapter 6.

<sup>38</sup> The other two: ‘dividing practices’ and ‘scientific classification’ take the position of society as a starting point, and see people as objects of such practices and classifications; people are powerless in such objectification,

‘subjectification’, is different in that it relates to the way in which people constitute themselves as subjects. Foucault analyses how people’s desire to comprehend themselves leads them to confess their thoughts, emotions and desires both to themselves and to others. This implicates people in networks of power relations with authority figures, for example, doctors and psychiatrists, and in this context, researchers, who maintain that they can understand. The researcher may enter into a power relationship where the interpretation of the text apparently becomes truer than the text itself. Foucault argues that through the expansion of this process of confession, people became objects of their own knowledge and of other people’s knowledge. Yet, they were objects who had learned how to reconstitute and change themselves. Foucault’s concept (subjectification) has instilled in the present researcher a need for developing what is possibly best described as a respectful approach to the study of pupil narratives in which it is important to keep in mind that what comes out of any interpretation of the pupil narrative are theories, and not necessarily truths about its content.

### **2.4.3 The writer’s integrity**

In this thesis, the pupil narrative is the object of study, and since the language-practising text also communicates meaning, this meaning can be analysed and interpreted. Through the pupil content, the pupils communicate identity in the content of the English lessons as well as in the other subjects in school. The pupil writers may lay bare their thoughts, emotions and attitudes in the genuine content, and this pupil produced content can be perceived as bearing information about their identity. But the pupil has not created the text knowing that it will be searched for its meaning by a researcher; s/he has not realised that the text is subject to analysis of the pupil produced content while writing it. To accommodate this possible discrepancy, the text can be viewed as a separate unit, an entity which is separable from the pupil who wrote it.<sup>39</sup> The text may call for the researcher/reader’s interpretation, instead of revealing the writer’s intentions.<sup>40</sup> In this view, the reader/researcher’s interpretation is

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whereas the third, subjectification, explores the individual’s struggle to construct subjectivity within the frames of objectification. See chapter 2, section 2.8.2 for further discussions of the concept ‘objectification’.

<sup>39</sup> Within literature studies, New Criticism of the 1950s and 60s paved the way for studying the text, and not the writer; likewise, the poststructuralist turn has generally argued that what is important is the text, and not its writer (Barthes, 1967).

<sup>40</sup> Writer intention can perhaps at best be hypothetically described as an intention to make, for example, an excellent or just passable response to a school task in accordance with certain requirements defined by others.

exposed, and not the writer's intention, the latter being unknown. This does not imply that the pupil writer is seen as less important than the text. The integrity of the individual pupil writer is well protected in an approach where the narratives that the pupils have written are discussed and interpreted and the biographies, intentions and motivations of the pupil writers are left unaccounted for. Thus writer intention in this context is not examined as what the individual pupil communicates, but more as an example of what is communicated in the pupil produced content which forms a discourse together with other pupils' texts. The pupil writes to practise writing but simultaneously communicates substantial content. But if the texts were written primarily to ensure language practice in EFL, one may ask whether it is fair to interpret pupil EFL texts in the pursuit of meaning. Winnicott (1965: 57-86) argues that the child is not a being, but a "[...] going-on being", who has to be "[...] called into existence" by the nurturing environment. Although the pupils are older than the infants that Winnicott refers to, the notion that pupils are in a process, which can be described as going-on being suggests that their narratives may communicate aspects of their identity at a particular time in their development. The study of individual narratives may tell about what the group of pupils, who are members of this discourse system, communicate.

## ***2.5 The relevance of the research***

The reason for studying pupil narratives is based in the need to enhance the knowledge about what pupils communicate in their role as EFL pupils. It is relevant to study what type of content that can be taken up in EFL narratives by the pupils themselves, and to find out whether the discourse that is developed through such communication of narrative content can be seen as an EFL pupil discourse; thus the main focus of this study is on the product and not the process of writing or the producer of the text. The reason for this choice is motivated by the intention to illuminate what is actually communicated, and to interpret what the sender in fact communicates to the receiver. To form a link between research on L1 and L2 English writing and to see the role of literature in narrative writing among EFL pupils are two objectives which are indirectly involved in this study of pupil texts.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The first mentioned here could be to try to establish how far the approach in the present thesis could be related to, for example, a developmental model of writing skills and to present a connection to the research area of development of writing in EFL. Another side-objective of the present study, in addition to the study of the

### **2.5.1 Pupil produced content and other content**

The pupil text constitutes a pupil produced content. This thesis argues that this content should be studied because it expresses a share of the content in the school subject that the pupils are responsible for. Although the other shares of the content have not been subject to scrutiny in vast research programmes, some smaller studies have been carried out in recent years; for example, the role of the modern Norwegian English teacher has been studied through discursive group interviews (Eikrem, 2006). Eikrem found that the relationship between the different subject positions that the teacher may take is central to the teacher's perception of her/his role. Moreover, the teacher's role in connection with ICT activity has been studied through ethnographic classroom observations (Lund, 2003). Lund emphasises the teacher's role as interface between the ICT content and the students. The teacher's role in the work with early beginners has been researched in a comparative study of Norway and the Netherlands (Drew, 2004). Also the content that the curriculum and the textbooks constitute has been studied, for example, as a discourse of cultural content in EFL (Lund, 2007). But the content that the pupils produce is scarcely described in current research. It is relevant and worthwhile to study what the pupils may communicate. A study of pupil content provides insights into an important aspect of the content of the school subject, namely of the content that the pupils produce themselves. But rather than studying the thematic content of pupils' EFL narratives or the content of pupil narratives in their mother tongue, adjacent pedagogical research has studied the psychological and social processes in which such writing takes place.

### **2.5.2 Creating EFL narratives**

The social aspect of writing has been dealt with by Vygotsky (1962: 20). His statement, "Development in thinking is not from the individual to the socialized, but from the social to the individual", implies that the source of language is to be found outside the individual as a continuation of socially and environmentally inclined language development. The patterns of development of thinking and of language usage are compared. Both are seen as originated in the social, and not in the individual. The individual aspect of writing has been explained by

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development in L2 writing, is to see the role of literature and the literary competence involved in narrative writing.

Piaget (1973), who sees writing as an individual activity which may even enable the individual to become less dependent on others. Although the theories proposed by Vygotsky and Piaget see the development of writing differently and even as contradictory, their views can be seen as complementary in the sense that the social and the individual aspects of writing are equally important.

The writing process in Instructed EFL is discussed, for example in Nunan (1995) and Lynch (1996) where the process is seen as developed through different stages. Likewise, in other FL process-writing studies the methodological aspects with regard to writing as process are explained, and the advantages of process-oriented writing are highlighted, for example, in Kasper and Wagner (1989), and Tornberg (2000). To simplify slightly, one may claim that the focus is on how pupils write rather than what they write about.

### **2.5.3 Development in writing**

Studies of writing with support from cognitive psychology (e.g., Flower and Hayes, 1981; Bereiter, 1980; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987) have substantiated that L1 writers of English must coordinate a number of faculties in order to write meaningful and substantial content. The stages involved in L1 writing may to some extent correspond to the EFL writing that Nordic pupils take part in. The present study is not comparative in the sense that the pupils' L1 and L2 writing is compared. But research on L1 writing in English can shed light on the process of writing EFL texts. An example of a model of the cognitive stages involved in L1 writing which Bereiter (1980) launched lists six skill systems which can develop interdependently and be identified in writing: "fluency in producing written language, fluency in generating ideas, mastery of writing conventions, social cognition (appearing as the ability to take account of the reader), literary appreciation and discrimination, and reflective thought" (Bereiter, 1980: 82). And here one may envisage a seventh system of skills that could be developed in order to include the L2 writing perspective as the capacity to integrate all these different skill systems in writing within non-mother-tongue English. Bereiter (1980) describes five stages in L1 English in the development of the writing skill. Such stages involve 1) associative, 2) performative, 3) communicative, 4) unified and 5) epistemic writing. Bereiter distinguishes between these stages, which do not necessarily occur in the order indicated

above. His hypothesis is that new skills could only be integrated if there were free cognitive capacities. The first stage he labels associative writing. It is characterised by the integration of the skills of language fluency and ideational fluency. Thoughts are written down in an associative way, without planning or application of formal rules. At this stage, the formation of the thematic content commences. Although the pupils are writing in order to practise the language, their creative ideas are often launched at the associative stage. The next stage is called performative writing. At this stage, the pupil writer integrates rules of style and mechanics. The textual, stylistic or, for instance, orthographic conventions of a particular discourse are being considered at this stage. The third stage, communicative writing, is characterised by further integration of social cognition. The awareness of the reader's perspective and the effects of texts will be considered at this stage. The stages of unified and epistemic writing encompass critical judgement and reflective thinking, both features which could help identify the novel elements in the pupil narratives, and thus identify the genuine pupil content.

#### **2.5.4 The didactics of literature**

The thematic content that the pupils produce in their narrative writing can be viewed as a literary contribution, and in mother tongue training, this is possible (Susegg, 2003), but in EFL, the rationale for viewing pupil EFL narratives as literature is relatively new.<sup>42</sup> To work with literature with the intention of developing the production skills of the pupils is apparently a novel topic in the didactics of foreign languages. As Vestli (2008) substantiates in her research article published on the website of the Norwegian Centre of Foreign Languages in Education, the development of the didactics of literature in FL is a neglected subject.<sup>43</sup> She argues in favour of an action and production oriented approach to literature in FL. Such an approach to literature education in FL would include practicing creative writing to achieve, what she calls literary competence, here understood as part of pupils' cultural formation, as the ability to read and interpret a literary text and recognise various literary devices (Vestli, 2008: 14). The systematic study of pupil narratives can contribute to enhancing the

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<sup>42</sup> The English syllabi in the Norwegian national curricula of 1997 and 2006 give room for this perspective. This is discussed further in chapter 3.6. onwards.

<sup>43</sup> See [www.fremmedspraksenteret.no](http://www.fremmedspraksenteret.no). (Accessed 3 March 2009) Vestli (2008:4) says this in her introductory phrase.

knowledge about the literature discipline within EFL studies. On the one hand, the pupil narratives are literary texts and may be approached as such. On the other hand, the texts are written by pupils who are in the process of developing their writing skill in EFL. When the cognitive relationship between the competences involved in writing is seen as being in a state of flux (Bereiter, 1980; Scardamalia, Bereiter and Fillion, 1981) writing in a non-mother-tongue language can be seen to constitute a separate stage in the development of the writing skill. What distinguishes FL writing from mother tongue may be that: “It increases the awareness of culturally defined deviations between texts of different language areas”<sup>44</sup> (Tornberg, 2000: 136). Hasselgreen (2003: 57-61) discusses the meta-reflection involved in pupils’ narrative production in FL and systematises the criteria for such reflection.<sup>45</sup> Thus both Tornberg (2000) and Hasselgreen (2003) point to the content side of FL writing. The question of how to approach such texts in the pursuit of substantial meaning is indirectly addressed. However, a methodology discussion of how to analyse such texts is not presented as it is not the scope of their approaches. Such content-based pedagogical research is lacking. When such writing is studied from a narratological and educational perspective, the literary competence involved in pupils’ narrative writing should be considered in the study of content (Vestli, 2008). The pedagogical insights into EFL narrative writing are thus enhanced. An important pedagogical insight in this connection is the notion of the narrative as dialogic and intertextual, researchers may recognise the intertextual nature of pupil narrative writing, pupils and researcher may even share this knowledge of the intertextual nature of language and of narratives. The concept ‘intertextuality’ makes other texts significant to the interpretation of pupil texts. Irrespective of whether one sees the awareness of intertextuality as the kind of knowledge that both pupils and researchers possess, the interpretation of such narratives should recognise the phenomenon of intertextuality. As any other instance of language, pupil narratives can be seen as intertextual.

## **2.6 Kristevian intertextuality**

In principle, the term ‘intertextuality’ may involve all language practice, but is mainly defined as the mutual influence between texts. To Kristeva, the concept ‘text’ is perceived as

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<sup>44</sup> [Den skjærper bevisstheten om kulturbetingede forskjeller i tekster fra ulike språkområder.] (my translation)

<sup>45</sup> Harsch (2004) discusses assessment criteria related to writing compared to the Common European Framework.

something which co-exists with other texts already written (Kristeva, 1974; 1980). Any text is informed by at least one other text, which thus becomes the intertext of the text. An intertext may be another text, but also textual fragments, which the writer's text alludes to. In an intertextual approach to language, the individual writer is seen to contribute to what has already been written by other writers in previous texts. The pupil narratives are created in such a textual universe. The pupil writer adds something new to the genre s/he writes within; something novel is formulated from another position by the pupil writer. Thus the pupil text can be seen as a result of intertextual practice.

### 2.6.1 The intertextuality concept

Kristeva<sup>46</sup> sees the text in relationship to two axes, the horizontal axis and the vertical axis. She charts a three-dimensional textual space as intersecting planes; she describes this textual space, whose three coordinates of dialogue are 1) the writing subject, 2) the addressee and 3) exterior texts. The horizontal axis relates the writer (the writing subject) of the text to the reader (the addressee) of the text. The vertical axis relates the text to other texts. The word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee. The meaning of the word is thus defined horizontally as well as vertically. The meaning of the word in the text is oriented towards a preceding or synchronic literary corpus. Each text is an intersection of texts where at least one other text can be read. Any text is the absorption and transformation of other texts. Any text is seen as constructed as a mosaic of quotations. "The term inter-textuality denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (Kristeva, 1974: 59-60).<sup>47</sup> The notion of the intertextual nature of any new text implies that the new text is seen as a conversion of at least one text already written. The pupil narratives are seemingly created in such a textual universe. The influences from other texts are thus central in the analysis of the pupils' narratives.

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<sup>46</sup> The French/Bulgarian literary theorist and psychologist Julia Kristeva coins the concept 'intertextuality' in 1974 in *La Révolution du langage poétique* [Revolution in Poetic Language].

<sup>47</sup> As we can see from the quote, the 1984 English translation splits the term with a hyphen; in subsequent studies and modern studies, the term is written "intertextuality". Hence this practice will be endorsed in the following.

## 2.6.2 Different aspects of intertextuality

The term ‘intertextuality’ is used differently in different subjects. As Kristeva points out, the term ‘intertextuality’ has often been understood in a somewhat banal sense as meaning the study of sources (Kristeva, 1980: 15), and the simplest expression of intertextuality can be seen in footnotes that quote source materials to which a given text is referring or which are known to have had an influence on the writer.

Within narratology, Genette (1997) proposes the term ‘transtextuality’ instead of intertextuality as a more extensive term. He lists five subtypes, whereof intertextuality is one subcategory: 1) Intertextuality: quotation, allusion, plagiarism. 2) Paratextuality: the relation between a text and its paratext, for example, the title, headings, footnotes and illustrations. 3) Architextuality: the designation of a text as part of a genre or genres. 4) Metatextuality: explicit or implicit critical commentary by one text of another text. 5) Hypertextuality: the relation between a text and a preceding ‘hypertext’ - a text or genre on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation). In this thesis, the term ‘intertextuality’ is used to denote all the subtypes listed above; thus the original Kristevian understanding of the concept is seen to refer to all such variations of intertextuality. The intertextuality concept has been widely accepted and may adequately denote the aesthetics of pupil narratives. As Lodge (1992: 98-99) puts it, “Some theorists believe that intertextuality is the very condition of literature, that all texts are woven from the tissues of other texts, whether their authors know it or not.” In this view, the writing of pupil narrative texts takes place in an intertextual universe where other narratives pre-exist.

In pedagogy, the term ‘intertextuality’ is often used as a synonym to reference; as Dysthe (1987: 54) points out, “We always write on the basis of other texts we have encountered”.<sup>48</sup> In an example from current educational research, intertextuality is seen as a notion of reflexivity which connects different moments in time and is identified by the juxtaposition of other texts to the current discussion (Pappas, Varelas, Barry and Rife, 2002). To utilise any previous experience and the discourse connected to the experience in an ongoing discourse would create an intertextual connection between the old discourse and the ongoing discourse. A

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<sup>48</sup> [Vi skriv alltid på bakgrunn av andre skriftekstar vi har møtt.](my translation) Although Dysthe’s discussion takes L1 texts as a starting point, such a general comment may describe the nature of any writing activity regardless of language.

parallel to this understanding of the concept may be found in pupils' experience of narratives told in the mother tongue and in EFL. When pupils read a story in English, which they are already familiar with in their mother tongue, an intertextual connection may be created. In a study of Canadian school children's storytelling, Yeoman (1999) applies the intertextuality concept in her study of the children's response to stories. She points to the significance of intertextual reference both in the children's story telling and in their understanding of gendered differences. She claims that the intertextual reference to traditional fairy tales gives coherence to lived experience. Yeoman uses the term 'intertextual knowledge' to refer to "[...] the use of previously known texts to make sense of new ones" (Yeoman, 1999: 427).

The two examples mentioned above suggest the wide applicability of the term 'intertextuality' in pedagogy. Such use is not necessarily averse to Kristeva's original definition of the term, but rather an implementation of the term in some research fields within pedagogy. Kristeva herself tries to replace intertextuality with the term 'transposition' to emphasise that the passage from one signifying system to another demands "[...] a new articulation of the thetic-of enunciative and denotative positionality" (Kristeva, 1974: 60). Hence, intertextuality implies more than just reference; it requires a new formulation from a different position. In this thesis, the term 'intertextuality' will be used to mean the latter.

### **2.6.3 Intertextuality and the novel**

Intertextuality denotes the dynamic relationship between texts and intertexts, and it is connected to Bakhtin's dialogical view of language (Bakhtin, 1981). Intertextuality implies more than the impact that texts have on each other. As Dysthe (1987: 54) argues, "[...]the writer of a text rarely produces something which is original in the sense that it is not created as a continuation of or as a reaction to something that others have written".<sup>49</sup> Something new can be said when it is articulated from a different position and in a new formulation. In the stages of associative, unified and epistemic writing (Bereiter, 1980), this novel aspect of pupil writing can possibly be identified. The critical judgement and reflective thinking and creativity that such writing involves may result in the expression of novel elements in pupils'

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<sup>49</sup> [Det er svært sjeldan at ein skrivjar produserer noko som er originalt i den forstand at det ikkje er blitt til i forlenging av eller som reaksjon på noko andre har skrive.] (my translation)

texts. Thus the narrative production of the pupils is not solely formed by the task as it is formulated in the school context, the genre requirements or the narratives they are already familiar with. In addition, the associative, unified and epistemic stages of their writing may lead to novel content being formed. In the interface between the text and its intertext(s), something novel may be created. The novel in the pupil narratives is identifiable through analytical comparison of the pupil texts and their intertexts. The concept 'novel' can be applied to analyse what is actually expressed in the pupils' own contribution, in the pupil produced content. The concept 'novel' is relevant for thesis question 1, "what characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives". The Bakhtinian concept 'novel' may denote the new that can be created when the writer makes the new narrative.

## **2.7 Bakhtinian novel**

Bakhtin<sup>50</sup> writes about the novel both as a genre and as a force which operates in language. In the American introduction to Bakhtin's essays, Holquist claims that "[...] novel is the name Bakhtin gives to whatever force is at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, the artificial constraints of that system" (Bakhtin, 1981: 31). Given that any text is in essence intertextual, the somewhat parodic nature of any textual production is thus given emphasis in a Bakhtinian view. The novel turn in pupils' writing will distinguish their texts from the texts of others. The genre that pupils write within will, to some extent, determine what they write, the contexts they are stratified into co-determine the content. Pupil narratives may be seen as stratified into what Bakhtin would have called a pupils' professional jargon, a pupil discourse (Bakhtin, 1981: 430). In this research connection, a non-mother-tongue discourse, which is fictional and narrative, is formed. The term 'the low language of contemporaneity', applied by Bakhtin (1981: 21), denotes the type of authentic language that this may invoke. The interpretation of narratives in this study may identify intertextual references and possible novel elements in the pupil narratives. Such an approach is based on the hypothesis that a study of the meeting between texts and intertexts makes the meaning of the pupil produced content identifiable. In a study of the novel that the pupil brings into the generic text, this meaning can hypothetically be found.

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<sup>50</sup> The Russian literary critic and teacher Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) formulated theory on language and literature in several essays published in English translations from the 1980s. I have read the English translations (Bakhtin 1981; 1996; 2004).

### 2.7.1 Stratification

Pupil narratives may be seen as stratified into a pupils' professional jargon, a pupil discourse. According to Dysthe (2006: 466),<sup>51</sup> Bakhtin saw language as an integrated aspect of pupils' development as personalities, as individuals, who think and write. The writer - and also the pupil writer - may be seen as taking part in a social language, which is to be understood as "[...] a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (professional, age group, etc.) within a given social system at a given time" (Bakhtin, 1981: 430). In a Bakhtinian sense, each individual pupil may be seen as operating within a pupils' professional jargon. This can be seen as

[...] the internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day (Bakhtin, 1981: 262-263).

Pupil produced narratives in EFL may be seen as stratified into a particular generic language where characteristic group behaviour and a professional jargon will be developed. Although pupils may be seen as writing within contexts and in relationship to other texts, something novel can be created in their text.

### 2.7.2 Parody and genre

When pupils write, they are confined into writing in specific genres defined in the school content. In this case, the narrative genre is the frame of their language practice. In an interpretation of pupil narratives, the researcher may focus on how pupils can be inspired by various literary and aesthetic manifestations in their own production of thematic content. The canonical quality of any genre, and, in this case, the narrative, that in the Aristotelian tradition imitates or is a mimesis of human action (Aristotle, 1961)<sup>52</sup> in that it involves a beginning, a middle and an end, is the inclination to strengthen its generic skeleton. Bakhtin, (1981: 53) maintains that "[...]there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of

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<sup>51</sup> When she makes this assumption, Dysthe refers to Bakhtin (2004).

<sup>52</sup> I have read the Norwegian translation (Aristotle, 1961).

direct discourse – artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary everyday – that did not have its own parodying and travesty double, its own comic-ironic *contre-partie*”. For every genre there is a parody. To Bakhtin, the concept ‘parody’ is more than just the conformity that the term connotes; it also involves a novel and creative attitude towards dominant and traditional usage. In the essay “Epic and Novel”, Bakhtin says that “in general any strict adherence to a genre begins to feel like a stylization, a stylization taken to the point of parody, despite the artistic intent of the author” (Bakhtin, 1981: 6). The narrative may become a parody irrespective of the writer’s intention. Applied to the study of pupil texts, this implies that the pupil writer may use parody both purposely and unintentionally. The pupil writer’s conscious use of parody suggests that the intertextuality concept is becoming an integrated part of the pupil’s literary competence (Vestli, 2008). Although the novel may also be created in the creative stage of associative writing, the novel content involved is possibly reflected in the advanced stages of the writing process - the unified and the epistemic stages (Bereiter, 1980: 87-88).

Within the canonical world literature, a well-known example of parody is found in the parodic sonnets with which the novel *Don Quijote de la Mancha*<sup>53</sup> opens. Bakhtin (1981) shows that although the verses are structured as sonnets, one would never possibly assign them to the sonnet genre. In *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the parodic sonnets appear as part of the novel. The sonnet hero is the hero of the parody. In a parody of the sonnet, one must recognise a sonnet form, its specific style, and its world view. A parody may represent and ridicule the distinctive features of the sonnet. But what results is not a sonnet, but rather “[...] the image of a sonnet” (Bakhtin, 1981: 51). One may claim that “All these parodies on genres and generic styles (‘languages’) enter the great and diverse world of verbal forms that ridicule the straightforward, serious word in all its generic guises” (Bakhtin, 1981: 52). This may be seen as what is characteristic of new contributions to a given genre. The pupil texts may be seen as the image of the genre they write their narratives within. When pupils write fairy tales, for instance, their narratives can be viewed as images of fairy tales. The elements that the pupils have added to the genre are focused on here; the thematic content that is expressed in the novel elements is scrutinised. In this research connection, the pupils write their novel content in EFL. The pupils write their image of the generic narrative in another language, which in Bakhtinian terminology could be referred to as other-languageness.

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<sup>53</sup> See Cervantes, 2004. I have read *Don Quixote*, the English translation by Grossman (see Cervantes, 2005).

### 2.7.3 Other-languageness

The notion of other-languageness may imply that the pupils parody the narrative genre in which they write their narratives. It may also suggest that the language they employ is different, “[...] one’s own language is never a single language: in it there are always survivals of the past and a potential for other-languageness” (Bakhtin, 1981: 66). The pupils write in the national language English, which, to these pupils, is a language that is not their mother tongue. Although Nordic EFL pupils do not necessarily engage in “[...] a deeply involved participation in alien culture and languages” (Bakhtin, 1981: 369) when they write narratives in English, they write in another language from a different perspective from that of their mother tongue. When pupils write in another language, it may provide another outlook on the world. Their texts are part of an intertextual repositioning which involves a different perspective. Their texts are intertextual according to Kristeva’s definition of the term; <sup>54</sup> a possibility for entering a different position and to formulate something novel within the given genre is thus provided. The concept of other-languageness may be applied on the EFL pupils’ narratives to suggest this other perspective which is involved in their non-mother-tongue-writing. The other-languageness writing that the Nordic EFL pupils in TALE are involved in is narrative; the pupils write fictional narratives, for instance. This particular genre would be referred to as a low genre in Bakhtinian terminology (Bakhtin, 1981). This popular contemporary language may bring their narratives in touch with the novel. Perhaps there, in the low language of contemporaneity, the pupil narratives operate.

### 2.7.4 The low language of contemporaneity

It might be relevant to approach pupil narratives as texts which operate within what Bakhtin calls “[...] the low language of contemporaneity” (Bakhtin, 1981: 21). Although such a term is not particularly flattering, it somewhat paradoxically suggests a more elevated role for the kind of narratives that pupils of EFL may produce: it is possible to view their contributions as complementary and relevant to the already existing narratives which are represented in the genres they write within. Seeing pupil narratives as parodies, may involve such narratives in a

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<sup>54</sup> See chapter 2, sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.3 for a definition of the intertextuality concept.

travesty of formulaic features where “[...] gods, demigods and heroes are contemporized”, and , “[...] brought low, represented on a plane equal with contemporary life, in an everyday environment, in the low language of contemporaneity” (Bakhtin, 1981: 21). Apparently the novel force may be found in this popular authentic language; perhaps it is “Precisely here, in popular laughter, the authentic folkloric roots of the novel are to be sought” (Bakhtin, 1981: 21). This popular, parodic, contemporary language forms a discourse which is intertextual; this discourse is represented as other-languageness and as the popular language where travesty prevails. Something popular, something authentic is apparently attached to this novel force or the novel genre.

### **2.7.5 Novel elements**

Whether the concept ‘novel’ can be made relevant for the pupils’ narratives depends on the assumption that they are comparable to the novel genre, and not only to the novel force. Such an inference may seem adequate when one juxtaposes it to the comparison that Bakhtin draws between the novel and “[...] certain forms close to it” (Bakhtin, 1981: 43), on the one hand, and the poetic genres, on the other hand. In such a dichotomy between the novel and the poetic, the narrative form and the pupil narrative may belong in the novelistic genre, and not in the poetic. Due to its inherent characteristics of the narrative, and not the poetic, the pupil narrative may be seen as novel. Thus, the view of the concept ‘novel’, as it is understood by Bakhtin interpreters, like Holquist and Lodge, is endorsed in this study.<sup>55</sup> The novel “[...]was formed and matured in the genres of familiar speech, found in conversational talk language (genres that are as yet little studied) and also certain folkloric and low literary genres” (Bakhtin, 1981: 50). This may imply that ordinary people and pupils are familiar with the novel, that it is precisely the so-called low language of contemporaneity that pupils may know well. When writing is seen as an intertextual activity, a form of parody is implied in the production of novel texts. As in Cervantes’ parody of the sonnet form with the anti-hero Don Quixote in the role of hero, the pupil narratives may parody the genre the pupils write within. This may be seen as a way of challenging the content of the old texts they refer to. Within the genre, the pupils may write novel content which encompass reflective thinking and critical judgement characteristic of the unified and epistemic stages in writing (Bereiter 1980). The

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<sup>55</sup> See Holquist in Bakhtin, 1981, and Lodge, 1999 (and also Bakhtin, 1996).

ability to add something novel to the well-known genre may become an integrated part of the pupils' literary competence (Vestli, 2008). According to Bakhtin (1981, 1996), individual usage contains language which is subject to 1) centrifugal forces which try to disseminate and 2) centripetal forces which try to regulate and discipline language. 3) The carnevalistic, the rebellious aspects of language are also present through novel usage. These three forces are at work simultaneously in language. The concept 'novel' is seemingly relevant in order to identify the pupil produced content of the pupil narratives. This assumption is based on the hypothesis that the pupil produced content can be sought for in the novel elements that the pupils add to the genre. The genre they write within is the realm of the centripetal forces. The novel elements can be seen as the results of the centrifugal forces of language, but may also be seen as carnevalistic and rebellious. In this deviation from or modification of the generic frame, in these novel elements, the pupil produced content can be identified. Identity is communicated in this pupil produced content, but whose identity or what aspects of identity this may involve is indeterminate. This is the complex issue which the second research question points to. In order to prepare for a discussion of what aspects of identity that are expressed, the concept 'speaking subject', which illustrates how identity may wander in any narrative text, can be studied.

### **2.7.6 The speaking subject**

Pupil writers may develop their own style, their own creative content within the parody of the genre. And within such individual pupil narratives, is a "speaking subject" (Bakhtin, 1981: 264). The term 'speaking subject' may elucidate how identity operates in narrative texts. It seems to point in the direction of the writer. "Behind the narrator's story we read a second story, the author's story, he is the one who tells us how the narrator tells stories, and also tells us about the narrator himself" (Bakhtin, 1981: 15). The speaking subject, which is behind the narrator, is here defined as the author of the narrative. But when the narrative is seen as an intertextual text, the speaking subject may involve the positions of several subjects in the production of the narrative; the speaking subject may constitute multiple subjectivities. Therefore, a necessary delineation between the writer, the narrator, and the characters in the narrative has to be acknowledged. In addition, a fourth subject is involved in this complexity of speaking subjects, the reader or researcher, who interprets. And finally, the reader of the

researcher's interpretation may be seen to constitute a speaking subject. Whose identity is communicated in the narrative is therefore dependent on the position of the subject.<sup>56</sup> To apply Kristevian terms, the identity of the subject that is constructed in the narrative depends on whether this subject is speaking from the position of 'the addressee', or from the position of 'intertexts', or from the position of 'the writing subject' (Kristeva, 1974: 7-9). In this view, the communication of identity is seen to work both horizontally and vertically. The communication of identity points to the vertical relationship between writing subject and addressee, but also horizontally to a synchronous literary corpus, as accounted for in section 2.5.1. Hence, the communication of identity in narratives is complex.

The term 'subject', which both Bakhtin and Kristeva apply, will often be understood as a synonym to the 'term' identity in pedagogical literature (Dysthe, 2006). The identity concept is associated with both the social and the personal aspects of human life. The study of the expression of identity in narratives is thus complicated and involves adjacent theory from various research fields.

## ***2.8 Identity in an EFL pupil discourse***

The research field of pedagogy mainly leans on psychological and sociological theoretisation of identity in its appliance of the term. In literary studies, the conceptualisation of identity has been pronounced in theoretical approaches like, for example, psychoanalytical literary theory and narratology respectively although the distinctions between sociological and psychological notions of identity are often unclear (Kittang, 1994). In psychology, the concept has been used to refer to the personal identity (Erikson, 1959), and the sociological approaches to the concept emphasise the social implications of identity (Goffman, 1956; Giddens, 1991). Identity as expressed in discourse often involves both the personal and the social identity. This personal and social identity is complex and represents different aspects of the pupil role. Pupil writers indirectly and directly communicate their identity in language and also in the first foreign language. A pupil discourse may develop in their narrative production in EFL (Foucault, 1977; 1986; 1990). The narrative discourse that is formulated is stratified into a

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<sup>56</sup> To attempt at distinguishing between these different positions is part of an advanced literary competence that pupils may develop in the long term.

pupil discourse which can be interpreted in order to find out what identity aspects of the personal and social kind that are communicated in the discourse. The narratives may be seen to constitute a discourse which gives voice to certain aspects of identity.

### 2.8.1 The identity concept

In psychology, the identity concept, as it is outlined by Erikson (1959: 22), often deals with “The conscious feeling of having a *personal identity* [...] based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one’s selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity.” In sociology, the term ‘social identity’ is often used to describe the collection of group memberships which define the individual. Based on the work of Mead (1934) on identity theory, the concept ‘identity negotiation’ is used both in sociological and anthropological literature to denote the process of the individual’s interaction with others. People negotiate their identity in the meeting with others; the others are often part of the same group. Pupils negotiate their pupil role with other pupils (Stryker, 1968). The identity of someone is seen as a product of both the social field and the discourse in the context in which the person is located. In language studies, the discussions of the identity concept in Joseph (2001: 9) and Ivanic (1998: 90) map out the complexity of the identity concept. They both draw on terms like 1) ‘self’ and ‘person’, 2) ‘ethos’, 3) ‘persona’, 4) ‘subject,’ ‘subject position’, ‘positioning’, 5) ‘subjectivity’, ‘subjectivities’, ‘positionings’, ‘possibilities for self-hood’; the poststructuralist concepts in 5) suggest the multiple nature of identity. Ivanic (1998) points to identity as socially constructed, but uses terms that reflect not only the social construction involved, but also the constraint implied in self-hood. People are not free to take on any identity they like. This fact notwithstanding, it is possible to add a sense of multiplicity to one’s identity, a sense of hybridity and fluidity where the changeable and variable aspects of identity are highlighted. People’s identities are not seen as natural facts, but as something they construct. The epistemological implication of such a view of identity implies that different people experience each other differently. Thus someone’s, “[...] distinctiveness, individuality, openness, particularity, personality, self, selfhood, singularity, uniqueness”, which are all

thesaurus entries listed as synonymous with identity,<sup>57</sup> may be understood differently by different people. All the terms referred to above presuppose a kind of freedom or subjectivity which is not necessarily explanatory for the understanding of the pupil role. The pupil role is, if not actually victimised, at least restrained. The role involves powerlessness, but may also provide the opportunity to exercise power.

## **2.8.2 Foucaultian objectification**

Foucault (1985; 1986; 1990) demonstrates how human beings are constituted as subjects in relationships of power. The aforementioned Foucaultian concept ‘subjectification’<sup>58</sup> is one of the three modes in which people are seen as objectified in modern society. The first mode, ‘dividing practices’ points to the way people are distinguished from others, as, for example, either sane or insane. The second mode ‘scientific classification’ objectifies people by means of the discourses and practices of the human and social sciences. People are seen as objects to be analysed and labelled. The objectification of the human being is seen as linked to historical changes in knowledge and in the nature of power. Foucault applies the concept ‘power/knowledge’ (Foucault, 1990) to denote this conjunction of power and knowledge. On the one hand, power may be connected to those who define their own identity; people have the power to define themselves, and knowledge may produce subjects instead of objects. On the other hand, an individual or a group is simultaneously defined by others and, to some extent, has to accept to be someone that others have defined, to be objectified. Thus the tension between the different modes of objectification, are relevant when speaking of a pupil identity. The identity of the pupil or a group of pupils is defined as results of such tension. In addition, the relationship between the individual and the group identity complicate the notion of identity. The pupil identity is thus formed by the individual pupils’ background and the role that pupils are objectified into. In addition, the pupils negotiate their role with each others and with society in general.

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<sup>57</sup> See Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2000.

<sup>58</sup> See section 2.4.2.

### 2.8.3 The pupil identity

To acknowledge the difference between the personal identity and the social identity is important when speaking of a pupil identity. On the semantic level, this difference between the individual and the group is complex. In part, one's deep, personal identity is made up of the various group identities one belongs to, for example, nation, town, ethnicity, gender, religion, or school. Still, people - and pupils - probably commonly perceive themselves as individuals in the sense that there is a unique part of any individual that transcends the sum of these group identities. A pupil is born either boy or girl;<sup>59</sup> he or she is a member of a family, comes from a particular region and country, is educated within a specific sphere, at a certain time in history, develops interpersonal relationships, learns a set of linguistic varieties within the first language, learns one or more foreign languages. The social identity of the pupil is marked by all these different contexts and discourses that the individual belongs to. The relationships to family members like parents and siblings are developed in various discourses, the relationship to friends and schoolmates likewise. At the personal level, the gender-roles and sex-roles are explored in various discourses. The age group that this study focuses on is twelve to fourteen and in psychology, this period is characterised, for example, by the oedipal conflict with the parents (Freud, [1917] 1992: 275; 1958). In psychological notions of the term 'identity', the personal identity of the pupil is marked by the traits of this particular stage in their development. The social identity will be defined by the institutionalised practices in which the pupils act. The role of the pupil identity demonstrates the tension between the personal and the social identity. Schooling is compulsory; at least in the Nordic countries, everyone has to be a pupil. The pupil role can be acted out in different ways, but not all of them based on the freedom of individual choice. In the tension between the innate and the culturally negotiated, identity is negotiated. Simultaneously the tension between the individual and the group identity adds to the composite nature of the identity concept. It seems as if identity develops in the flux of competing influences on the individual and the group. The individual creates a version of her/himself accessible to others, which is again negotiated with the other(s). A discourse system may be constituted and maintained based on such construction and negotiation.

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<sup>59</sup> Even this distinction is readily crossed; see, e.g., Prieur, 1994.

## 2.8.4 The discourse concept

The concept 'discourse' is given different meaning in different disciplines. In language studies, it is often used to describe various aspects of language usage. Scollon and Scollon (1995: 95) differentiate between three conceptions of discourse. Firstly, the most technical field as "[...] the study of grammatical and other relationships between sentences" has studied the problem of cohesion, as, for example, in the aforementioned NORDWRITE project.<sup>60</sup> Often discourse analysis in language studies deals with, for example, the topic structures of sentences or paragraphs. The main focus of such studies of discourse would be to study how units of communication, which are larger wholes than just words or sentences, are formed. Secondly, a broader use of the term involves studies of how language usage is based in its social environment. And thirdly, the broadest concept of discourse is seen as the study of whole systems of communication. The interpretation of substantial content of Nordic pupils' narratives in Instructed EFL can be placed somewhere between the second and the third types of discourse. Thus discourse cohesion in the grammatical sense and through such a close lens is not studied in pupil narratives in this thesis. This study takes the broader view where context and intertext inform the discourse in which narratives by Nordic EFL pupils are produced. The individual act of writing within such discourse systems may be seen as a social act, too. Gere (1987: 83) points to the significance of the interaction of groups of individuals who interact socially and where "[...] small group dynamics and communicative practices" develop. Foucault (1985; 1990) takes this view even further and claims that society produces individual human subjects who struggle to keep the discourse within the boundaries of normality and where the discharge of power takes place in the kind of discourse which is characterised by Foucault (1985: 28) as "[...] 'the tiny, invisible text that runs between and sometimes collides'". What is said between the lines is given importance; the discourse can be seen as an expression of the struggle for power. Foucault takes his examples from mentally challenged people and from prisoners (Foucault, 1977; 1985). Although the pupils are not subject to this level of control from the authorities, the power aspect of the discourse concept may be relevant to the understanding of how the pupil discourse, or various pupil discourses, are developed and maintained. Within the system in which the discursive practice is carried out, the different participators form the content of the discourse.

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<sup>60</sup> See chapter 1, section 1.4.1.

### 2.8.5 A pupil discourse

The TALE pupils take part in several pupil discourses whereof the TALE network represents one discourse system in which several pupil discourses may co-exist. The various pupils' discourses are situated in social systems where pupils are generally seen as less powerful than the other participants.<sup>61</sup> Foucaultian discourse is characterised by the absence or presence of power (Foucault, 1977; 1985; 1990). The various pupil discourses thus exert power or powerlessness on behalf of the pupils who participate in them. Scollon and Scollon (1995) distinguish between two major types of discourse relevant to the understanding of the pupil discourse,

[...] those into which one becomes a member through the natural processes of birth and growth within a family and a community (one's gender and one's generation, for example), and those into which one chooses to enter for utilitarian purposes such as one's professional specialization or the company for which one works (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 136).

The identities in the first category are non-negotiable; the second category may presuppose a somewhat positivistic world view where individuals are seen as able to choose freely who they want to become. How they express their membership in various group identities of the second category discursively is then something that individual participants can decide. According to Foucault (1977; 1985), this freedom is restricted, the rules of the discourse system in which any identity is located decides what it is possible to say within this particular discourse. These rules are not static; they may change synchronously from one epoch to the next.

The discourse systems in which the person has a membership make up the parts of who this person is, or at least who this person appears to be. A discourse system may provide a sense of identity for its members. Members of each discourse system try to socialize its members according to the norms that are most valid within this particular discourse system, and often away from the norms of other discourse systems. The different discourse systems that the individual takes part in may be seen as being in a state of competition (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 248). The TALE network constitutes one such discourse system in which the TALE pupils take part. Within this system, the narratives they write may constitute one discourse

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<sup>61</sup> For example, teachers.

which is separable from other ongoing discourses within the same system. This thesis studies those aspects of their social and personal identity that are dealt with in this particular discourse. Is it, for instance, likely that expressions of identity related to age-typical gender and sexuality issues will be taken up in this discourse; are the relationships between different generations questioned, or are other aspects related to the communication of identity emphasised? In the literary interpretation of the narrative discourse, such questions can be pursued.

### **2.8.6 An EFL narrative discourse**

In the TALE project, the pupils write narratives in English as a first foreign language. The actual writing, which is seen as both an individual and a social act,<sup>62</sup> takes place in a non-mother-tongue language. The aspects of identity that can be expressed in the narratives are influenced by genre choice and teacher instruction. Various classroom confinements, local and national curricula also make an impact on those aspects of identity that are expressed. Thus the discourse that develops out of classroom practice of the writing skill is, to some extent, externally defined. Nevertheless, the identity of someone, in this case, the pupil, who communicates his or her emotions, cognition and knowledge, is inherent in that person's voice whether in spoken or written form. This hypothesis is central to how pupil narratives are being read in the present study. The idea that the personal identity or signature of the writer will rub off in some way is a prerequisite for this view. It presupposes that the individual writers will put their mark on their texts. Thus an L2 discourse in English may take on traits generally attached to L1. Pupils may communicate substantial content in L2, as well as in their mother tongue. In *Language and Identity*, Joseph claims that there is “[...] a tension between the value of a world language as a means of wide communication, and the value of one's local language as a repository of cultural forms of representation (Joseph, 2004: 23). He maintains that linguists tend to think that only the latter value has a legitimate claim to support, because of what it means for what he calls the authentic identity of those who speak the language. But given that there is an underlying expectancy of second language proficiency in English, the value of L2 increases; ongoing discourses in EFL may present texts that

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<sup>62</sup> See, e.g., section 2.5.2.

communicate aspects of the identity of its participants. Both mother tongue texts and texts in English may be seen to express the identities of their writers.

### **2.8.7 Deciding the narrative content**

The text is interpreted by both the writer and the reader (Kristeva, 1974; 1980). This mutuality may influence the process in which the narrative content is defined, and the concept of the other has substantiated that a resonance of one's own inner being can be perceived in other individuals. People construct a perception of other people's identities by filling the gap between the linguistic evidence and other information available (Scollon and Scollon, 1995; Erikson, 1959). The readers of a text might not even be aware of this. In a way, the readers test their theories about the writer when reading what s/he has written. Everybody possesses this kind of accumulated knowledge about others, and people put it to use in every social encounter, for instance, when reading someone's text (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). When someone makes use of this knowledge to construct their image of someone else, they are probably at the same time focusing at least as much on the construction of something that involves the identity of themselves. To some extent, the writer of the text negotiates identity with the reader and with other texts. The reader negotiates identity with the writer and other texts. Factors, such as gender, geographical and social origin, intelligence, reliability, likeability, and trustworthiness are essential to the interpretation of identity in communication (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). Discourse is seen as a social act and both "[...] talk and texts as parts of social practices" (Potter, 1996: 105). Although the text is seen as independent of its writer and reader,<sup>63</sup> it is written in a context where other people operate. A collection of narratives from a group of pupils may be seen to constitute a discourse of pupil narratives. A literary interpretation may point out the distinctiveness of such a discourse and illuminate how identity is communicated in such narrative writing. The thesis questions 1) What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives, and 2) What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse can be addressed methodologically through the literary study of the narratives that the pupils themselves produce in the given genre. The interpretation can focus on the novel content in pupil narrative. The novel content may become evident in the associative, unified and epistemic stages (Bereiter, 1980: 83-88) of pupil writing. The

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<sup>63</sup> In the sense that the readers' response is not part of the interpretation.

following hypothesis is thus explored. Given that texts are intertextual, the identification of the novel in the text provides a foundation for the interpretation of what is actually communicated in the text, which aspects of identity are expressed.

## **2.9 Relevant approaches**

The thesis is based in the research fields of literature studies and pedagogy. The choice of method by which to analyse the narratives must take into account that the texts are written both to produce thematic content but also for educational purposes as EFL practice. Grounded theory, for example, presents a methodological apparatus within qualitative research in social science where the quality of the data that are collected continuously determines what theory to develop in the research process. Also many variants of discourse analysis provide designs for detailed analysis of texts which could illuminate the thematic content of pupil narratives. Within the humanities, literary analysis offers different approaches to text interpretation. Although there are probably other possible approaches for this thesis' study of substantial content, a literary analysis could take into consideration both the literary and the pedagogical aspects of pupil narratives; literary methods adequately give systems in which it is possible to discuss the various aspects of pupil narratives.

### **2.9.1 Possible approaches to pupil narratives**

The importance of approaching texts “[...] in their own right” (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 160) is central in grounded theory, in literary interpretation and in discourse analysis. In such approaches, “Inconsistency and variation, as we have seen, are at least as interesting as consistency”(Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000: 206). The divergence from the formula in each individual text may be viewed as significant. In Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994), data are collected from every phase of the research process; almost everything that the researcher encounters in the research topic's context is regarded as data. These relevant data are coded and categorised. In the study of pupil narratives in the TALE project, this could mean that all the contextual factors related to TALE would have had to be

analysed and considered relevant. This disposition is not necessarily false, but in this study, which restricts itself to studying the pupils' narrative, such a wide approach could easily sidetrack the thesis' focus on thematic content in narratives although the context would have been thoroughly analysed. In this study, the focus on the text makes the research designs of various forms of textual analysis more fit. Both within social science and literary studies it is possible to view pupil narratives as discourse and to apply various text analytical devices to consider the context of pupil narratives, and in many ways, the second approach mentioned here, discourse analysis, provides an appropriate methodological apparatus. Nevertheless, the literary approach, with the implied notion of texts related to intertext(s), introduces an extra dimension which is difficult to include in the other approaches mentioned here. The capability of the literary approach of keeping the old, generic, textual discourse and the new pupil discourse of narratives in the foreground simultaneously makes the literary analysis of pupil narratives trustworthy. This project focuses on the theme of pupil's literary texts; hence a literary approach<sup>64</sup> is relevant although other approaches are possible. The following hypothesis thus forms the basis for the choice of approach: A literary interpretation, which allows a study of the theme in the individual pupil narrative, will illuminate the pupil produced content; this literary approach, which is narratological (Kristeva, 1974; 1980; Bakhtin, 1980) and psychological (Heuscher, 1974; Jung, 1964; Zipes, 1979; Bettelheim, 1976) will hypothetically tell what the narratives actually communicate. The literary approach gives room for a comparison of the intertextual relationship between generic characteristics and individual pupil narratives. The intertextuality concept (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) creates a connection between the new text and the old intertext(s); the identification of the novel (Bakhtin, 1981) in pupil narratives will supposedly pinpoint the identity expression of the narrative. The narratives may form a discourse which gives voice to aspects of identity.

## **2.9.2 The approach in this study**

The analytical apparatus of the literary approach is considered fit for the present study's focus on pupil produced content. The discourse that is formed in this narrative writing is seen as a pupil discourse which is developed among Nordic EFL pupils in TALE. The language usage which can be said to be the pupils' own usage is what constitutes this discourse. The pupil

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<sup>64</sup> See, e.g., Jefferson and Robey, 1986; Lodge, 1999 for introductions to modern literary theory.

produced content can be identified through a study of the novel elements that pupils create in the interface between the text and its intertext(s) (Kristeva, 1974; 1980). A method of interpretation in which the novel (Bakhtin, 1981) elements that emerge in the meeting between the text and its intertext(s) are studied may provide a relevant basis to the discussion of theme in pupil narratives. A focus on the novel elements will hypothetically help define the theme in the individual pupil narrative. The novel is identified by comparing the text with its possible intertext(s). When the pupil narrative deviates from or modifies the generic frame, the novel can be identified. The notion that this deviating element of the pupil text can tell about the theme can be tested in a literary approach which focus on the relationship between the text and its intertext(s). The aspects of identity that the narratives are seen to communicate can hypothetically be spotted in their novel elements, in their pupil produced content. Initially the present thesis asks what the findings of this study may imply for the teaching and learning of EFL and sets out to discuss the possible bearing of this study of narratives on the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school. To elaborate on this question could be to ask what is to be gained from writing in the narrative genres, or from having authentic receivers. To discuss the role of literary texts as inspirational sources to the writing of pupil EFL texts is also appropriate. In chapter 9, the thesis discusses the possible bearing of this study of narratives on the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school. The focus is on the two research questions formulated in chapter 1,

1. What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives?
2. What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse?

These questions can be further developed into the following points:

- Is identity expressed in terms of the relationships between the individual and the social, related to, for example, family and friends, and to local, global, and national identity?
- Is the individual identity communicated in the narratives? Are there expressions of identity related to, for example, gender and sexuality or other aspects of the individual identity?

### **2.9.3 Possible limitations of the literary approach**

The text intertext relationship is seen as central to the interpretation of narratives, and the literary approach gives room for a comparison of the intertextual relationship between generic characteristics and individual pupil narratives. The concept 'intertextuality' taken from narratology makes it possible to emphasise the pupil produced content. But one may quite rightfully ask whether the *sjuzhet* in pupil texts is of such an advanced nature that narratology as method is applicable. Aaslestad (1997; 1999), who applies narratology, for example, in the interpretation of medical records (Aaslestad, 1997), points to the risk implied that the narratological devices take the lead in relation to the actual content of the text (Aaslestad, 1999: 9). The method may easily overshadow the meaning of what is said in the text. The complexity of the structures that the method outlines may get the attention at the expense of the thematic content of, in this case, the pupil narratives. Larsen (2001: 1), who studies the oeuvre of the Norwegian writer, Agnar Mykle, discusses the applicability of narratology as method and suggests that the texts are generally quite complicated if the apparatus of the method were to be given justice. With regard to the study of EFL texts, one might find that the various intertextual and contextual factors surrounding the narrative make it relevant to focus on something wider and that the *fabula sjuzhet* dichotomy not necessarily, at least not in its literary obstinacy, provides the most adequate scope for pupil narratives. The examples mentioned above demonstrate the versatile appliance of narratology as method, and also the modifications of the method to suit various textual genres. To apply the basic principles of narratology as method, for example, by highlighting the text intertext relationship, is relevant to the study of pupil narratives. To focus on the thematic substantial content in the narratological approach to the narratives give insights into the psychological and social notions of identity expressions in pupil produced content. Thereby, the pupil narratives are interpreted as manifestations of identity.

### **2.10 Summing up**

In this discussion of the theoretical basis, the approach and methods chosen have been explained, and the central concepts of the study have been presented. The notion of the Bakhtinian novel (Bakhtin, 1981) and Kristevian intertextuality (Kristeva, 1974; 1980) may

help explicate how EFL writing leads to thematic content being formed. The study of pupil produced content in this thesis implies a literary interpretation of what such texts by pupils supposedly are telling. In keeping with the tradition within the humanities and social science, to let the data determine the choice of method, a literary interpretation method has been chosen. A literary interpretation inspired by the work of Bakhtin and Kristeva, with elements of narratology and psychology to interpret the intertextual references, takes into consideration that the pupils' texts in question are written in the fictional narrative genre by pupils. A study of pupil narratives may contribute to increase the insights into those aspects of identity that are given voice to in such narrative writing. Furthermore, it may illuminate how pupils approach the writing process in EFL and how they may develop literary competence in their production of narrative substantial content. It may also shed light on the way pupils tell stories. It may tell more about what dilemmas they are inclined to take up in such narrative tasks. The study does not focus on the process, not on the writer, but on what the text communicates when the cognitive faculties involved in EFL writing are put to use. Nevertheless, the literary approach to their texts can only suggest, and not prove, what the texts may communicate at a deeper level. The interpretation may reveal those aspects of identity that are, in fact, communicated in the narratives. The two questions formulated in chapter 1 are developed further:

1. What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives?
2. What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse?
  - Is identity expressed in terms of the relationships between the individual and the social, related to, for example, family and friends, and to local, global, and national identity?
  - Is the individual identity communicated in the narratives? Are there expressions of identity related to, for example, gender and sexuality or other aspects of the individual identity?

But before these questions are addressed in the discussions of method in the sixth chapter, an account of the context of the pupil narratives will be given.

The context of the pupil produced narrative writing is complex, the school setting of such narrative writing diverse. In chapter 9, the thesis discusses what possible bearing this study of narratives has for the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school. In the forthcoming discussion, the Nordic context is seen from a Norwegian perspective. English as a first foreign language in school is the frame in which pupil narrative content is produced.



## **3 English learning and teaching in Norway**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

In this chapter, the school context of the pupil narrative is discussed. The special role of the first foreign language, compared to the other foreign languages taught in lower and upper secondary school today, suggests that the pupils may attain an ownership attitude towards English. The level of proficiency of the teachers has continuously proved to be a challenge; the first foreign language is still a compulsory subject in general teacher training. From the middle of the nineteenth century when English was introduced as a voluntary school subject in Norway, it has steadily increased its range and is currently compulsory in all primary and secondary education. The volume of English language practice worldwide necessarily affects how English is studied in school. Through references to the teaching methods, the organisation of the subject and the role of culture and literature, the development of the dominating position of English as a school subject is seen in connection with the influence of ICT, and the development of English as a global language. The pupils may make English into their own language and communicate various aspects of identity through EFL narrative writing.

### ***3.2 The introduction of English in school***

Currently the first foreign language is introduced in the first grade in Norwegian schools to five to six-year-old pupils. The role of pupil produced content is constantly becoming more prominent as the communicative approach to FL learning and teaching has gained ground (van Ek, 1975; Savignon, 2000). Pupil narratives are part of the pupil produced contributions to the EFL classroom. From the introduction of English as a school subject almost 150 years ago up until the present situation, there have been substantial changes in society, in school and in Instructed EFL. The objectives of schooling have changed and are, for example, reflected in the general part of the current curriculum where education is supposed to “[...]”

promote democracy, national identity and international consciousness”.<sup>65</sup> This is different from the rationale used when English was first introduced in school.

### 3.2.1 Practical English

English as a school subject was initiated in the southern parts of Norway in the 1860s. According to Ytreberg (1993: 9), there were practical reasons involved for teaching English to boys in the two towns, Grimstad and Arendal. As the south coast was closely connected with Great Britain through shipping and trade, a certain degree of language proficiency was required by the prospective seamen. EFL was taught outside compulsory school hours on a voluntary basis, and the parents had to pay for the education in English. It would have been possible for other municipalities to do the same as the two southern towns did, but for various reasons they apparently did not.<sup>66</sup> First and foremost English was taught in schools preparing for shipping, trade and craft, and not primarily as a preparation for academic studies. The privileged classes would have German or French governesses and tutors or send their sons and daughters on a ‘Grand Tour’ to grant direct contact with European culture and languages (Ytreberg, 1993: 9). From 1886, English was studied in the Norwegian grammar school<sup>67</sup> and got its literary and historical profile within the national curriculum from 1899 (Ibsen and Wiland, 2000: 20). English was introduced into the national curriculum during the last decade of the nineteenth century (Simensen, 1998). The start-up was impeded by the lack of qualified teachers especially in the countryside. In 1889, foreign languages were mentioned in the national curriculum as a voluntary additional subject (Ytreberg, 1993). German was the preferred foreign language at this time. In 1896, English was the main foreign language in secondary education.<sup>68</sup> Høigård and Ruge (1971) claim that Norway’s relationship to the USA was a dominating argument for highlighting the role of English at the expense of German during the first decades of the twentieth century, the shipping affiliation to Great Britain likewise. Thus both the cultural and political considerations involving Norway’s position in

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<sup>65</sup> [http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM\\_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laereplanid=1547&scope=Sc...](http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laereplanid=1547&scope=Sc...) (Accessed 24 April 2007)

<sup>66</sup> Substantial research in this field is deficient. Presumably people acquired foreign language proficiency also at this time. For most people this perhaps happened if they could learn languages through their working experience.

<sup>67</sup> In Norway called “gymnaset”, equivalent to the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> grades in upper secondary school’s academic specialisation programme.

<sup>68</sup> “Lov om høiere almenskoler av 1896” [The Act of secondary education from 1896] (my translation).

an international setting, and the practical considerations related to shipping and trade, have been understood as good grounds for the status of English in school. From 1936, English was taught from the sixth grade within ordinary school hours,<sup>69</sup> but it was still a voluntary subject until 1969<sup>70</sup> and became compulsory in 1974 from the fourth grade. In the 1974 Curriculum for primary and lower secondary education, henceforward referred to as M74,<sup>71</sup> English as a school subject was outlined in a nationwide plan for the first time. The versatile rationale for enforcing the role of English in the Norwegian curriculum throughout the twentieth century is perhaps one of the reasons for a seemingly widespread acceptance of English among multifaceted social and economic groups in society. Even if some pupils may experience themselves in an outsider position<sup>72</sup> with regard to English, it has not only been the language of the academically talented pupils, but the language of the practically oriented pupils, as well. This may imply that an ownership attitude towards the language may develop among complex groups of the population. English as a school subject first found its way into the Norwegian classroom through the need for practical proficiency in English and then for academic purposes. At the time when English was introduced, the main foreign language was Latin.

### 3.2.2 The dichotomy between Latin and English

In the European language teaching tradition in schools preparing for academic studies, Latin still had a dominating position from the sixteenth century onwards (Simensen, 1998: 24). Although it was no longer the lingua franca it had been during the height of the Roman Empire, Latin was preferred by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities in the centuries to follow. The history and geography of the Roman Empire and Roman lifestyle were taught as an integral part of the studies of Latin (Kelly, 1969). The formation aspect was ensured by the study of literary texts and *The Bible*, and the meticulous work with Latin grammar would support the logical thinking abilities of its students. “Thus from having been a means to an end outside language itself the study of the language itself and its literature had become the

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<sup>69</sup> “Lov om folkeskulen på landet 16. juli 1936” [The Act of primary schools in rural areas of 16 July 1936] (my translation) referred to in Simensen, 1998: 320.

<sup>70</sup> “Lov om grunnskolen av 13. juni 1969” [The Act of primary and lower secondary schools of 13 June 1969] (my translation) referred to in Simensen, 1998: 320.

<sup>71</sup> “Mønsterplanen for grunnskolen 1974”, “The 1974 Curriculum Plan”, referred to in Simensen, 1998: 320.

<sup>72</sup> Traditional methods for teaching EFL may have favoured the academically oriented pupils.

end” (Simensen, 1998: 24). Latin was taught, if not for a non-communicative purpose, mainly to communicate with the past through the study of old texts. The content of these old texts was seen as educative. As Latin gradually changed from being a practical language used both orally and written in ordinary communication into becoming a so-called dead language orally speaking, the written language attained authority as a model for other languages. English was also a practical language for those who were not necessarily expected to attend academic studies. Gudem (1989; 1998) discusses this dual role of foreign language study where pragmatic and academic objectives seem to compete. The tension between practical usage and academic preparation is still evident in FL learning and teaching in Norway.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.2.3 Early methods

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the modern languages which were introduced<sup>74</sup> adopted both purpose and procedures from Latin since it apparently was the most prestigious foreign language at the time in Europe, including in Norway (Simensen, 1998: 24).<sup>75</sup> FL learning and teaching around 1850 constituted some components which were to some extent fixed,<sup>76</sup> “[...] statements of abstract grammar rules, - grammar paradigms and lists of vocabulary, and – sentences for translation” (Simensen, 1998: 24). English in M74 is influenced by behaviouristic language learning theory (Skinner, 1957) combined with a structural view of language (Simensen, 1998; Ytreberg, 1993). In a language learning context, this interface may be referred to as the audio-lingual method. It prescribes grammatical drills and controlled listening and reading activities. Language laboratories are introduced to support this method. Previous to the audio-lingual method, it is actually difficult to find traces of other methods in the plans which are relevant at the time. The grammar-translation method inherited from the teaching of Latin seems to have dominated both the learning and teaching of EFL and the other foreign languages, but also the Direct Method and the Natural Approach

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<sup>73</sup> See, for instance, “The Norwegian White Paper # 30” which prescribes a practical aim for second foreign language learning and teaching in Norway. (<http://www.regjeringen.no/nn/dep/kd/Dokument/Rettleingar-og-brosjyrar/2004/Report-no-30-to-the-Storting-2003-2004-Culture-for-learning.html?id=88104>. Accessed 25 February 2008)

<sup>74</sup> English, German and French.

<sup>75</sup> However, when modern languages obtained a footing, German was the preferred language in addition to Latin partly due to the close contact between Norway and Germany through trade.

<sup>76</sup> This method is commonly referred to as the grammar-translation method.

have had some influence on teaching plans in Norway.<sup>77</sup> Both methods demand a high level of teacher proficiency in the foreign language since they both advocate teaching the target language in the target language. All teachers were not necessarily qualified for such teaching methods.

### 3.2.4 Current methods

Drew and Sørheim (2004) claim that the underlying philosophy shared by many language teachers today is that Norwegian pupils at least from the intermediate level and up to lower secondary level will benefit from what they call a balanced, eclectic approach. They maintain that “[...] a balanced, eclectic approach to language learning, which includes understanding language, practising it, and producing it, is now recognized by many teachers and scholars as the best one” (Drew and Sørheim, 2004: 22). They define this as an approach to language learning which includes features from all traditional learning methods for language learning, including the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method, the direct method, and the communicative approach, which was introduced in Norway in the 1980s.

The 1987 Curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools, henceforward referred to as M87,<sup>78</sup> emphasises the communicative aspects of language. Proficiency in the traditional skills of language learning, listening and speaking, which ensure oral practice, and reading and writing, which ensure written practice, was emphasised. The communicative approach introduces a variety of communicative games and activities - like role-play and drama - into the FL classroom. The European Community’s effort to promote communicability took place at the same time as the Norwegian initiative (European Council, 1988). Drew and Sørheim claim that the idea of using local teaching material was introduced in the aftermath of M87 “[...] so that English could be used to talk about familiar topics, as well as to teach Norwegian pupils about their own culture” (Drew and Sørheim, 2004: 24). For example, in Sørheim (1986), the local district around Sognefjord in Western Norway is presented for EFL educational purposes through vocabulary training adapted to local distinctiveness. In Norwegian teacher education in EFL, this local orientation resulted in regionally adapted

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<sup>77</sup> C. Knap and other linguists pioneered the Direct Method in textbooks in the middle of the 1920s, (Simensen, 1998).

<sup>78</sup> Mønsterplanen av 1987 [The 1987 Curriculum Plan] referred to in Simensen, 1998: 320.

topics in EFL, as exemplified in Larsen (1999) where Sami and Australian aboriginal cultures are compared. Emphasis is put on the national and regional culture of the foreign language pupil and not only the foreign language per se. Wiland states that “M87 is a true representative of the communicative language teaching paradigm where the functions of language are concentrated upon and trained within textual or topical language contexts” (Ibsen and Wiland, 2000: 100). The pupil produced content is fully acknowledged as part of the communicative act. The idea that pupils’ language aptitudes are different starts filtering through. The idea of exposure to the language itself<sup>79</sup> becomes widespread in FL learning and teaching in general in Norway at this time. Thus to expose pupils to a variety of authentic English language input becomes an ideal.

### ***3.3 English and the other foreign languages***

FL learning and teaching in Norway has become a matter of learning and teaching English, on the one hand, and learning and teaching the other foreign languages, on the other hand.<sup>80</sup> The concept ‘foreign languages’ is going through a differentiation in meaning based on the situation of the individual foreign language in question.<sup>81</sup> When referring to FL teaching in a school context at present in Norway, one is most likely referring to the second foreign language, German, French, Spanish or Russian.<sup>82</sup> English as the first foreign language has a special position because of its size compared to the other foreign languages, an issue which is also discussed in Simensen (2003). In Kramsch (2006), it is claimed that there is currently an increased interest in the teaching of languages other than English in Europe. It is difficult to determine whether this applies to the situation in Norway and in the other Nordic countries, as well. The FL school subjects have different external conditions, which define their position, to some extent.<sup>83</sup> The beginner’s age and the volume of the foreign language in question are central in this respect.

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<sup>79</sup> This is similar to what the direct method promoted 50 years earlier.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, Simensen, 2003.

<sup>81</sup> This issue is discussed, for example, in Lund, 2001.

<sup>82</sup> In addition, Finnish, Italian, Chinese and Japanese are optional at some Norwegian schools.

<sup>83</sup> The most important one being the fact that the second foreign language is an optional subject.

### **3.3.1 The other foreign languages**

The second foreign language, German, French, Spanish or Russian, is a voluntary subject from lower secondary school level. From 1974 to 1997, it was an optional subject to be elected instead of activities related to sports, music, and art. From 1997, it was an alternative to practical project work. From 2006, the name of the subject changed from second foreign language to foreign language. This study refers to the subject as second foreign language. This is also done since the university subject 'foreign language education' includes EFL alongside second foreign language studies, also referred to as L3. In 2007, the in-depth study in foreign languages was chosen by only 5.7% of the pupils in upper secondary school.<sup>84</sup> Although this does not necessarily mean that English is superseding the second foreign language, such a move may easily become self-reinforcing. This tendency may be partly related to the volume and the content of the language teaching. English is different from the other languages because of its global impact area and its dominating position in ICT. Pupils encounter English input both inside and outside school. The volume of such input in the second foreign language is considerably smaller. The quantity and quality of exposure to the foreign language in question vary. Norwegian children are exposed to English continuously through various media sources.<sup>85</sup> Many pupils use their English in authentic encounters with foreigners abroad and at home. The pupils are not exposed to the same amplitude of second foreign language input where communication happens mainly in the classroom.

### **3.3.2 Beginner's age and amplitude of input**

In Norway, the differences between the subjects - English and the second foreign language - have developed particularly during the last three decades. Apart from the content differences, there are other relevant aspects in this connection. The first is connected to the age of the learners. The gap between the beginner's age for English and the second foreign language has risen. Fifty years ago, the age difference between pupils who got beginner's education in EFL and in the other foreign languages was minimal. The methods for beginner's education could

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<sup>84</sup> See [www.fremmedsprakssenteret.no](http://www.fremmedsprakssenteret.no) (Accessed 9 October 2007) for further details.

<sup>85</sup> Anglo-American TV series, for example, are usually not dubbed into the Norwegian, but have Norwegian subtitles.

therefore be almost identical. During the last 30 years, the beginner's age of Instructed EFL has gradually declined from twelve to six. During the same period, the beginner's age for education in the second foreign language is relatively unchanged and has only declined from fourteen to thirteen. In upper secondary school, the beginner's age has even been raised to sixteen for pupils who have had no second foreign language education in lower secondary school. In upper secondary school, second foreign language education takes place in the academic specialisation education programme.<sup>86</sup> The possibilities for studying a second foreign language are limited in vocational education programmes (Lindemann, 2004: 2).<sup>87</sup> English is the only foreign language taught to the entire population.

The difference between the number of lessons taught in English and the second foreign language is significant. English is studied for a minimum of eleven years, and Norwegian pupils' proficiency in EFL is comparatively good, according to European Network of Policy Makers and the Evaluation of Education Systems (2002). The school subject, English, approaches, for example, literature somewhat in the same manner as the school subject, Norwegian, does. The pupils are expected to read authentic texts at a relatively advanced level.<sup>88</sup> In the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research's<sup>89</sup> document "Languages open doors"<sup>90</sup> from 2005, the connection between teaching the mother tongue and teaching English is indicated. According to this strategy document, the teaching and learning of EFL is "[...] closer to the teaching and learning of the first language than to foreign languages".<sup>91</sup>

### **3.4 The communicative classroom**

In the communicative classroom, proficiency in the four traditional language skills is a prerequisite for language learning. Yet the focus in English learning and teaching is, as Wiland puts it, "[...] on creating an environment where the pupils are encouraged to produce

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<sup>86</sup> See [http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte\\_lareplaner\\_for\\_Kunnskapsloftet/](http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte_lareplaner_for_Kunnskapsloftet/). (Accessed 9 October 2007)

<sup>87</sup> French is studied in food and restaurant subjects in the vocational study programme.

<sup>88</sup> See section 3.6.1.

<sup>89</sup> The Norwegian Ministries of Education and Research were separated into two independent ministries in 2007.

<sup>90</sup> "Språk åpner dører" [Languages open doors] was launched in 2005 and revised in 2007.

<sup>91</sup> "Languages open doors" (2005: 17) [nærmere opplæringen i førstespråk enn opplæringen i fremmedspråk] (my translation).

oral and written language in a meaningful context” (Ibsen and Wiland, 2000: 100). Exposure to English is emphasised. The focus on student-centred activities is asserted. Thus the role of the pupil is gradually transformed. From being a receiver of language instruction, the pupil becomes an active communicator, who contributes to the communicative act. Also the young and pre-literate child is seen as a contributor to the communicative act mainly through oral English related to, for example, the activities inspired by rhymes and songs. The content that the pupil brings into the communicative classroom becomes part of the school subject’s content. The other part of the school subject’s content is brought into the classroom by, for example, the syllabus and the textbook. The input is organised by the teacher. Whereas syllabus and teaching material are documents which can be examined,<sup>92</sup> the teacher contribution to the content in the foreign language classroom is less transparent. To increase the knowledge about the English teacher one can, for example, study the recruitment policy and the qualifications of teachers of English.

### 3.4.1 The English teacher

The recruitment of English teachers is different in primary and secondary school. The former recruit their teachers from the general teacher training programme<sup>93</sup> and the latter primarily from the humanities faculties at the universities.<sup>94</sup> In primary and lower-secondary school, many teachers lack any formal education in English above the upper secondary level. English is still an optional subject in the general teacher training programme. The teacher training colleges have offered separate in-service courses for English teachers who do not meet the formal requirements in an attempt to mend this drawback. Simultaneously preschool teachers have been qualified for work at the initial stage in school with a short course ensuring a minimum of proficiency in central school subjects, such as English.<sup>95</sup> A survey by Lagerstrøm (2000) points out that 65% of the teachers who teach English in primary and secondary school have no formal education in English above upper secondary level. At the initial stage, seven out of ten teachers have no formal education in English above upper secondary level. At the

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<sup>92</sup> See, e.g., Lund, 2007.

<sup>93</sup> [Allmenlærerutdanningen.]

<sup>94</sup> Lower-secondary school recruits teachers from both the universities and the general teacher training programme.

<sup>95</sup> The course is called PAPS, pedagogical work at the initial stage (my translation). The part of the course which focuses on English is equivalent to 7.5 study points.

intermediate level, the figures are five out of ten, and at the upper secondary stage, two out of ten. Thus the survey demonstrates that the teachers without formal qualifications as English teachers are most likely teaching the early beginners. This circumstance might depreciate the language input the teacher can offer.<sup>96</sup> Likewise, an inquiry by Drew (2004) among 153 English teachers of the grades from one to seven, shows that 42% of these lack formal qualifications in English. Higher education in English is apparently not required in order to teach English in primary and lower secondary school. Whether the English teachers who teach at this level have formal qualifications in English depends on the supply of qualified teachers, as well as on the appointment procedures that the individual employers apply. In spite of the lack of qualified teachers in English, the pupils seemingly do well (European Network of Policy Makers and the Evaluation of Education Systems, 2002). In a situation where the qualifications of the pupils have been documented as being adequate, the inadequacy found in the teachers' formal qualifications is conspicuous. An ownership attitude towards the first foreign language may thus be formed among the pupils. English is introduced in the first year. Thus the Norwegian pupils start learning English in school earlier than most of their European colleagues.

### **3.4.2 Early start**

At the outset, early start was a supplement to the curriculum, and M87 was operative when the Norwegian Ministry of Church, Education and Research decided that English would be introduced in one of the three first grades from 1992. From the National Curriculum of 1997, henceforward referred to as L97,<sup>97</sup> English is taught from the first grade in cross-curricular themes. Norway is currently in a transitional stage between the two national curricula, L97, and the National Curriculum of 2006, called Knowledge Promotion,<sup>98</sup> henceforward referred to as LK06, which was introduced gradually from 2006 to 2008.<sup>99</sup> Thus, except for pupils

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<sup>96</sup> It may also suggest that the topics, like, e.g., colours, pets, numbers, in which the English teaching is integrated, get more attention at the expense of the traditional language skills.

<sup>97</sup> All page references here to L97 are from the Norwegian edition.

<sup>98</sup> [Kunnskapsløftet.] In the list of references the title, LK06, is given in parenthesis before the formal reference. This applies to L97 and L97S as well. In the text, quotes from these documents will be cited as, e.g., LK06: page.

<sup>99</sup> I was one of the six specialists who made the English syllabus of LK06.

who started from 2006 onwards,<sup>100</sup> pupils attending school well into the next decade started as L97 pupils.

English for early beginners in the first and second grades is dominated by oral activity although some central words can be presented as written text on posters, for instance. In LK06 the demand for increased written activity already from the second grade onwards is highlighted. In the appurtenant textbooks, the content of the topics that are taught in the other school subjects have determined the content of the EFL teaching for the early beginners. An emphasis on content is thus characteristic of the teaching of EFL at the initial stage. Flemmen (1998) recommends an integration of English into the topic-orientation at the initial stage, from the first to the third grade, and to introduce separate English lessons from the fourth grade. Examples of topics involving all subjects that are taught are, for example, 'media' in the second grade and 'communication' in the fourth grade.<sup>101</sup> In Holderness and Hughes (1997) and Hughes and Williams (1999), many suggestions for topic work and texts for beginners are arranged in order of difficulty to meet differentiation requirements. The rationale for introducing the first foreign language to younger pupils is to be found in theories on language acquisition.

### **3.4.3 Language acquisition**

In the last few decades, second language acquisition (SLA) research has become increasingly meaningful for EFL and ESL purposes in its variety of approaches and applications; the direct impact it has on the school subject is, however, unclear.<sup>102</sup> In accordance with other early notions of language learning, theories about language acquisition were also firstly developed with regard to mother tongue acquisition and therefore acquisition which starts in small children. Aspects of SLA research relevant to Norwegian pupils may include issues related to word order, for example. Norwegian is a Germanic verb second (V2) language, whereas English is a subject verb object (SVO) language. SVO is generally presumed to represent a

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<sup>100</sup> Some schools used LK06 from 2005.

<sup>101</sup> The fact that teachers' proficiency in English is relatively weak makes it likely to suspect a focus on the content of the topic, whether it is "Christmas" "animals" or "colours" at the expense of English language practice.

<sup>102</sup> Research issues in Instructed SLA which might be relevant to EFL didactics encompass, for example, 1) Sociocultural theory and second language learning, and 2) Communication technologies and SLA.

basic word order.<sup>103</sup> An example of this line of research is found in Westergaard (2003). She discusses the degree of language transfer from the L1 in a study of how child speakers of Norwegian acquire the presumably more basic SVO word order of English. In her study of schoolchildren at the primary school Bjerkaker,<sup>104</sup> she demonstrates how the textbook methods influence the L1 transfer of word order. In the teaching material, the do-support is avoided in the controlled input until the seventh grade. Her study suggests that limited input of structures demonstrating do-support, in this case, put the “Norwegian learners in a difficult position with regard to the acquisition of word order” (Westergaard, 2003: 92). The input cues that are essential to reorganise the child’s internalised grammar are indicated. The frequency of these cues is disputed to be accountable for the order of acquisition of the different constructions. The reasons for avoiding the do-support in the preceding textbooks and including it as late as in the seventh grade is not explained in the appurtenant teaching manual. Whether this is related to the textbook authors’ intentions to postpone instruction in a topic that will be acquired later and at different points in the individual pupils’ learning processes is therefore unclear. This example demonstrates the strong position that the communicative approach and the theory of acquisition have in the Norwegian school subject. That conventional grammar teaching has been kept in the shade in modern teaching material partly as a result of Krashen’s (1981) contribution on acquisition is possibly a fact. Instead of Instructed Grammar, exposure to authentic language has been an ideal since the introduction of M87, and this ideal has apparently been continued in L97. The connection between mother tongue and other tongue is strengthened through the application of SLA theory. The expectations of the communicative ability in FL change. To write correctly is just one aim, whereas earlier it was *the* aim. Pupil contributions to content are encouraged possibly with a resulting de-emphasis of grammatical correctness. To expose pupils to difficult language without demanding a complete comprehension emerges in the wake of language acquisition studies. The idea of extensive reading of long and complicated literary texts, instead of adapted versions, becomes pedagogically correct. The idea that culture is learned through literature is transferred from the teaching methods applied for the study of Latin centuries back. English has steadily grown into becoming the most important language, except for the mother tongue, in society, as well as in the classroom. Even though the main causes for this development are perhaps to be found outside the school subject’s syllabus, the school’s role in

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<sup>103</sup> Moreover, SVO is disputed by, for example, Kayne (1995) to be the sole underlying word order allowable in Universal Grammar (UG).

<sup>104</sup> See <http://www.tromso.kommune.no/index.gan?id=1571>. (Accessed 22 November 2006)

this development is not insignificant.<sup>105</sup> The school subject has partly accommodated such change in both its linguistic, literary and cultural studies. In the school subject, literature is seen as part of cultural studies. In this research connection, the prominent role of literature makes it adequate to treat the two topics separately. First, the role of culture in FL education will be discussed briefly.

### **3.5 Culture in language learning**

In traditional language learning and teaching, culture has been seen as an integral part of language learning. The concept ‘culture’ covers various fields of being, including level of civilisation, way of life, nationality and ethnic membership, country of origin, religious affiliation, moral values and ideology, the literate tradition and high culture (Taylor, 1994; Brøgger, 1992). In the English syllabus in LK06, the terms ‘culture’, ‘society’ and ‘literature’ are combined to describe this broad field of study. Besides, the intercultural notion of culture has been emphasised recently. In Norway, this has meant an inclusion of Sami and other aboriginal cultural content in Instructed EFL. Thus the culture concept is complex. In the general part of the core curriculum, which LK06 and L97 share, aims related to culture are expressed indirectly through phrases, such as: “The international culture of learning links humanity together through the development and use of new knowledge to better the human condition”.<sup>106</sup> Both modernist and post-modernist perspectives on culture characterise the culture aspect in FL teaching today.

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<sup>105</sup> English has 95 lessons at the initial stage (1-4 grades). A regular distribution of lessons in the four grades has not been recommended, and, for instance, Trageton (2000) suggests doing, for example, 10 lessons in the first grade, 15 in the second grade, 25 in the third grade and 45 lessons in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. English has 266 lessons at the intermediate stage (5-7 grades) and 342 at the lower secondary stage, which gives a total of 703 lessons (L97: 81). In LK06 the distribution of lessons between the intermediate and the lower secondary level is regulated, giving fewer lessons at the lower secondary level and more at the intermediate level. In LK06 the distribution of lessons is 555 hours of 60 minutes in grades 1 to 10 and 140 obligatory lessons of 60 minutes in both vocational education programmes and in academic specialisation education programmes. In the vocational education programmes, English is distributed over the two first years of upper secondary school.

<sup>106</sup> See the English version of L97, Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997: 29.

### 3.5.1 Modernist and post-modernist perspectives

The role of culture in language education changes with the increased mobility of modern society. Byram (1997) points to the pluralistic aspects of national culture; when individuals interact, they bring to the situation their own identities and cultures. Kramersch (2006) divides the concept 'culture' into two perspectives, the modernist and the post-modernist, and claims that they co-exist in current language teaching. The following definition seems to cover the various notions of the term 'culture' in such a way that most incidents where culture connects to language studies are covered.

We define culture as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artefacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving (Samovar, Porter and Stefani, 1998: 36).

In the modernist perspective, culture is seen as the context in which the national language is spoken. After World War II and the following communicative turn in language pedagogy, culture and nation were intimately connected. The speakers were perceived as being of a homogenous national citizenry (Kramersch, 2006). In the modernist perspective, culture is both a humanistic and a sociolinguistic concept. The former prescribes learning about the history, the arts and the literature of the language; the latter focuses on the use of language in its cultural context. In the post-modernist perspective, culture may be seen as referring to discourse, identity and power. When culture is seen as discourse, an utterance is part of the unequal distribution of power between the communication partners. In this perspective, a pupil discourse may appear in narratives both to communicate within the pupil culture, but also to communicate with more powerful participants in the communicative act, like teachers and parents. According to Kramersch (2006), culture in the form of language can be viewed as embodied history. The meaning of this history is constantly renegotiated through language. When culture is seen as identity, people are perceived as individuals. At the same time, individuality is also cultural. Each individual is seen as the intercept of an interminable number of cultures which are partially overlapping each other. Intercultural education is also a component of language teaching in this perspective.

### 3.5.2 Intercultural EFL

In the Scandinavian countries especially, the concept ‘intercultural’ emerged in the 1980s and has been seen as a measure to improve communication between groups of different national cultures (Hansen, 2004; Risager, 2006). In current EFL learning and teaching, a thorough knowledge of foreign cultures, as well as languages, is highlighted, and an awareness of one’s own identity in relation to other cultures is emphasised. Traditionally pupils learn about British, American and post-colonial lifestyles in the school subject English, and they learn about the culture through their encounter with literature. In LK06, the role of English as a world language is accentuated. An understanding of the lifestyles of others, not necessarily British, post-colonial, or American others, is emphasised. Cultural understanding in LK06 seems to be related to the English speaking world, which, if understood literally, may comprise practically the whole world as we know it today.<sup>107</sup> Supposedly pupils also learn about their own culture through their knowledge of Anglo-American culture, according to LK06. Whether this is really the case remains unexplained so far. There is an increased focus on intercultural communication. This means that the pupils are accustomed to English being used separated from the national cultures of English speaking countries. In Samovar and Porter (2001: 1) intercultural communication is understood as the study of what takes place “[...] in intercultural contacts when the communication process involves culturally diverse people” and is carried out “[...] between people whose perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event” (Samovar and Porter, 2001: 46). Intercultural perspectives take into account the diversity in pupils’ backgrounds. In Norway, the population comprises pupils with several different mother tongue languages.<sup>108</sup> The Nordic countries receive immigrants from most parts of the world, but also the indigenous population of Finland, Sweden and Norway represents a minority in the national culture. In addition to Norwegian, Sami and Kven are official languages in Norway. The multicultural background of the learners is reflected in the current curriculum.

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<sup>107</sup> LK06 applies the term “verdensspråk” [world language] (my translation).

<sup>108</sup> Because of immigration, but also because of Norway’s indigenous population.

### 3.5.3 Indigenous aspect

Through the implementation of L97, a separate Sami curriculum, The Sami curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school, henceforward referred to as L97S, was introduced for the first time.<sup>109</sup> Earlier Josephine Stenersen had produced special textbooks in English for pupils with Sami as their first or second language, thereby recognising the differentiation between learning and teaching English via Norwegian, as opposed to Sami (Stenersen, 1991). In L97S, a separate syllabus in English for the Sami population was introduced concurrently as early start in school and early start in English.<sup>110</sup> The differences in the English syllabus are related to the recommended reading list. In L97S, the seventh graders are encouraged to have access to the English-speaking Sami journal “Baiki”<sup>111</sup> (L97S: 296). Apart from this and the reference to poetry by Grey Eagle<sup>112</sup> (L97S: 298) the plans are almost identical. In LK06, there is no Sami version of the English syllabus. LK06 define aims, and not the actual reading list in literature studies. The local teaching plans define the reading list for the individual school. The choice of literary texts included may vary, although the textbooks’ selection of texts will probably influence the local reading list. Thus the literary content that inspires the pupils in their own text production may vary, not only between Sami and other Norwegian pupils, but also between pupils in different regions. Thus it becomes unclear whether future literature teaching will promote nation-wide likeness or difference with regard to the choice of literary texts. The teaching of literature and pupils’ response and production of literary texts are also relatively unexplored topics (Vestli, 2008).

## 3.6 Literature in language teaching

The role of literature in the school subject has varied, and literature is treated differently in different syllabi. The view that literature is primarily read to learn about the culture of the target language was generally dominant until the 1990s, at least in primary school. In L97, the role of literature is concretised through the development of a literary canon in the syllabus for

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<sup>109</sup> There is no separate Kven curriculum.

<sup>110</sup> Beginner’s age in school was lowered from seven to six. English was introduced from 1st grade.

<sup>111</sup> The Sami word “Báiki” [bah-h’kee] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society’s word for cultural identity and survival, “the home that lives in the heart”.

<sup>112</sup> See chapter 3.5.4 for further details on literary texts.

English. Anglo-American heritage texts are favoured, but also the fairy tale genre, which is central in this thesis, constitutes a considerable part of this content. The texts that are suggested in the canon constitute part of the content which inspires and influences the pupils in their communication and in their construction of narratives. The intertextual reference that they apply may be taken from such canonical texts.

### **3.6.1 Literature's role in the syllabi**

Traditionally literature teaching is, on the one hand, perceived as a method for teaching culture. On the other hand, Ibsen and Wiland (2000: 12) claim that literature should be taught as “[...] a true form of art and with due respect to its literary value and the students’ responses”. They state that even if it is difficult to conceive what guides syllabus developments in the field of literature, the choice of literary texts may represent a literary canon for English in Norwegian upper secondary schools. At lower secondary and primary school level, literature teaching was earlier often an instrument, a means to an end more than an end in itself, and the function of literature was subservient to the paramount aim in language learning: to learn the language. This is particularly noticeable in the audio-lingual influenced M74. On the one occasion where the term ‘literature’ is mentioned, it is listed in brackets (M74: 148).<sup>113</sup> The position of literature is not remarkably reformed in M87, but a fundamental transformation takes place in L97 with the introduction of example texts. Extensive lists presenting examples of suitable literature for pupils at the different stages of education are presented (L97: 226-232). As Eikrem (1999: 9) puts it, “From a period of literary drought where literary texts have been given little or no room in the foreign language classroom, the pendulum now seems to be swinging back to a focus on literature, back to literary texts”. Whereas M74 presented extensive lists of vocabulary, which the pupils were expected to know at the different stages in their education, L97 supplied what might be termed a literary canon. Although the texts were only mentioned as examples of the type of literature recommended, the entitling of specific texts may gradually constitute a canon.

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<sup>113</sup> Cited in Ibsen and Wiland, 2000.

### 3.6.2 A literary canon

L97's English literary canon for Norwegian pupils is a collection of transnational fairy tales as well as other texts well-known from the British and American heritage of children's and teenagers' literature.<sup>114</sup> Examples of texts that are mentioned explicitly are "Humpty Dumpty", "Jack and Jill", "Pat-a-cake", and "Simon Says" for first graders and "London Bridge is Falling Down" and "Oranges and Lemons" for third graders. Writers who are mentioned especially for the fourth graders are A. A. Milne and Beatrice Potter. Other texts mentioned for fourth graders are *Peter Pan* and *The Jungle Book*. In grades five to eight, there seems to be an allocation of gender divided literature especially. To fifth graders, the Anglo-American boy's book tradition is represented by the "Just So Stories" by Rudyard Kipling and also extracts of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Huckleberry Finn*. No equivalent list of books particularly intriguing for girls, either because the writer or the main-character is female, is suggested here. The poetry genre is represented by Edward Lear's "The Owl and The Pussycat". For the sixth grade, extracts from Hugh Lofting's *Doctor Doolittle* are mentioned explicitly. The girls' book tradition is favoured with Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* and *The Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" by T.S. Eliot is also listed. For seventh graders, the plan recommends *The Secret Garden* by Frances H. Burnett, *Little Women* by Louisa M. Alcott and *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, all traditional texts for girls and boys respectively. Also extracts from C. S. Lewis' Narnia-books are mentioned. For eighth graders, *Gulliver's Travels* is suggested, Mark Twain once more, and Roald Dahl and Nina Bawden. In the ninth grade, Ernest Hemingway and William Somerset Maugham are listed, likewise, Charles Dickens and J.R.R. Tolkien, poems by William Blake and William Carlos Williams, and *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw. In the tenth grade, short stories by John Steinbeck, extracts from novels by Charlotte Brontë, Lewis Carroll, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, all English and American heritages, are suggested. Likewise, poems by Emily Dickinson, Rupert Brooke and Langston Hughes are mentioned. In L97S, poetry by Ken Jackson (Grey Eagle) is suggested as a supplement to the texts already cited. And popular music represented by The Beatles is included in the canon. Apparently there is no exposition given for the choice of texts in L97, rather the texts themselves are the rationale. William Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams are the last

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<sup>114</sup> The texts in the canon are suggestions and examples of texts that can be replaced by other similar texts. The texts referred to here are not included in the list of references of this thesis but cited in L97.

examples mentioned. They also become metonyms of their national literature, at least as it is organised in L97.

Fairy tales have been granted a dominant position in the canon, but no argumentation is offered in L97 to suggest why certain fairy tales are mentioned explicitly at certain grades. The fairy tales, “Little Red Riding Hood” and “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”, are the examples mentioned explicitly for second graders. For third graders, the two fairy tales, “Goldilocks” and “Cinderella”, are mentioned. For eighth graders, the legend of “Robin Hood” is suggested. The motivation for highlighting these texts at the expense of others within the genre is not presented. In the school subject Norwegian, pupils at the primary stage are supposedly working with fairy tales on a daily basis (L-97: 118), and according to (Spurkland, 2000) “[...] folk/fairy-tales traditionally have an immense importance [...] There is not *one* single day when there are not several fairy tale projects going on; in schools, kindergartens, mass media, theatres, storytelling groups, organisations, etc.” To move from a text that the pupils already know in their mother tongue, into experiencing the same text in English, may be pedagogically adequate and correct in L97. Content-wise the themes of the fairytales are transcultural and can support the development of the intercultural competence of pupils. The term ‘intertextual knowledge’<sup>115</sup> denoting “[...] the use of previously known texts to make sense of new ones (Yeoman, 1999: 427) may be relevant in this connection. When pupils work with texts within the fairy tale genre, they will most likely recognise the content of the text and can concentrate on understanding the foreign language. Simultaneously the specific fairy tale genre knowledge that they have developed from the Norwegian lessons is utilised in the development of literary competence in EFL.

### 3.6.3 The future of the canon

The new reading lists for English in LK06 are developed locally, and in 2009 there is no national survey which tells what texts are included. The literary traditions that L97 and its appurtenant textbooks represent will perhaps influence the new syllabus especially since it is not replaced by an alternative list in LK06. The structure and design of LK06 allows no

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<sup>115</sup> See chapter 2, section 2.6.2.

reference to particular texts, literary or otherwise. However, the local teaching plans, which are developed in the different schools, may suggest what texts to read in their local community. The textbook production will probably indirectly define some of this content. The English syllabus in LK06 states about the relationship between the reading of literary texts and the development of pupils: “Literature in English, from nursery rhymes to Shakespeare’s sonnets, may instil a lifelong joy of reading and provide a deeper understanding of oneself and others”.<sup>116</sup> The connection between reading literature and developing as a human being through self-produced texts is accentuated in the current plans.<sup>117</sup> Hence, LK06 affirms the canon thinking of L97 and the link between literature and pupils texts.<sup>118</sup> The pupil narrative is value-generative outside its narrow frame of language practice and may be seen to play a part in the general development of the individual pupil.

### **3.7 English currently**

Currently English is undergoing substantial change. These changes influence the understanding of what the English language is, and the learning and teaching of EFL. At the same time, Norway is among the nineteen countries in transition from EFL to ESL status (Graddol, 1997: 11). Pupils’ proficiency in the language is measured against European standards. Norwegian pupils seem to be well qualified in comparison with their fellow European pupils, according to the findings in the European survey of 2002,<sup>119</sup> discussed in Ibsen (2004). Thus they are seemingly adequately equipped for the production of narrative texts. English is used in higher education and dominates many professional discourses. In school, pupils meet EFL, not only in their English lessons, but also in bilingual teaching in other subjects or in ICT-based activities in other subjects, and digital literacy has become an objective which also affects the school subject English. Process-oriented writing is linked to the computer technology and integrated in Instructed EFL from L97 onwards.

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<sup>116</sup>[http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte\\_lareplaner\\_for\\_Kunnskapsloftet/english/English\\_subject\\_curriculum.rtf](http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte_lareplaner_for_Kunnskapsloftet/english/English_subject_curriculum.rtf) (Accessed 3 October 2007).

<sup>117</sup> The broad term ‘plans’ here refers to the two curricula, L97 and LK06, but also to the strategy document “Languages open doors”.

<sup>118</sup> See section 3.7.1.

<sup>119</sup> European network of policy makers and the evaluation of education systems, 2002.

### 3.7.1 Process-oriented writing

In Norway, process-oriented writing has found its way into the English classes via the mother tongue training (Dysthe, 1987; Drew, 1993). In what Dysthe describes as a new romantic creativity approach to writing, she points to the risk of text writing in the mother tongue becoming first and foremost a means to self-realisation and personal development (Dysthe, 1987: 43-44). Dysthe (1987) points to the influence of the American writing master Mary K. Healy,<sup>120</sup> who introduced what was termed the new writing pedagogy to Norwegian teachers in the middle of the 1980s. The emphasis on writing as a process and to teach, tutor, and guide the pupils through all phases of the writing was experienced as something new. While writing in the mother tongue to support identity development is established as a widely recognised task (Dysthe, 1987: 44), such an objective in FL emerges in the wake of the communicative approach. The term ‘personal development’ is applied in the current English syllabus to cover a complex objective: “Learning English may also give us better insight into our native language and other languages we know, thus becoming an important element in our personal development and making a significant contribution to our communicative abilities”.<sup>121</sup> A through-going progression in process writing is accounted for in both L97 and LK06. Peer-assessment, which is an important part of process-oriented writing, is also mentioned in both syllabi and represented something new compared to M74 and M87. In the third grade in L97, for example, the pupils are to help each other to make texts and share texts (L97: 227); in the sixth grade, the method is noted explicitly (L97: 229) and is further refined during the lower secondary stage. In LK06, writing is seen as a process developed continuously, and the language that the pupils have constructed themselves has attained greater attention.

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<sup>120</sup> Cited in Dysthe, 1987: 310.

<sup>121</sup>[http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte\\_lareplaner\\_for\\_Kunnskapsloftet/english/English\\_subject\\_curriculum.rtf](http://www.udir.no/upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte_lareplaner_for_Kunnskapsloftet/english/English_subject_curriculum.rtf) (Accessed 3 October 2007).

### 3.7.2 Digital literacy

The parallel development of process-oriented writing and of ICT<sup>122</sup> is evident partly because ICT makes it more convenient to change the text, a central aspect of process-oriented writing. Likewise, the use of references to Internet content is prevalent in many pupil assignments, according to ITU monitor 2007,<sup>123</sup> an inquiry carried out by the National Research and Competence Network for ICT in Education at the University of Oslo in 2007. According to the Norwegian White Paper 30, “Culture for learning”,<sup>124</sup> skills in the use of digital tools shall be implemented in all subjects.<sup>125</sup> The White Paper further states that basic skills in the use of digital tools are prerequisites for participating fully in society. Being able to collect, create, present, exchange and save digital information is of cardinal importance. To master digital tools is central in order to function in a constantly more digitalised society (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2004). The implementation of the intentions of White Paper 30 aims at digital literacy, a concept used to define and describe both basic ICT skills and an innovative use of ICT in the learning process. These are the aims that national authorities prescribe. Although the situation in local classrooms may differ substantially, ICT influences the aesthetics of the school subject substantially.

### 3.7.3 ICT classroom practice

ICT practice in the contemporary Norwegian classroom varies. The TALE project facilitated online exchange of texts for its participants. Other exchange networks may organise their digital communication differently. The examples presented in the popular science journal for foreign language teachers in Norway, “Språk og Språkundervisning”,<sup>126</sup> may give a small

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<sup>122</sup> See, for example, how Microsoft applies the term “process-oriented writing” in their education course: <http://www.microsoft.com/education/WordTutorial.msp>. (Accessed 31 October 2006)

<sup>123</sup> National research and competence network for ICT in education at the University of Oslo, 2007. [http://www.itu.no/itu\\_monitor/1170757930.87](http://www.itu.no/itu_monitor/1170757930.87) (Accessed 25 February 2008)

<sup>124</sup> [Kultur for læring.]

<sup>125</sup> Digital competence is one of five basic competences, the other four being the three “r’s”: reading, writing and arithmetic, and oral presentation.

<sup>126</sup> [Languages and Language Teaching and Learning] (my translation) No 4/02 specialises in ICT.

sample of ICT application in Norwegian foreign language teaching.<sup>127</sup> An example is given by Hoel (2002), who describes the development of a homepage with resources for teachers that she and her two colleagues have designed. Also the projects presented at the website of the Norwegian Centre for Foreign Languages in Education<sup>128</sup> give insights into how ICT is used in EFL. Blogs and wikis have recently become important media in FL teaching.<sup>129</sup> In the school subject English, ICT plays an important part in the syllabi for English in LK06, and in L97. Since 2007, many upper secondary schools have provided individual pupils with portable personal computers. The syllabus for English in the previous curriculum, M87, encouraged the English teacher to use information technology. Oliver (1996: 13) suggests that the strong textbook tradition in the Norwegian school could restrain the use of information technology in language teaching. Currently most textbooks have appurtenant websites. Oliver (1996) also raises the question of the risk of isolation of pupils that the technology may represent, and that language teachers are afraid that communication in the foreign language may suffer if the pupils spent too much time in front of the screen. In the aforementioned inquiry, ITU monitor 2007,<sup>130</sup> 390 Norwegian schools were asked about ICT usage. Only 22% of the school leaders claim that the teachers in their school are well qualified in the use of digital tools in their teaching. Pupils in the seventh, ninth and eleventh grades participated in the inquiry. 90% of the seventh graders say that they spend less than four lessons per week using ICT. 39% of the eleventh graders, who are in their first year in upper secondary school, claim that they spend less than four lessons using ICT. Apparently this is not due to lack of adequate equipment. Quale (2000) refers to the vast investment in hardware during recent years in the Norwegian school. Lund (2003) points to the teacher's role as interface in ICT-rich environments. It is evident that the attitude the teacher has to ICT is important in this respect. Regardless of what happens at school, pupils from different sections of the population meet Internet content outside the school setting, and the language input from Online English is part of the exposure to English that pupils experience and that probably influences their own language usage. The TALE pupils are also part of this ICT-rich context and exposed to the general impact from various electronic media. The language input from such sources is potentially influential.

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<sup>127</sup> Although the teachers who present their work in a journal like this are probably among the more inspired and resourceful group, and not necessarily representative of the profession as such, one gets an idea of ICT practice in foreign language teaching.

<sup>128</sup> See [www.fremmedspraksenteret.no](http://www.fremmedspraksenteret.no).

<sup>129</sup> See, e.g., [www.fremmedspraksenteret.no](http://www.fremmedspraksenteret.no).

<sup>130</sup> National Research and Competence Network for ICT in Education at the University of Oslo, 2007. [http://www.itu.no/itu\\_monitor/1170757930.87](http://www.itu.no/itu_monitor/1170757930.87) (Accessed 25 February 2008)

### 3.7.4 Online English and pupils' writing practice

Online English is not written speech; it is not spoken text, but takes on characteristics from both forms. It is spontaneous and instant like oral English, but still permanent like written English (Crystal, 2001). The level of formality used in different types of Online English will also be influenced by the hybridity between oral and written forms. Netlish and Netspeak<sup>131</sup> are terms used to characterise Online English. These terms are used as alternatives to cyberspeak and weblish and more sophisticated terms for Internet language and electronic language, for instance, electronic discourse, interactive written discourse and computer-mediated communication. Crystal (2001) discusses the different implications of each term. Netlish is a variety of English used on the Internet.<sup>132</sup> To what extent Online English influences the use of English both inside and outside the classroom is still unclear. Notwithstanding, it is likely that Online English has some influence on the language used by pupils in Norway and other countries where the computer density is high. Simultaneously an appraisal in school of genre knowledge, which includes ICT, will perhaps increase the pupils' awareness in relation to style. Genre knowledge has been highlighted both in L97 and LK06 and is expressed in the syllabi for both Norwegian and English. The pupils' encounter with texts from different genres combined with their own text production is meant to raise their sensitivity to different styles of language. The pupil's ability to produce adequate texts within various genres is emphasised. Recently the impact from the European efforts with regard to language teaching may modify national plans for both ICT usage and EFL. The national tests, the Common European Framework and the portfolio methodology have made their way into Norwegian language politics.

### 3.7.5 National tests and Common European Framework

From 2004, national tests in English are carried out online for the fifth and the eighth grades to test pupils' attainment of language proficiency. The Common European Framework for

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<sup>131</sup> Netspeak is derived from the popular terms in George Orwell's novel, *1984*.

<sup>132</sup> The terms 'Netspeak' and 'Netlish' and 'computer-mediated communication' are discussed further in e.g. Lund (2003: 63-65).

Languages, henceforward referred to as CEFL<sup>133</sup> (Council of Europe, 2001), which can classify pupils' language competence, and the national tests may readily be connected. LK06 is influenced by the CEFL, but the European Language Portfolio, henceforward referred to as ELP, is not fully integrated in LK06. Notwithstanding, Norway is one of the 47 European countries who endorse CEFL. Hasselgreen (2003) has directed the *Bergen 'Can do' project*, which adapts the principles and procedures of ELP. She has also directed the work in Norway with national tests in English. Moe, Carlsen and Hasselgreen (2006) have discussed the possible effects of national tests on classroom practice and claim that the influence will be notable in school quite shortly.<sup>134</sup> The pupils practise certain tasks in national tests. Their writing practices may be influenced by this. In the longer term, this may influence both the design and the substantial content of pupil texts. The context of pupils' narrative production is also influenced by the use of English in other subjects.

### **3.7.6 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

The development of teaching practice related to CLIL can be seen in relation to Norway's transitional state in connection with English attaining a second language status, as mentioned in section 3.7. CLIL, which means teaching in the foreign language in another subject than the foreign language, has been revitalised in the work with LK06, according to "Languages open doors" (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007). Previously there were attempts at teaching other subjects both in German, French, and English (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007: 24). The experiments with CLIL that have been carried out suggest that the reading skills improve and that the pupils benefit highly from CLIL (Hellekjær, 2005; Hestnes, 2006). That most pupils may benefit from CLIL is rendered probable (European Network of Policy Makers and the Evaluation of Education Systems, 2002); "The Norwegian pupils seem to master the receptive skills, in particular oral comprehension" (Ibsen, 2004: 143). This may imply that they can actually understand some specialist content in EFL.<sup>135</sup> In continental Europe, CLIL gains ground in the wake of the

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<sup>133</sup> See, for example, [http://www.language-certificates.com/TELC\\_Administration/cef\\_telc.htm](http://www.language-certificates.com/TELC_Administration/cef_telc.htm). (Accessed 31 October 2006)

<sup>134</sup> Keeping in mind the teachers' general ability to turn tests into account more extensively, there is reason to believe that this is an adequate observation.

<sup>135</sup> If CLIL becomes more widespread than it is at present, it will perhaps speed up the process towards second language status.

promotion of national languages (Kramersch, 2006). For example, French pupils can learn history in German and vice versa. Such efforts can be seen as counter-attacks on the anglicising of global communication to maintain linguistic diversity.

### **3.8 *English as lingua franca***

Modern society is characterised by global connectivity, on the one hand, and local identities, on the other. While English is becoming a global language, it is simultaneously splintering into multiple “Englishes”, a global resource of local variants of English. “Norwenglish” is one of them. The adjustments of the language practice happen worldwide to suit different users in different contexts (Graddol, 2001). This situation influences the content of Instructed EFL. Previously the communication in English that pupils were indirectly prepared for in their education was supposed to take place between the EFL pupil and a native speaker. Although this was not necessarily expressed explicitly, it was an important prerequisite in traditional EFL education. Current methods, to some extent, reflect the democratic notion associated with ELF, English as lingua franca. When English is used worldwide and develops into a global language, communication in English more often takes place between speakers who have English as a second or third language. The adjustments of the language practice happen worldwide to suit different users in different contexts (Graddol, 2001). Although the written norm for English is upheld, various variants of EFL are developed. A considerable part of the school subject’s content is international and not attached to the national culture of English speaking countries. For example, the school subject in the academic specialisation programme in the second year of the Norwegian upper secondary school is called International English. The frame of reference for the content of the school subject is extended. The increasing diversity of its uses makes English into a world language, often called Global English.

#### **3.8.1 Global English**

Global communication is mainly carried out in English, and gradually English spoken by native speakers in an Anglo-American discourse is losing its primary position. This means

that native or what might be called Canonical English gives way to the so-called Global English. The number of English speakers is steadily growing, and the most typical exchange in English is between EFL or ESL speakers. In an estimate from the late 1990s (Graddol, 1997), the number of people who speak English either as their first language, their second, or as a foreign language is estimated at 1,500 million. Only 320-380 million of these have English as their first language, 250-300 million as their second language; the rest are EFL-speakers (Graddol, 1997: 61). The term 'global' does not merely denote an accumulation or a collection of all the countries and languages, one put next to the other on a long line. Thus global is not the equivalent of international. An international relation is the connection that moves from one country to the next and from there to the next, between nations. A relation that establishes and maintains a connection between the two or more nations involved is international or transnational, whereas global connotes a joint achievement or accomplishment working at a higher level, above nationality and internationality. Castell (1996: 97) points to the economic notion of the term 'global' by defining it in terms of information flows that are made possible by technology and linked to the global financial market.

English is a global language, but Global English has no native speaker. At some point in this process, the language can no longer be attached to an Anglo-American culture. Thus globalisation makes it relevant to ask what content will be reflected in the school subject and consequently: what content will be reflected in pupil narrative texts. The scope of such content seemingly becomes limitless. Or perhaps it is likely that a special EFL discourse develops within different mother tongue areas. The term 'glocalisation' is possibly a relevant concept in this connection. As some sociologists and anthropologists use this term, it might be understood as a way of describing modern society as new kinds of local identities in the global connectivity (Savage, Bagnar and Longhurst, 2004). Glocalisation in globalisation has involved the reconstruction of home, community and locality (Robertson, 1995: 30). The local contexts get a new meaning in what one may call the era of globalisation. In the global era, the local particular might become more recognised. There is also a chance of developing a local defence of the local culture (Savage, Bagnar and Longhurst, 2004: 3). This type of local defence in the global era is expressed like this in the general part of LK06 and L97 (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997: 29): "When transitions are massive and changes rapid, it becomes even more pressing to emphasize historical orientation, national distinctiveness and local variation to safeguard our identity - and to

sustain a global environment with breadth and vigor”.<sup>136</sup> According to the Norwegian curriculum, there is seemingly little conflict between the two objectives, to sustain global environment and to emphasise national distinctiveness and local variation. This question is addressed by Høgmo (2005: 161), who asks whether “[...] the ideal of unity and diversity are incompatible”.<sup>137</sup> Local and national distinctiveness in a global context may be referred to as what this thesis chooses to call glocal distinctiveness. The concept ‘glocal’, applied to describe the influence from the local language, suggests a different position for the L1 influence in English. Instead of seeing the faultiness of the local accent, it may be viewed as the local L2 variant of English.

### 3.8.2 ‘Norwenglish’

The term ‘Norwenglish’<sup>138</sup> has so far produced mainly negative connotations and been viewed as an inferior variant of English with frequent errors typical of the influence from the Norwegian.<sup>139</sup> Johansen and Graedler (2002: 18) apply the term ‘anglonorsk’<sup>140</sup> to account for the opposite phenomenon, when English influences the Norwegian.<sup>141</sup> Pidgin English and Creole language are concepts which signal such transfer from L1 into English.<sup>142</sup> To study English in its various glocal forms is perhaps required in order to develop EFL learning and teaching methods accordingly. The range of topics that can be taken up in an EFL discourse is increasing. In the current Norwegian syllabus, the personal and social benefits of learning English are prescribed, and self-development is supposed to take place in the EFL classroom. The construction and negotiation of identity take place in English as well as in the mother tongue. Differentiated discourses may take place in different tongues, and to uphold the

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<sup>136</sup> This part of the National Curriculum of 1997 and 2006 has been translated into American English, hence the American spelling of “vigour”.

<sup>137</sup> [Er idelaet om enhet og mangfold uforenelige?] (my translation)

<sup>138</sup> The term ‘Norwenglish’ was launched in Scott, 1972.

<sup>139</sup> Code-switching and other cases where phrases or words from the Norwegian influence the glocal variant of English, are described in Johansson and Graedler, 2002. Such transfer also involves stress patterns in the pronunciation. For example, when counting, Norwegians will tend to place the stress on the first, and not the second syllable in the pronunciation of numbers like, 13, 14, 15 etc.

<sup>140</sup> [Anglonorwegian.] (my translation)

<sup>141</sup> See also, for example, the discussion of Nordic youth language in Drange, Kotsinas and Stenstrøm (Eds.), 2002.

<sup>142</sup> Perhaps the development of ‘Norwenglish’ and ‘anglonorsk’ is a consequence of the development towards second language status and what teachers and schools can do is merely to safeguard the quality of the Norwegian ESL variant by encouraging the development of the local variant into becoming as close to standard English as possible, provided that this is the aim.

dichotomy between mother tongue and other tongue pedagogy makes it worthwhile to study the various types of discourses that can be taken up in L1 and L2.

### **3.8.3 Perhaps a democratic language**

Beyond Europe, a minimum mastery of English has become a requirement worldwide. Internet speeds up this development. In Norway, English was introduced in school for practical purposes while Latin was still dominating the academic field (Ytreberg, 1993). Thus it may seem as if English had been taught as if it were everyone's language from the very start, irrespective of class. English is introduced in the first year in school, and pupils are exposed to authentic language input from various English texts, films, games and music of different origin. There is no dubbing of TV series, and people generally use ICT to communicate with others. It seems as if English is everywhere and used by everyone.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps this egalitarian, democratic aspect of English becomes particularly evident in Norway with its political and cultural affiliations to the UK and to the USA.

Whether pupils are employing all these aspects of modern global and glocal language behaviour in EFL is unclear. Yet English is not merely another language that pupils study in school in addition to their mother tongue. The content side of the school subject is constantly expanding (L97; LK06). Studies connected to modern media are attended to alongside traditional fairy tales and other canonical texts. The competence of the learners is also changing. At the same time, popular culture in English is accessible worldwide. English develops into a language that the individual citizen needs to master in a number of fields, not only professionally and socially, but also in the personal sphere. The context of the pupil produced narrative is thus complex.

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<sup>143</sup> Obviously groups in the Norwegian population are not able to take part in an English discourse for reasons related to lack of proficiency. To my knowledge this has not been quantified.

### **3.9 Summing up**

This chapter has presented an account of the development of English as a school subject in Norway. The language that the pupils construct and the pupils' texts constitute a considerable part of the content in the EFL classroom. The special role of English compared to the other foreign languages taught in lower and upper secondary school today can be understood both historically and related to the present situation of EFL and the development of English as a global language. If it might appear that many pupils of today make English into their own language in Norway, this may be historically rooted, and not just related to the present dominance of English worldwide. The communicative classroom has made pupil produced content constantly more extensive. The modern pupil, to a much greater extent than his or her predecessor, participates in authentic communication in English. Worldwide pupils with other cultural backgrounds than the typically English or American one use English as a means of communication. Partly this communication takes place in their oral and written narratives. LK06 emphasises the self-development involved in the study of English.<sup>144</sup> In an EFL context, the content-input of the two teaching topics, culture and literature, is important in this respect. Simultaneously the input outside the English lessons in CLIL and ICT and outside school in media are salient sources of inspiration for pupil produced content. The widespread influence of English changes the expectations, both on an individual basis, and for society at large, for the proficiency in English. The syllabus speaks of educational aims which are beyond the basic expectations of proficiency in the four skills<sup>145</sup> and expects pupils to develop as human beings in the foreign language. The pupils communicate their identity through the foreign language. Partly this communication takes place in their narrative writing.

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<sup>144</sup> See [http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM\\_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laaereplanid=1547&scope=Sc...](http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laaereplanid=1547&scope=Sc...)  
(Accessed 25 April 2007)

<sup>145</sup> Speaking, listening, reading and writing.

## **4 The TALE network**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will present the inter-Nordic TALE project in which the pupils' narratives interpreted in this study have been collected and selected. TALE was a Nordplus network which comprised triads of pupils, whose first languages are not the same. Each triad exchanged texts and response to each others' texts. The work in the triad also involved student teachers as response persons. TALE facilitated the division into four self-controlled pools with representatives of three nationalities in each pool, plus national representation in a management team. In the following, the participating universities of the TALE project are briefly named, and the function of the software that supported the Internet-based learning and teaching in TALE is discussed. The organisational structure of TALE will be accounted for to describe the contextual framework of the TALE narratives.

### **4.2 A Nordplus project**

TALE (Nordplus 890/2002) was established among Nordic English teachers in teacher education to carry out cultural and textual exchange. The main activity in the project was aimed at developing proficiency in the process of narrative text composition. To improve communicative and narrative competence among both educators and pupils was defined as the overall objective. TALE involved partners from Denmark (DK), Finland (FIN), Iceland (ICE), Norway (NO), and Sweden (SE) and was designed as a network for research and development in EFL. Estonia and Australia also participated in parts of the organisation.<sup>146</sup> Seventeen teacher education institutions cooperated, and the project was coordinated at the Institute of Educational Research and Development, University of Southern Denmark, and received its financial support for exchange visits and network meetings from Nordplus, a Nordic organisation for cooperation among academics and students. The initiating meeting of TALE was held in Kolding (DK) in August 2002. The conference, "Put a Saga on Your

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<sup>146</sup> The former participated for one year in one of the pools; the latter participated in the role of external evaluator.

Screen”, in Akureyri (ICE) in October 2004 marked the conclusion of the Nordplus project, as such; parts of the network will perhaps be operative in other formal or informal designs in the future.

The corpus of TALE is situated at the server of the University of Southern Denmark. TALE has been elected as supplier of empirical data for the present study mainly for two reasons. Firstly, this study required a narrative text corpus of some size. The meticulous registration of data was streamlined in the web-based TALE project and fitted in well with the focus of the present study. Secondly, TALE was activated simultaneously with the present study and thus provided an appropriate corpus of pupil texts at the right time. The present researcher’s position in TALE’s management team provided a practical tie to the production of data. TALE was the only Nordic ICT-based network running at this particular time (2002-2004) with a focus on narrative competence in pupils’ EFL narratives.<sup>147</sup>

#### **4.2.1 Groups of participators**

TALE was a rather complex project where the mode of participation was different for the various groups of participants. Different activities and objectives applied to the different levels of the project organisation. The subject experts and teacher trainers had various research focuses related to TALE. The student teachers, the class teachers and the teacher trainers planned and implemented the various activities that the pupils were involved in. In addition, they organised the practical work in the various schools and the physical exchanges for the student teachers and the teacher trainers, taking turns as hosts and visitors. The student teachers wrote assignments related to the TALE project as part of their teacher education. The student teachers and the pupils responded to pupils’ texts. The pupils wrote texts, which constitute the corpus of the present study.

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<sup>147</sup> To my knowledge, there was no other Nordic exchange network (where pupil narratives in EFL were produced) of this size operative at this time.

## 4.2.2 Teacher education institutions

Twelve teacher education institutions took part in the exchange programme in TALE. In addition, five other institutions were involved through the participation of various resource persons, who were subject experts in the fields of narrative theory, EFL and ICT respectively. Some of the experts contributed with lectures on relevant topics during the exchange visits. Table 1 lists the institutions involved in TALE.

Table 1            The participating institution

POOL A: Bergen University College (Faculty of Education English Department)
POOL A: Åbo Academy, University College of Oesterbothnia (Didactics of Foreign Languages)
POOL A: University College of Jelling (Jelling)
POOL B: Bodø University College (Department of Teacher Education)
POOL B: Skaarup College of Education (Skaarup)
POOL B: Helsingin II normaalikoulu (University of Helsinki)
POOL C: Mid-Sweden University (Department of Teacher Education/Humanities)
POOL C: University of Akureyri (Department of Teacher Education)
POOL C: University College of West Jutland (Ribe)
POOL D: Oslo University College (Faculty of Education, English Department)
POOL D: Haapsalu Kolledz of Tallinn University (Educational Sciences)
POOL D: University College of South Jutland (Haderslev)
EXPERT: University of Aarhus (Department of English)
EXPERT: University of Southern Denmark (Department of Language and Communication)
EXPERT: University of Southern Denmark (Centre for English and Danish, Department of Literature, Culture and Media)
EXPERT: Karlstad University (Department of Language & Communication)
EXPERT: Luleå University of Technology (Institute of Teacher Education)
EXPERT: Tromsø University College (Department for Teacher Education)
EXTERNAL EVALUATOR: Charles Sturt University (School of Education)
CO-ORDINATOR: University of Southern Denmark (Institute of Educational Research and Development)

The schools involved in the TALE project were practice schools in the teacher education institutions, and the student teachers carried out their practice periods in the schools involved in the TALE project. The relationship between the teacher education institutions and the municipal schools was already established through their partnership in teacher education.

### 4.2.3 Meta-discussions in TALE

In TALE, the teamwork with peers for the pupils and the self-controlled pools for all the participants were the main sources for meta-learning. At the outset, an action research ambition was presented by the originator of the project.<sup>148</sup> Some of the teacher trainers and subject experts discuss issues related to action research in TALE in subsequent articles (Parkes, 2005; Bäckström and Nilsson, 2005; Hansson, 2005). The Nordplus project focused on exchange and networking, whereas the research part in reality was outside the frame of the Nordplus funding and became included as the project gradually developed.<sup>149</sup> The subject developmental component of TALE aimed at involving the subject experts, the teacher trainers and the student teachers in self-motivated projects.

According to Hawisher and Pemberton (1991: 79), the teacher becomes a well qualified researcher when s/he is able to “[...] observe activities in the classroom on the regular basis”, and the role of the teacher-researcher is noteworthy in computer/writing research. On the one hand, the connection between classroom experience and theory is made more transparent in web-based networks; on the other hand, the lack of distance to the data may mismanage the impartial observations of the researcher when s/he is in the teacher role. Gousseva (1998: 6) discusses such dual roles of teachers and researchers and believes that “[...] the advantages outweigh the possible drawbacks”. Carr and Kemmis (1986) emphasise the emancipative aspects of action research and see it as a means of grappling with oppressive ideologies and practices. It becomes an ideal to combine individual action and reflection with collective development through interaction among educators, students and pupils. In Eilertsen (2004: 37), it is claimed that “[...] fear of innovation and chaos are companions on the journey we embark on in action research compared to research designs where hypotheses, approaches to

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<sup>148</sup> University of Southern Denmark.

<sup>149</sup> Further project funding for the research part was not applied for. However, the partners were invited to join a new Nordplus project (VALID) at the end of the TALE project's duration.

problems and data are of a relatively defined and controllable size”.<sup>150</sup> Apparently this is an adequate description of the kind of climate that may develop in a complex cooperation project like TALE.<sup>151</sup> In TALE, practical problem-solving turned out to be more time-consuming than expected. Consequently less attention was paid to the action research component. As the TALE project developed, the textual production among pupils ran independently. The text analytical approach of the present study was relatively unaffected by the downsizing of the overriding action research ambition in the TALE project. The role of the present researcher was that of participant observer to the educators’ meetings and did not involve classroom attendance.<sup>152</sup>

The articles that were written by the teacher trainers and subject experts in TALE were published a year after the closure of the Nordplus project in the anthology *Tales on the screen: Narrative Competence in Teacher Education*.<sup>153</sup> It comprises fifteen articles on topics as diverse as action research, distance education and narrative competence. To the present study of narratives, the contributions discussing narrative texts are particularly relevant. Birketveit (2005), for example, has written about the fairy tale genre in general, and Lassen (2005) about narrative theory. Larsen (2005) discusses identity construction in a small sample of narrative texts from the corpus. Project partners who contributed to the accumulation of data gained access to the data at the end of the project; other research projects based on the TALE corpus are possibly in progress.

### **4.3 Exchange activity in TALE**

All the student teachers, teacher trainers, and subject experts, henceforward referred to as the educators, met in Jelling (DK) in 2002 and in Akureyri (ICE) in October 2004. Apart from these two occasions, the educators met in the pools, which was the name given to the four

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<sup>150</sup> [innovasjons- og kaosangst vil i større grad være følgesvenn på den reisen vi legger ut på i aksjonsforskning, sammenlignet med forskningsdesign der hypoteser, problemstillinger og datamateriale er definerte og kontrollerbare størrelser.] (my translation.)

<sup>151</sup> A subjective account of such an experience can only apply to the undersigned researcher unless the account is based on more thorough studies.

<sup>152</sup> My membership in TALE did not involve me as a teacher educator in the sense that “my” students and cooperating practice schools were members in TALE. Thus an action research form of participation was not relevant for my part as subject expert and management team member.

<sup>153</sup> Hansson, Kjartansson, Larsen and Lassen (Eds.), 2005.

separate inter-Nordic units in TALE. The face to face meetings took place during exchange visits in the pools and involved the educators and the host school pupils. The pupils were not part of the travel exchange visit programme. The interaction between the participants was otherwise conducted in the digital portfolios. In the triads, which was the name given to the small organised working groups of pupils and educators, the Internet-based software provided the single service for communication. Table 2 shows the programme for face to face meetings and exchange visits in TALE.

Table 2 Face to face meetings and exchange visits

Nordplus-TALE	
	<p><b>Wed, Jan 22, 2003 -- PAST AND FUTURE EXCHANGES</b>            Management Team 24 June - 26 June 2002, Kolding            Management Team &amp; Teacher Educators 22 August - 26 August 2002, Kolding            Management Team, Teacher Educators &amp; Student Teachers 28 November - 1 December 2002, Jelling            Management Team 16 May - 18 May 2003, Härnösand            Management Team 5 December - 7 December 2003, Helsinki</p> <p>-----</p> <p>POOL A 14 March - 19 March 2003, Jelling            POOL B 4 April - 9 April 2003, Bodø            POOL C 28 February - 5 March 2003, Ribe            POOL D 29 April - 4 May 2003, Helsinki</p> <p>-----</p> <p>POOL A 26 September - 1 Oct 2003, Vaasa            POOL B 12 September - 17 September 2003, Helsinki            POOL C 12 September - 17 September 2003, Akureyri            POOL D 16 October - 21 October 2003, Oslo</p> <p>-----</p> <p>POOL A 12 March - 17 March 2004, Bergen            POOL B 27 February - 3 March 2004, Skaarup            POOL C 5 March - 10 March 2004, Härnösand            POOL D 15 April - 20 April 2004, Haderslev</p> <p>-----</p> <p>"PUT A SAGA ON YOUR SCREEN"            Open TALE-conference for dissemination of work and results            18 October - 24 October 2004, Akureyri</p>

### 4.3.1 Writing in inter-Nordic triads of pupils

The pupils were organised in small units called triads. The ideal triad consisted of three pupils, one pupil from each class of the three cooperating nations, and was the smallest communicative unit in the project organisation. These small groups of pupils from three

countries were supported by two student teachers and one teacher educator. Since the pupils did not meet during the project, all contact between them was upheld through ICT.<sup>154</sup> The three pupils, who had different mother tongues, exchanged texts and got feedback from each other and from the student teachers;<sup>155</sup> however, an unquantified number of pupils did not submit their texts in subsequent editions, and many pupils who submitted second and third editions did not make any changes at all in them.<sup>156</sup> The changes made were most often related to spelling and grammar and did not involve changes related to the substantial content.<sup>157</sup> The student teachers and the teacher educators were members of several triads of pupils. These triads constituted a pool. Each pool consisted of approximately 30 triads.

### 4.3.2 The inter-Nordic pools

TALE consisted of four units called pools A, B, C, and D. According to the project design, each pool was supposed to have participants of all categories from three countries. In pool A, representatives from the teacher education institutions and two local authority schools from the towns Jelling (DK), Bergen (NO) and Vasa (FIN) cooperated. The schools involved in the Jelling area were Bredagerskolen and Kollerup, in Bergen, Loddefjord and Haukedalen, and in Vasa, two classes at Vasa Øvningsskola. In pool B, Finland was represented by Helsinki, Norway by Bodø and Denmark was represented by Skaarup.<sup>158</sup> In pool C, Iceland, Denmark and Sweden cooperated. Iceland was represented by one teacher educator and two student teachers from the University of Akureyri, two local authority school classes and two of their teachers from the schools Hrafnagil and Thelamerkur in Akureyri. From Denmark, the schools Gredstedbro and Noerremark in Ribe participated together with the two schools Vattudalsskolan and Kiørningsskolan in Harnøsand (SE), and Mid-Sweden University. In Pool D, Oslo (NO) pupils from Bjørndalen skole exchanged their narratives with pupils from Eltang Centralskole in Kolding (DK) and Haapsalu Primary School in Tallinn in Estonia and

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<sup>154</sup> Although pupils may have contacted each other outside the design of the TALE project, their professional correspondence as TALE members was situated in Blackboard.

<sup>155</sup> In one of the pools the teacher trainers were also involved in the feedback.

<sup>156</sup> See chapter 5, section 5.4.2.

<sup>157</sup> Hence a selection of texts from the first drafts of narratives ensures an unbiased selection in the sample that is analysed. The selection of narratives is discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>158</sup> See Table 3 for further details regarding pool B.

Yhtenäiskoulu in Helsinki (FIN).<sup>159</sup> The representation from each Nordic country covered several geographical regions. In Norway, for example, the regions Northern, Western and South-Eastern Norway were represented. Thus the narratives were produced in different regions of the participating countries.<sup>160</sup> The pools in TALE were responsible for establishing and maintaining inter-Nordic cooperation both via web-based interaction and through exchange visits in each country. Each pool had representation from all categories of participants from three countries. The national representation in each pool consisted of one teacher educator, two student teachers and two classes together with their teachers from two local authority schools.<sup>161</sup>

TALE included developmental activities for exchange visits between the teacher education institutions and provided support to teacher educators and student teachers. It was proposed by the project coordinator that other networks could possibly finance exchange visits for the pupils,<sup>162</sup> but this was only a suggestion.<sup>163</sup> To this particular study of narrative content, the fact that the pupils did not meet face to face is important contextual information about the material. On the one hand, it is problematic to discuss how the level of authenticity in the narrative production is influenced by face to face meetings in web-based exchange programmes. To explore whether the narrative comes out more or less authentic, depending on the scope and condition of the reception, is difficult. On the other hand, the absence of face to face meetings delimits the scope of the discussion. The pupils' written performance and written response are situated in digital portfolios and constitute a stable material; the process, which the narratives emerge from, becomes more transparent when each step of the process is documented in the digital network.

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<sup>159</sup> For further details about the participating schools, look at, e.g., the TALE homepage for further references: <http://www.hum.sdu.dk/projekter/ipfu/uk/TALE>. (Accessed 21 November 2005)

<sup>160</sup> Except from Estonia, which was represented by Tallinn only (and represented just in pool D and just for a year).

<sup>161</sup> Some minor deviation from the project design was allowed to solve practical problems en route.

<sup>162</sup> See <http://www.programkontoret.se/> (Accessed 13 September 2007) for more information about possible exchange programme for pupils.

<sup>163</sup> To my knowledge, no such exchange programme for the pupils involved was activated. Initiating such programmes would be outside the responsibility of the teacher education institutions involved and would have had to be organised by the participating schools through their municipal structure. (In Finland the teacher training institutions include practice schools. Their pupils could probably have been part of the travel programme in TALE.)

### 4.3.3 The management team

An inter-Nordic management team was established in May 2002 prior to the initiation of TALE. The management team participated at the two conferences in Jelling (DK) and Akureyri (ICE). Apart from that, they met in Kolding (DK) in June 2002, in Härnösand (SE) in May 2003 and in Helsinki (FIN) in December 2003. The management team initially had representatives from all participating Nordic nations, but in 2003, the Swedish representative withdrew from the project and was not replaced. Such changes and replacements were not unusual among the group of teacher educators at the beginning of the project period.<sup>164</sup> The members of the management team were appointed by the coordinator at the University of Southern Denmark to coordinate the various activities in TALE, and they were all teacher educators. Between them, they were also representatives of all the four pools. The leader was from Skaarup College of Education (DK), her deputy was from the University of Akureyri (ICE) and the two other members were teacher educators from the universities of Helsinki (FIN) and Tromsø (NO).<sup>165</sup> The management team, the coordinating function of TALE, with representatives from the four pools, may indirectly have contributed to pointing out the choice of genres in the four pools, for example, when deciding on the choice of topics for the subject expert's lecture at the kick-off meeting.<sup>166</sup> Otherwise, the management team had no direct influence on the choice of narrative tasks in the individual pools

## 4.4 Organisational challenges

Both the historical background and the present conditions for the different TALE partners vary. To take into account the differences in the various countries, certain modifications of the organisational structure were necessary. Although not all discrepancies are of equal importance to the present study of the pupils' narratives, they are versatile, and some of them can be mentioned briefly. The national structure for delivering teacher education as a seminar course or university programme is one example of variation. Whether these various teacher education programmes have national or municipal practice schools is another. The size of the

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<sup>164</sup> An outline of all the organisational modifications made has not been produced. Hence such changes can only be given as examples of alterations.

<sup>165</sup> I was the Norwegian representative of the management team in the role of subject expert in EFL.

<sup>166</sup> Althea Ryan from the University of Århus lectured on pupils' narrative competence.

projects' partner schools also varies. Variations are related to the number of pupils, whether the school is urban or rural and variation in technological skills and equipment. The inequality of the initial year of EFL and the proficiency in EFL are part of the contextual frame for the interpretation of pupil narratives and needs to be considered briefly.

#### 4.4.1 EFL proficiency

Some consideration was put into creating triads that were not too heterogeneous with regard to EFL written proficiency.<sup>167</sup> Consequently pupils from different grades cooperated within the pools and triads. This was considered of importance in order to maintain pupils' motivation, which might have been inhibited by too great difference in language skills (Gardner, 1988). In Norway and Denmark, for example, EFL education is now introduced during the first grade of compulsory school, where pupils are five to seven years of age, with an emphasis on listening and speaking skills.<sup>168</sup> There is a gradual increase in emphasis on written skills in the aims for grade four onwards. L97 is the relevant curriculum for the Norwegian pupils participating in the TALE project. For the TALE pupils in the other Nordic countries, English was introduced later. In Sweden, English was compulsory from grade four,<sup>169</sup> whereas Icelandic pupils started at the age of ten. In Finland, EFL education usually starts in grade three for pupils in Finnish-medium schools.<sup>170</sup> The most usual start of EFL in Swedish-medium schools in Finland has been grade five.<sup>171</sup> Most Swedish-speaking pupils in Finland start their studies of Finnish in grade three or even earlier on an optional basis (Björklund, 2005: 223). The differences in EFL proficiency were not tested by an objective test, but what was relied upon was the class teachers' evaluation of the EFL skills of their pupils (Björklund, 2005).

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<sup>167</sup> See Björklund (2005) for further details about the variation in EFL proficiency in TALE.

<sup>168</sup> The 1st grade pupils are 5-6 in Norway and 6-7 in Denmark.

<sup>169</sup> English can be introduced from grade 1 if the municipality decides to do so.

<sup>170</sup> In the Finnish-medium schools, Swedish is studied from grade 7.

<sup>171</sup> Starting from autumn 2005, regulations have changed so that Swedish-medium schools from now on include English (or the first foreign language) in the curriculum from grade 4.

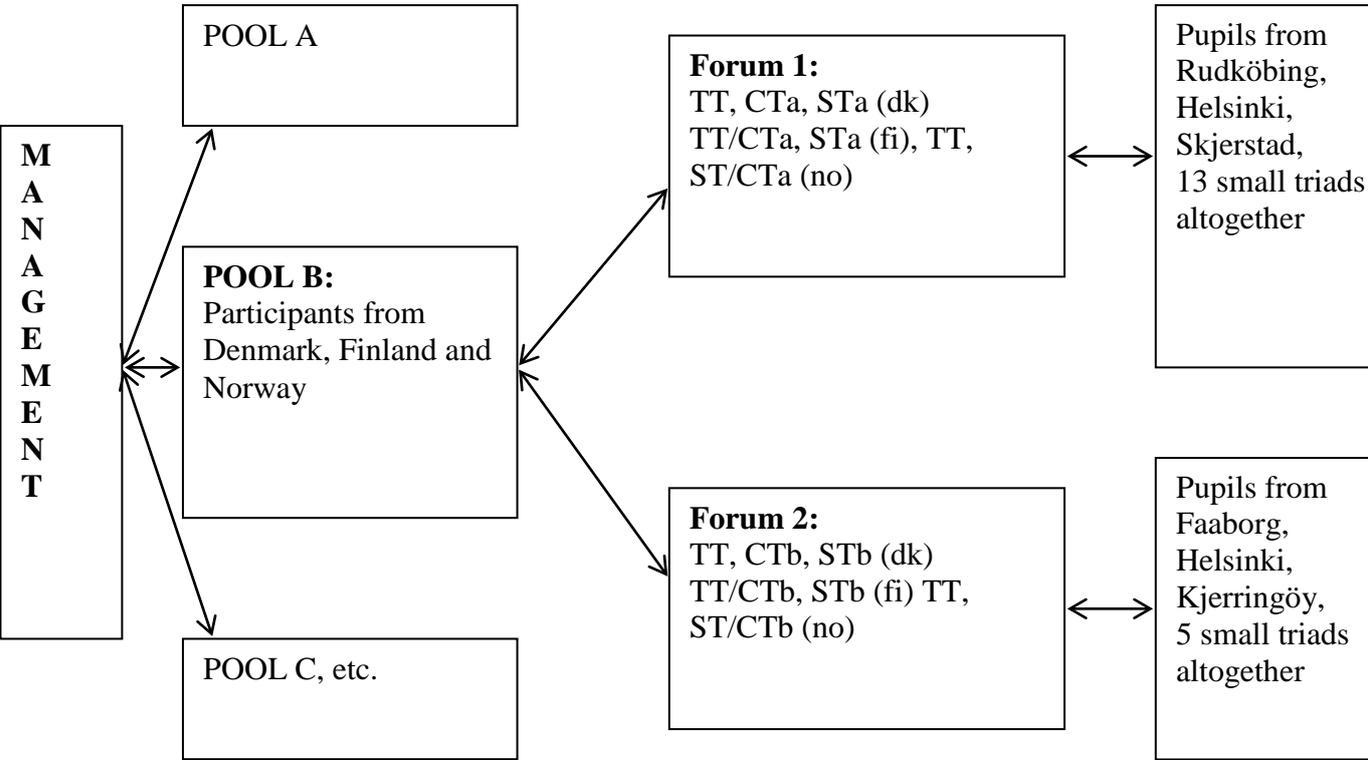
#### 4.4.2 Adjustments

Although the structure for each pool was supposed to be identical, the pools rather quickly found themselves facing different challenges, something which influenced the structure of the individual pools strongly. Pool D, for example, lacked participation from one teacher training institution and was therefore smaller than the other pools. They also organised all the pupils in the pool into pairs who wrote narrative texts together. This constitutes the most substantial deviation in the TALE project. Also the study background of the student teachers varied. The Danish student teachers attended general teacher training, whereas the Finnish students had to have a master degree in English for educational purposes to become teachers of EFL. Due to uncertainty related to the recruitment process, the Norwegian delegation in pool B consisted of students taking in-service teacher training courses at the same time as being class teachers in the participating schools.<sup>172</sup> There was a similar situation in Finland as class teachers in pool A were also teacher trainers. Due to this variation, practical modifications were made in the pools to meet the actual deviations, for instance, with regard to the variations in the teacher education programmes in the individual countries. As illustrated in Table 3, Denmark was the only nation in pool B with a complete participation with two local authority school classes, two class teachers (CT), two student teachers (ST) and a teacher trainer (TT). Table 3 illustrates how pool B met their specific organisational challenges.

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<sup>172</sup> English is an optional subject in the fourth and last year of the general teacher training in Norway. This implies that ordinary student teachers participating in TALE would have finished their teacher training in the middle of the TALE project's duration.

Table 3 Make-up of Pool B



(Kontio and Mannisenmäki, 2003)

Pool B operated with two forums, 1 and 2. Both forums had members from each country. Forum 1 consisted of one class from Helsinki (FIN), one from Rudköbing (DK) and one from Skjerstad outside Bodø (NO). Forum 2 consisted of a second class from Helsinki (FIN), one from Faaborg (DK) and one from Kjerringøy outside Bodø (NO). Both Pool A and pool B divided the pool into two units to make the practical work with the exchanges more perspicuous. Pool A was divided into what they called “the first half of the pool” and “the other half of the pool”. That pools A and B denoted their bisections differently demonstrates the fact that each pool was autonomous and could make its own organisational decisions. It is difficult to envisage how such minor modifications may have influenced the narrative production in the individual pool. The contextual frameworks of the narrative texts are near identical in the four pools, but some minor variation of different kinds and consequences is part of the context in which the narratives were produced.



## **4.5 A web-based project**

The TALE narratives were written on computers and published in the digital portfolios, and although many of the TALE partners had previously practised virtual activity, like chat-board, homepage design or games privately, without a specific focus on learning, many of them took part in a school-based ICT network for the first time and had to develop their routines for ICT use.<sup>173</sup> According to a Danish teacher involved in the project, an unjust amount of time was spent on the use of the virtual platform and its technical details, instead of the main aspect of developing narrative writing skills among the pupils (Rahbek, 2005: 207). Hence one can hardly exclude the possibility that the challenges related to the technology influenced the narrative production among the pupil participators. The submitted narratives are studied in this thesis, and it is difficult to trace such technological problem-solving in the individual narrative retrospectively; however, the reading and interpretation of such narratives needs to consider the web-organisation as part of the contextual frame of pupil narratives in TALE.

### **4.5.1 Organisational structure**

TALE was a digitalised network, and when the network was established, the initial assignment was to register and authenticate the 477 users in TALE. An organisational structure for the various groups of participants was provided, and the users were divided into management team, self-governed pools and inter-Nordic triads. This structure was chosen for exchanging information between members of the five different project categories: twelve teacher trainers, seven subject experts/evaluators, 24 class teachers, 24 student teachers and approximately 400 pupils.

The combination of conventional classroom methods and web-based interaction is challenging: “In the classroom context, the computer network provides a new dimension to peer group work and class interaction; they open new possibilities and create new problems” (Gousseva, 1998: 4). Most educators and pupils in TALE were novice users in networked

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<sup>173</sup> The TALE project did not facilitate a survey of the previous ICT experience of the TALE partners.

school-based ICT. TALE drew on the experience of other web-based projects in FL education in its initial programme load.

#### 4.5.2 TALE and other web-based projects

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Computer-mediated communication (CMC) offer a wide range of communication channels (Cunningham, 2000). Categories of CMC are, for example, list servers, e-mail, bulletin boards, computer conferencing, chat rooms and many different types of learning environments, which may offer a virtual framework for the teachers and the pupils. Although some of the narrative writing in EFL today takes place in such a digitalised environment, it is difficult to estimate how much of pupils' narrative production is exchanged in ICT networks. In Norway, the ITU monitor 2007 (National Research and Competence Network for ICT in Education at the University of Oslo, 2007) suggests that the most prevalent use is to refer to Internet content in the various pupil assignments, as mentioned in chapter 3.7.2. The TALE project was operative from 2002-04. Since 2004, the European Community has developed eTwinning, which is a European network for pedagogical cooperation. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training<sup>174</sup> facilitates Norway's participation in eTwinning.<sup>175</sup> Other web-based writing projects similar to TALE have been examined systematically, and within the TALE network, references have been made to other web-based projects<sup>176</sup>, for example, Shulman (2001) where a group of American students cooperated with students from the Federal University of Parana in Brazil. Even though the project took place between university level students, many features are similar to TALE, for example, their aiming at developing the students' writing skills by exchanging written texts via the Internet and also enhancing cultural skills by visiting the participating schools. Another example referred to in TALE is Gousseva's (1998) study, which discusses some possibilities that the Internet had to offer in a college composition course.<sup>177</sup> Gousseva established an Internet-based project that united 50 students from different countries. Norway, Sweden, Singapore, Hong Kong, the USA, China, France and Turkey cooperated to develop the possibilities of collaboration between students from

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<sup>174</sup> [Utdanningsdirektoratet.] <http://www.udir.no/>. (Accessed 24 January 2007)

<sup>175</sup> See <http://www.etwinning.net/ww/en/pub/etwinning/index2006.htm>. (Accessed 27 February 2008)

<sup>176</sup> These projects were referred to in discussions among the educators.

<sup>177</sup> See <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Gousseva-CyberComp.html>. (Accessed 3 April 2008)

different cultures. The aims were to improve the students' cultural knowledge and writing skills. Gousseva found that the writing process was made more meaningful by gearing the students' texts towards a real audience consisting of their peers. The students also had the opportunity to communicate their ideas and perspectives similar to the way in which it was done in the TALE project. According to Gousseva (1998), the students experienced the results as more meaningful than traditional writing-for-the-teacher methods.

### **4.5.3 The software provider**

All the text exchange and much of the communication in TALE were situated in Blackboard. Organising opportunities for publication and communication for the pupils is part of the general teaching activity, and Blackboard is just one of the virtual teaching and learning software packages available for educational purposes. The reasons for the choice of Blackboard were partly practical. It was already used by the home institution of the TALE project at the University of Southern Denmark when the TALE project was established. When the virtual rooms were designed with registration of the participants, the pool and the triad structures and the various forums for communication, a stable virtual environment had been formed. The production of data happened continuously as the pupils' texts were composed in the traditional classrooms, submitted in Blackboard, read by their peers and stored in digital portfolios. Subsequently the feedback from student teachers and the peer review from the other pupils in the triad were submitted and stored in portfolios.

Murphy (1997: 244) claims that the virtual classroom demands activity from all its participants. The pupil cannot "remain an anonymous member of the class often mistakenly thought to be engaged in learning simply by physical presence". In TALE, the student teachers and the teacher educators interpreted the results of the motivation activities and the quality of the process-produced texts. The class teachers could interpret the results by comparing the pupils' progress with the familiar results of traditional classroom methods for text composition. Blackboard facilities provided the structure, and due to the fact that the individual pools were self-controlled activity units, the Blackboard facilities were used differently in each pool. The participants communicated via the homepages, the threads, the chats, the e-mails and the attachments.

#### 4.5.4 Blackboard usage

Blackboard provides online information about the actual use of the various facilities, and the frequency of communication could be one indication of the inherent dynamics of the individual pools. Table 4 demonstrates that the various pools have used the facilities differently and presents a simplified survey of Blackboard activity during the first project year from June 2002 to June 2003. The activities have been arranged in three categories: firstly, Coordination, which involves practical facilitation and decision making, secondly, Main Activity, which involves the educators' feedback to pupils' texts and, thirdly, Response, which involves the response that the pupils provided on each other's texts. In the group of educators (Educator-Educator-column), the three categories of teacher participants, student teachers, class teachers and teacher educators have been grouped together.

Table 4 Use of Blackboard Facilities

	<b>Coordination</b>		<b>Main Activity</b>	<b>Response</b>		
	Educator-Educator		Educator-Pupil	Pupil-Pupil		
	e-mail	Chat	Feedback	Peering/Homepages		
Pool A	x	x	x	x		x
Pool B	x	x	-	x		-
Pool C	x	-	x	x		x
Pool D	x	x	x	x		-
All	x	-	-	-	-	-
MT	x	x	-	-	-	-

Table 4 indicates that the various pools made priorities for the use of Blackboard facilities in the first year. Everyone used e-mail as a means of coordination. In Pool C, the participants decided not to use the chat-board, a facility much utilised in the other pools. In pool B, the educator response to pupils' texts is not shown in the table because it was done after the first year. The activity of providing feedback to the pupils on their texts was made in two steps also in pool B. Pupils gave feedback to each other in the same way as in the other pools, and this was followed up by student teachers also giving feedback on pupils' texts. Pool A consisted of 150 users, Pool B had 118 users, Pool C consisted of 121 users, and Pool D was the smallest, with 88 users, because there were fewer educators involved, as accounted for in section 4.4.2. The difference in size is also due to the difference in the number of pupils in the classes involved.

What might be a disadvantage with the chosen design for coordinating virtual activities in Blackboard is that everything is done in the written mode. Especially for the pupils' peer response, this may be a challenge. The face to face meetings make it possible for the participants to share information and discuss matters; they benefit from the combination of virtual and face to face meetings and written modes of interaction. Conventional EFL education comprises teaching and learning to write, listen, read and speak. The listening and speaking skills are left unattended to in TALE's use of Blackboard, except when the student teachers interact with the pupils in active experimentation during the face to face meetings. Still the chat-board interaction, which is direct and time-synchronous, is an effective way of exchanging experience for decision-making on urgent challenges. The written mode, with its inherent characteristics of clarity and authenticity, has probably helped the educators and the pupils acquire proficiency in communication skills in written English (Benson, 2001). All the text exchange and much of the communication in TALE were placed in Blackboard. In an ideal case, the pupils were communicating about something interesting, which made the communication real and the contextual frame of the narrative production authentic.

#### **4.5.5 TALE versus classroom setting**

In TALE, the pupils were grouped into transnational triads who exchanged texts in digital portfolios. Thus the pupil narratives are placed in an ICT environment with its own

challenges, restrictions and contextual constraints. The pupils did not primarily write for their teachers but for partners, who gave feedback on each other's texts. The conventional classroom sets different guidelines to EFL writing. The day to day work with writing often concentrates on the performative aspect of writing, and the assessment that the teacher is doing of the pupil's text influences the process (Tornberg, 2000: 131). Although EFL teachers may organise the conventional writing activity according to the principles of process-oriented writing, with several drafts and response in groups, the digital publication in a pan-Nordic ICT network like TALE lifts the narrative production out of its traditional classroom context.

#### **4.6 *Summing up***

Chapter 4 presents the inter-Nordic TALE project, which produced the corpus of this study. The Nordplus project, TALE, comprised national representation in a management team and division into self-controlled pools with representatives of three nationalities in each, and also triads of pupils with the student teachers as response persons. The participating universities of the TALE project include several Nordic institutions and one Estonian, plus Charles Sturt University in Australia. The research-related activity in TALE has so far produced an anthology (Hansson, Kjartansson, Larsen and Lassen [Eds.], 2005). A recapitulation of the situation in which the pupils' narratives have been created illuminates how the writing process has been facilitated. The context of pupil narratives in TALE is affected by several factors. That the narratives are written on computers and published in a network where 4-500 other people are involved is vital. That the pupils exchange texts, read and respond to the narratives of the other triad members is important. The fact that the pupils know that there are two receivers of their own age, apart from the educators, who read their narrative, is significant.

## **5 The TALE corpus**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the TALE corpus will be discussed further. With a focus on narrative competence in EFL, the pupils' roles as writers and readers in inter-Nordic triads may seem to be quite challenging. The pupils are expected to provide feedback on other pupils' EFL texts - as well as improving their own EFL narratives - based on feedback from their fellow triad members. In the following, examples of how the pupils address each other and present themselves are provided. When the TALE pupils write narratives, they are influenced by the context in which their narratives are produced. A sample of narratives is presented to illustrate the frame of reference, which encompasses the pupils in their text production. The phases of the writing process are discussed in relation to how the process ran in the TALE project. The different formulas employed in the production of narratives in TALE are discussed to illuminate the contextual framework in which the narratives are created.

### **5.2 The TALE pupils' role**

The pupils in TALE get the opportunity of being exposed to English as it is used by other non-native speakers and writers of their own age in authentic communication. The pupils focus on narrative writing in English and practise narrative writing in a systematic manner. They work with the writing process through the two roles of reader and writer of narratives where they practise both giving and receiving response on narratives. They practise how to introduce themselves in a digitalised network. The texts included in this study are written in the period from September 2002 to June 2004. Teaching and learning narrative writing in English is the main activity in TALE and an improvement of pupils' narrative skills an important aim. During the project period of two years, extra attention has been paid to this particular skill.

### 5.2.1 The pupils' age

Broadly speaking, the pupils are aged twelve when they write their first text and fourteen when they write their last one. They are leaving the intermediate level in primary school to attend lower secondary school. To most Norwegian pupils, for example, this involves starting at a new school. The Norwegian TALE pupils, who were born in 1990, started school as second grade pupils, and have, according to the 1997 curriculum (L97), had English as a school subject since the second grade. English was introduced for first grade pupils in 1997 when compulsory education for six-year-olds was implemented.<sup>178</sup> At first, their English instruction intentionally comprised approximately twenty minutes per week.<sup>179</sup> The implications for the linguistic development of the participating pupils in the TALE project are discussed in Vinther (2005). With regard to the differences in the proficiency in English among the TALE pupils, there was no such systematic comparison concerning this except for Björklund's (2005: 223-224) comparison of Norway, Denmark and Finland, referred to in chapter 4, section 4.4.1.

### 5.2.2 Constructing triads

Since pupils in the Nordic countries start learning English in school at different ages, the relationship between age and language competence - as well as ICT proficiency - does not strictly correspond.<sup>180</sup> To some extent this discrepancy has been taken into consideration in the design of triads. For teenagers, to communicate with someone younger than themselves at this age is not necessarily an ideal basis for the exchange of narratives. The content of the older pupils' texts will perhaps seem more advanced. However, a compromise between age and level of competence has been made to make the difference between age and language level as unnoticeable as possible. In pool B, for example, this has been done by pairing young Norwegian pupils, who have learned English in school from the second grade, to Finnish

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<sup>178</sup> The first form previously began at the age of seven. At the same time, primary and lower secondary education was extended by one year from nine to ten years (L97).

<sup>179</sup> Even though this is very little, they actually had English as a school subject at a time when many of them could neither read nor write in their mother tongue. To my knowledge, reading and writing proficiency in the mother tongue was not examined in TALE.

<sup>180</sup> To my knowledge, no such systematic comparison has been carried out concerning the differences in language proficiency and ICT proficiency among pupils from the various Nordic countries in the TALE project.

pupils who are one year older and started learning English in school in the fourth grade. However, the ideal exchange in TALE will take place between pupils with equal competence of the same age.

### 5.2.3 Reader and writer

The writing process will, to some extent, be influenced by who the pupil writers picture as the readers of their narratives. It is relevant to question who the receiver of the narrative is. Apart from the writer of the text being herself/himself the first reader of the self-produced text, the reader of the text is first of all two fellow pupils, and not only the teacher and a teacher student.<sup>181</sup> The pupils are aware that they are writing to someone of their own age in the Nordic countries.<sup>182</sup> Thus the writing process is made more authentic. The pupil writer can actually picture a live reader of his or her narrative. Rahbek (2005) has compared texts by Danish TALE pupils to texts by Danish pupils who were not members of the TALE project. She maintains that the exchange of texts between authentic receivers, and not only involving the teacher, changes the learning situation in a positive way. She found that the “[...] authenticity and the demands for a tangible product” (Rahbek, 2005: 220), developed through interaction with teachers and peers, are some of the key benefits of participating in projects like TALE.

The introductory work and the classroom practice during the writing process vary both with regard to the different writing tasks and the people involved in the four autonomous pools. Nevertheless, one could assume that the teachers work in accordance with the intentions in TALE. This would infer that they emphasise the authenticity of the writing process. This authenticity is first and foremost achieved through the text exchange with peer response. Gilliam (1990) claims that peer work develops the confidence of the reader and writer in their capacity to learn from one another and for themselves. The reader reads “[...] like a writer composing a text” (Gilliam, 1990: 99). In TALE, the pupils both give feedback to the other

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<sup>181</sup> The group of readers also includes researchers like the undersigned.

<sup>182</sup> Systematic comparisons of the level of maturity in the pupils’ texts have not been carried out in TALE. The pupil readers will probably meet texts that are written by someone who does not match them exactly in terms of age or language competence.

pupils' texts and receive response to their own narrative. Thus their awareness of having an authentic audience is stimulated. Before the pupils exchanged narratives, the communication between them was initiated through various classroom activities resulting in introductory texts being exchanged. These shorter texts are the first incidents where the pupils get to know each other.

#### 5.2.4 Initiating communication

The pupils introduce themselves to each other in different ways. In the following text, submitted by a Finnish pupil in pool A, the introduction has the form of a letter. This biographical text illustrates what the communication in TALE previous to the exchange of fictional narratives is like. It was downloaded 1 February 2007 for the present research purpose.

##### Hello!

I am thirteen years old. I will tell my name if you tell me your name first. I have a big family. Which time of the year do you like most? I like the summer because then we dont have to be in school. What is your fauvorite sport? My is volleyball and skating. Have you read Harry Potter? I have. I like to read some books. Do you? Where do you live? I live in Finland, in a city called Vasa. It´s a big city. If you wanna know where it is look at a map. I will tell you more about myself in the next letter if you tell more about yourself.

The frameworks for the introductory text vary in the different pools (Björklund, 2005; Kjartansson, 2005). In this example, the personal information and the hometown presentation is combined. Others prefer to split the two topics in different texts, for example, one text called "Myself" and another called "My hometown". Yet another variant is to write introductory texts on the pupil's individual homepage. Favourites in sports, music and films are often listed as well as their family situation. In texts like these, the pupils introduce themselves to the other triad members. They form a relationship in the triad through the

introductory exchange where the most basic information about their everyday lives is outlined.

### 5.2.5 The triad member

Each triad constitutes the immediate reading public of the individual narrative. The narratives are written primarily for two other Nordic pupils of the same age and read by teachers and student teachers that some of them have met already in their practice period. Who, if anyone, the pupil writer visualises as the receiver of the text, their fellow Nordic pupils, or the teachers and student teachers, is difficult to acknowledge without having interviewed the pupils about this.<sup>183</sup> The pupils have exchanged shorter texts prior to the fictional narrative, and they have e-mailed each other. They hold information about each other's names and nationalities, hometowns and schools. They have also introduced themselves to each other in short texts about themselves, their families and their hobbies. The following text gives a typical example of the information the pupils provide about themselves prior to the exchange of fictional texts. It has been taken from the homepage of a member of the triad, 'BD Grp 4 - Bianca Candy' in pool A, and was downloaded 25 January 2007 for the purpose of this research.

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#### **Personal Information**

I live in Åsane outside Bergen. I have a mother, a father, and a sister .

She is 16 years old. I am 165cm tall, have green eyes and short brown hair.

I love football . I play outside my home every day and once a week with my team.

My favourite team is Manchester United. My favourite player are van. Nistelroy .

I like listen to Eminem . He is very cool .My favourite song with him is "Lose yourself".

But I like the most hip hop artists exept "Ja-rule". My favourite food are pizza and taco.

My favourite subject is P.E. .We are only 15 pupils in my class and it is the smallest class at our school.

On my freetime ,in good wether, I do skateboarding, ride on my bike or play football.

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<sup>183</sup> To my knowledge, this has not been done in TALE.

The biographical information provided in a text like this is highly personal. Hometown, neighbourhood and family are mentioned, and details about appearance and favourites are provided. Yet such presentations suggest underlying formulaic frameworks which tend to deprive the texts of the nearness one could easily expect from such presentations.<sup>184</sup> On the one hand, this is an expression of how pupils tend to present themselves to the others in TALE; on the other hand, it is an expression of the actual interests of the individual in question.<sup>185</sup> Although the pupils state all these facts about themselves, such presentations become almost impersonal in their reliance upon reference to what may be written off as stereotypical teenage triviality; the lifestyle, which is indirectly depicted, is widespread among pupils of this age group; football and pizza are part of their everyday frame of reference.

Although the members of the triad have not met face to face, relations have been established through such introductory texts prior to the exchange of fictional narratives. The pupils reading their texts are not anonymous, but are other pupils that they are acquainted with through the exchange of information in TALE. This perhaps adds to the pupils' experience of feeling that their narrative is of genuine interest to someone beside the teacher; the pupil writer is actually telling a story to a real person of his or her own age outside the classroom. These narratives are well supplied with intertextual reference to other texts. The following discussion will give an idea of what type of texts this may involve.

### **5.3 *The TALE pupils' frame of reference***

Although the TALE pupils' frame of reference in principle is infinite, there are seemingly some typical intertextual references that are prevalent in the material. The pupils are part of a TALE discourse which operates at a certain time in history. This contemporaneity is evident in their narratives and in their exchange of views. In the following, some texts will be presented; the sample demonstrates this contemporaneity and also how a literary approach

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<sup>184</sup> Different formulas for presentation have perhaps been accessible in the various pools and classrooms and on the Internet.

<sup>185</sup> Some of the homepages also include pictures. For reasons of securing anonymity the pictures and names are, of course, omitted from this study.

could view such narratives. Exactly what the pupils are inspired by and what they choose to communicate when they write vary. Nevertheless, elements from contemporary popular culture,<sup>186</sup> sports and entertainment, may be reflected in what sort of topics the pupils tend to deal with in their narratives and what sort of characters, settings and plots they seem to favour. As Cantor (1980: 120) states, “[...] each form of popular culture in turn becomes the mass medium for its generation”. Whereas the radio or the printed texts were typical mass media of the grandparent generation, the visual representations of literary works, for instance, are mass produced today and constitute mass media content. The TALE discourse related to such mass produced substance is evident in the pupil narratives, but also in the communication in the triad prior to the actual exchange of narrative texts.

### 5.3.1 Contemporaneity

The TALE pupils exchange information and viewpoints prior to the writing of narratives. That important current intertexts are discussed among the pupils is demonstrated in the following example from the messenger file in the TALE set up.

In the following excerpt, a Swedish pupil shares her opinions with the members of the triad, ‘Grp N Modruvellithe. The pupil writer is preoccupied with positioning herself in relationship to dominating contemporary films based on the works of Rowling and Tolkien. The date for submission is 17 March 2003, and downloading for this research purpose was done 28 March 2006.

**Subject:** Little information of HARRY POTTER

yes i have a little information

he is bad i think the lord of the ring rules especially Legolas and aragorn they rules

"One ring to find them, one ring to bind them, one ring to rule them all and in the darkness bind them in the land of mordor were the schadows lie"

hahahahhahahahhahaha

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<sup>186</sup> Popluar culture refers to the popular art forms that contemporary culture produces (Cantor, 1980).

The pupil writer responds to an enquiry made by one of her fellow triad members and makes it clear that she is no admirer of Harry Potter. Instead, she is a supporter of *Lord of the Rings* and refers to characters in this work. These two works, the Harry Potter series and *Lord of the Rings*, are frequently cited in the TALE corpus, and they are topical in the period 2002-2004 when the TALE pupils wrote their narratives mainly because of the film versions that came at the same time.<sup>187</sup> The Tolkien influence is, for instance, easily detectable in the next example from a Danish pupil in ‘AXX Triad 15 – Ozmon’. His text was submitted 6 November 2003 and downloaded for this research purpose 29 January 2004.

### ~The Ring of Light~

It was a clær and shiny summerday and Link was on his way to the market but the suddenly he saw smoke raising from the town. He ran as fast as he could. When he reached the town he got a shok; houses was on fire and there was corpeses spret out on the market. But right infront of him he saw an old lady omong the ruins. Link walked to the old lady and she told that it was Andariel’s work. She also told Link to look in the monestary for a sacret ring called the Ring of Light whitch was the only thing who could destroy the evil witch Andariel. Link ran to the monestary whitch law a bit outside the town. The monestary was a dark and scary place when all the monks where gone. Finaly after a few houres seaching he reached a great room with a tabel like thing in the middle and with the sun shining upon it throw a hole in the seeling. Link walked towards the socalled “tabel” and on it there law a ring whitch was the Ring of Light. He reached out for it

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<sup>187</sup> The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy came in the period from 2001 to 2003, and the first three Harry Potter films came in 2001 to 2004.

and when he took it he was blinded by a big light. Then he quickly ran out of the monastery and he walked to the old lady and she told him to look for Andariel in Lost Woods. Link went home to his house in the forest to pack his backpack. When it was done he left. When he came out of the forest he came to a BIG swamp. The water was so deep that he couldn't pass over. But then he saw a Phoenix in a nearby tree. He ran towards the Phoenix who told him that it could transport him over the swamp, but only if Link gave the Phoenix some of Link's food. Link gave the Phoenix some food and it flew him over. After the swamp he came to a great mountain but the Phoenix told him that it could transport him over but only if Link gave the Phoenix some of his food. Link gave the Phoenix some food and it transported him over the high mountain. Finally he reached the Lost Woods and with the help from the Ring of Light and the Phoenix he came to the cave which was Andariel's cave. Link stepped slowly inside the cave. After a hour searching he reached a great hall but there was nothing.....but then he lit the entire hall up with the ring and THERE right in front of him was the evil witch Andariel. But Link pointed the ring towards Andariel and a massive light-beam fired towards Andariel and when it was gone Andariel was also gone. Link ran quickly out of the cave and he got a shock because the entire land's people had come to thank him for defeating Andariel and as a reward he was allowed to keep the Ring of Light and Link, the People and Link's new friend the Phoenix lived happily ever after.

The title, “The Ring of Light”, suggests clear connotations to Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* series.<sup>188</sup> To obtain the magic ring of light is the key to freedom. But Tolkien’s *oeuvre* and its appurtenant PC games are not the single intertextual reference involved in this narrative. The science fiction genre is implied when “[...] a massive light-beam” is fired toward Andariel. Likewise, the conclusive phrase, “[...] lived happily ever after”, puts this text within the frame of fairy tales. If this text were subjected to interpretation, the plot, which portrays Link’s ineffective attempts at entering the wood twice, and the intertextual reference, which makes him succeed the third time, would have been pointed to; the assistance provided by an old lady would have been emphasised because of the connection to the fairy tale genre. On his way towards success, Link shares his food with creatures he meets and gains their assistance in return, like any traditional fairy tale hero. The magic of the ring is what secures the hero the power needed to neutralize evil. The numerous and versatile references to other texts would have been interpreted, and the novel elements in the pupil narrative would have been emphasised in the analysis. This predilection for contemporary media-exposed popular culture is evident in the allusions to football, too.

### 5.3.2 Sports reference

The following text demonstrates the sports reference prevalent in many pupil texts. It was submitted by a Danish pupil in ‘AXY Triad 16 – Pestalozzi’ 18 November 2003 and downloaded 29 January 2004 for the present research purpose.

The |vamp®€™

**Once upon a time there was a boy he was called Zidane.  
He lived in a cave whit a dragon called Domovio, he was the size  
of a truck.  
Zidane was a Genenom, a Genenom is a acrobats whit greet  
fight skill, Zidanes webon was two daggers called Ocil´ s.  
But in a fare away country is deer a greet vampire called Kuja.**

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<sup>188</sup> The films based on the work by Tolkien (1965, 2002) were topical around 2003.

**He was once a Genenom but in a fight he got bite of a vampire and slowly transform into a vampire and now he is boss of the vampires.**

**He control a Country called Gaia, it was the country of the vampires.**

**One day Zidane was down whit the river and taking a nap, suddenly he herd a sound, it sound like a greet explosion, little bit later he saw smoke raise from the woods.**

**Zidane hurry in the woods and find the place the stand a little man whit a funny looking hat it was a wizard hat, the most funny thing was that he was totally black, he told that his name was Vivi and he was a wizard whit greet power in magic, he asked if he could follow me and.**

**On the way back Vivi and Zidane got friends, and Vivi told that he has see the vampire boss Kuja, and that he would attack this world whit his army of vampires and that Zidane hat to kill him.**

**Zidane run fast home and told Domovio what he now and that he hat to kill Kuja before he kill them.**

**After that Zidane and Vivi toke of to Gaia to kill Kuja but it was not easy to do there was monsters and a lot vampires in the country but Zidane and Vivi make it to Kujas palace in the top of a tower was Kuja looking what was going on and he was ready to fight.**

**Some minutes later come Zidane and Vivi up and the fight began, it was a hard fight but an hour or two was the fight over and Zidane and Vivi was the winders.**

**When Zidane and Vivi come back they got one ton Gold for sawing the world.**

**And they lived happily ever after.....**

The title, “The Vampire”, may connote Bram Stoker’s Dracula horror story.<sup>189</sup> But the main character vampire has got the name of the famous French football player, Zidane. The setting is, however, far from the pitch.<sup>190</sup> The vampire, Zidane, belongs to the fantasy species, “Genenom”. The fairy tale introduction and conclusion put the main character into a heroic drama where he conquers the enemy, Kujo. When Kujo is referred to as “the boss” and the name of the hero’s accomplice is Vivi, and wears a hat, the connotations to Vito Corleone of

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<sup>189</sup> Stoker, 1897.

<sup>190</sup> Note that this text was written prior to the World Championship in Germany 2006 when Zidane lost some of his heroic status when he butted another player.

Puzo's *The Godfather*<sup>191</sup> and American mafia movies is clear-cut. Another more far-fetched allusion is found in the naming of Zidane's roommate, Domovio, a name that may sound somewhat Shakespearean even if the creature in question is no Benvolio, but a dragon. A multitude of genres and intertexts are indirectly implied. "The vampire" is presented in the first and the second – and final – edition in the appendix to this thesis. This text illustrates the mixture of intertextual reference prevalent in many pupil narratives. A medley consisting of allusions to various fields of culture is typical of the genre of pupil narrative in TALE. References to TV series are part of this synthesis.

### 5.3.3 TV reference

A pupil in Vasa (FIN) submitted the following text in 'AU Triad 12 – Locke' 28 October 2003, and it shows the influence that TV series may have on the pupil text. It was downloaded for the present research purpose 29 January 2004.

## *The big batman*

*Once upon a time Batman was thin and beautiful. One day he became fat , because of his worst enemy Puuha-Pete. Puuha-Pete send batman every day food that he could not resist. Batman ate and ate... He became so fat that he couldnt walk or save the world from Puuha-Pete! Meanwhile Puuha-Pete was taking over the world, Nukkumatti feel that he have to do something... So he gaved Batman some diet drink. It*

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<sup>191</sup> Puzo, 1969.

*didn't help so much. So Nukkumatti decided to lock him in to a closett and leaved him in there in 3 months. But nukkumatti forget him there for 3 years!!! When nukkumatti get Batman out from the closett he saw something strange... Batman was himself again! Beautifull and thin! Batman jumpped out from the closett and saved the world from Puuha-Pete. Then the whole world lived happy in ever after...*

This text shows how famous TV heroes may function as main characters in pupil narratives. The figures are fitted with slightly different traits in the pupil narrative above. The title, “The Big Batman”, does not imply that the narrative necessarily is about corpulence among superheroes since being a big batman may merely suggest power. However, the first sentence announces that the popular ideal of being thin and beautiful is going to be dealt with even if the introduction, “Once upon a time”, suggests a traditional fairy tale type of narrative. Fatness is what makes Nukkumatti lock up Batman for three months with no food since the diet drink did not help. Nukkumatti is the Finnish name for the Sandman. Nukkumatti thinks that Puuha-Pete becomes too dominant and calls upon Batman for help. But fatness is the problem that prevents Batman from saving the world from Puuha-Pete, which is the Finnish name of the TV puppet Bob the Builder. Puuha-Pete is a genuinely positive character for the younger TV audience. He can apparently mend everything. The choice of name of the villain seems to be slightly ironic. Both hero and villain have well-established TV hero names, Puuha-Pete for younger children, Batman for children of the TALE age. The slightly smarter Batman saves the world from the childish Puuha-Pete. If this text were to be interpreted, the reference to the comics and film heroes would have been emphasised. An interpretation of this text would have taken such parodic representations of the TV and film heroes into account. This text demonstrates the playful attitude the pupil writers may take to established literary characters. The modern media focus on lifestyle is another ingredient typical of the pupil produced text.

### 5.3.4 Modern lifestyle reference

The next text was submitted by a Norwegian pupil in ‘AXZ Triad 17 Bakhtin’ 13 November 2003. This narrative demonstrates the allusions that many pupil narratives have to typical traits of modern lifestyle. This text has not been submitted as a Word document attachment, but was written directly in the messenger file.<sup>192</sup> It was downloaded for the present research purpose 7 February 2004.

Once upon a time there was a princess. She lived in a big, big city. She lived with her two friends in a castle. She had almost no money left because she was addicted to slot machines. She could play and play all day long. she was called the Red Princess because her face turned red and her fingers started to shiver if she didn't play on the machine for ten minutes. one day her friends decided to help her. At first they tried to hide her money. The red Princess got very angry and robbed a bank. The second day they tried to handcuff her. But it did not stop the Red Princess. She started to use her nose on the machine instead. The two friends did not what to do. Suddenly one of them got an idea. They called information 1890 and asked for a prince. He agreed to a meeting the very same night. When the red princess saw the prince she turned all red again, but not because of the slot machines. They fell in love. She stopped playing the slot machines, and they lived happily ever after....

The title alludes to the princess with the red shoes, and the introductory line, “Once upon a time there was a princess”, confirms the narrative’s belonging to the traditional fairy tale genre. The princess suffers from an obsession, like the princess with the red shoes, who can not stop dancing. This red princess is addicted to slot machines. The picturesque fairy tale locality is replaced by a modern setting. The princess lives in the big city; still she lives in a castle, not with the queen and the king, but with two friends, who try to help her. They call the telephone information line 1890.<sup>193</sup> The narrative is concluded well within the fairy tale genre when the prince arrives on the scene; the traditional expectations are maintained. An interpretation of this narrative would have drawn upon the realistic trivialities of modern society, which is implicit in its frame of reference.

Such intertextual reference, literary or otherwise, that the previous examples have demonstrated would have been taken into account if the method of literary interpretation were applied to these particular narratives.

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<sup>192</sup> The disparity in modes of publishing has complicated the determination of the exact number of narratives submitted in TALE.

<sup>193</sup> Not 1880, which is the Norwegian information telephone number.

This study focuses on the publicised text and concentrates on the novel elements in pupil narratives. Nevertheless, the process it has been through prior to submission needs to be considered as it constitutes an important part of the context of the narratives.

## **5.4 Processing narratives in TALE**

The actual process where the narratives come into being is complex and involves various phases.<sup>194</sup> A brief comment on the actual writing process in general is presented to illuminate the situation in which the narratives are formed. Within the TALE network, the references to Peres (2001) and Dysthe (1987) have been shared by the TALE educators. Their discussions of the writing process have created a common understanding of what to expect from a pupil narrative within this particular context. The writing of narratives has taken place both in a virtual setting and in the classroom. It is difficult to determine how the shift between actually writing the narrative on the computer and the creative process of launching the ideas for the narrative functions. Dysthe (1987) introduces different phases in writing. Dysthe's terms were applied in TALE and involve pre-writing, writing, response, revision, editing, evaluation and publication.<sup>195</sup> The following examples from the TALE corpus illustrate some characteristic features of the various phases.

### **5.4.1 Pre-writing**

Preparation, the first step of the writing process, may involve listening to music, showing pictures, creating vocabulary in the form of a mind map, collecting ideas, launching discussions on the topic, and exchanging thoughts and ideas. Such activities are examples of preliminary work which function as motivating factors for writing in school. The pupils may discuss the content and may also be influenced by each other and share ideas. In TALE, the preparatory work has been carried out according to plans made in the individual pools. Bäckström and Nilsson (2005: 31) refer to the pre-writing activity in pool D. In this particular

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<sup>194</sup> This process has not been studied systematically in the present study, which concentrates on the actual text.

<sup>195</sup> To my knowledge, there has not been a systematic study of how consistently the various phases of the writing process have been carried out in the various pools in TALE.

pool, the pre-writing activities included the study of legends, pictures and vocabulary related to the topic in question. The pupils were also given lists by the student teachers of lexical chunks and adjectives to attain a wider vocabulary.

#### 5.4.2 Text composition and revision

The actual text composition may be experienced quite differently by individual pupils in TALE. It is also possible that pupils experience a sense of community in the writing process when they sit together with their fellow pupils as they actually write the narrative.<sup>196</sup> Generally when the actual writing process starts, the writer makes the first draft of the text. According to Zamel (1982), the less proficient writer tends to concentrate on the mechanical side of writing and is inhibited by language proficiency requirements. Richards (1990) points to similar finds. Bereiter (1980: 85) refers to this phase of the writing process as the stage which involves performative writing and points to “[...] children’s difficulties with revision” as symptoms of the complexity of the skill integration involved in writing. To attend to the content and the stylistic demands at the same time is challenging. In Perez’s (2001)<sup>197</sup> study of children revising their writing, it is claimed that during this phase the writer may change the text as the story develops, thus revising the text several times. Although the most frequent revisions are for spelling, followed by capitalisation and punctuation changes, he states that the writer might revise the text throughout the whole writing process, and that the changes made may concern meaning, too. Notwithstanding, he finds that changes in meaning are rare and that the few instances where changes are made involve either deleting, substituting, or adding single words, rather than paragraphs, phrases, or sentences. That the age group represented in the TALE project as well as younger children tend to be somewhat reluctant to edit their written texts is well substantiated in other research in this field (Flower and Hayes, 1984: 151). The inclination to produce the final version in one leap is more frequent among the younger writers. Accordingly the most frequent changes from the first to the second draft of the text do not usually influence the content of the narrative. In this study, the first draft of

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<sup>196</sup> It is also possible to feel somewhat cut off from the classroom community in a situation where it looks as if everyone else manages to make up fantastic stories while some struggle over their texts and find the task too demanding. This may result in a negative experience for the pupils who do not enjoy writing, whereas the pupils who enjoy writing get a positive one.

<sup>197</sup> Perez has been referred to in TALE in discussions among the educators.

the pupil narratives is selected. This has been done to ensure that a sufficient number of narratives constitute the research data from which the selection of narratives is made. A substantial number of narratives were only submitted once, that is as first drafts.<sup>198</sup>

In TALE, the actual text composition has been carried out differently in the four autonomous pools. It is presupposed that the texts are written in their lessons at school in the presence of fellow pupils and teachers.<sup>199</sup> The possibilities for discussing their texts with others while they write are therefore at hand. As a consequence, the joint brainstorming phase in the classroom, or in a smaller group, may become apparent in the individual text. In the TALE material, there are examples of texts which resemble each other, but still narrate different stories. The following text was submitted 31 October and downloaded 13 November 2003. The writer is a Norwegian pupil in Bergen.

**Subject:** Battle of humanity

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Once upon a time there were three mighty kings who ruled the three biggest human countries the world. Korisican, Willan and Kenobis.  
But unknown to the kings there was an evil force who builds a great army in the deep land of Isendoor. A army of orks, trolls, and monsters.  
In the allfand of Wisholf the alfs sensed a disurbance in the ground.  
The alfs are with one with the trees, earth and all of nature so it din` t take them long to understand something was rong.  
Day after day went and the forest was very quiet.  
And one day the army stormed Wisholf.  
The army had allredy destroyed three villages.  
Land of the dwarfs (small but powerful warriors, and keepers of the mines), land of the guardians (half men half horse who uses there hole lives to guard there city, families, or anything else) and the land of the swamp- creatures (disgusting but peaceful creatures)  
The alfs put up a good fight with their skills with bau and magic sense.  
But the evil army was to many and to strong.  
The leader of the alfs told a young alf soldier to ride into Korisican and warn the humans of this great threat and to make them build a last alliance between alf and men to destroy this force of evil forever.  
Wen the alf had reached Korisican he was met by great concern of the king Barsamir.  
After the king had heard about it he said  
Send a letter to Willan and Kenobis...  
No... The alf said. It is gonna take to long before the messenger reach Willan and Kenobis...  
The army is already moving in top speed into Korisican.  
We got to evacuate the Hole City as soon as possible.  
No .said the king I have an army.  
So did we. Said the alf.  
The king understand.

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<sup>198</sup> The question of selection is discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>199</sup> In some instances, the writing is organised as a group activity in class where the individual pupils are members of different triads. Some texts are clearly made in groups and published in different triads in Blackboard. However, such group-produced texts are entered in Blackboard and therefore possible to identify and preferably omit from a collection of individual pupils' narratives.

Send order to evacuate the city.  
I want every woman, child and man out this city and the men must take their weapons with them.  
About three hours later everybody was on the way to Willan.  
It was hard and many people died of hunger.  
When they reached Willan Barsamir requested to see the king Ragador.  
After Barsamir had spoken with Ragador they got a message that the army had destroyed Koriscan  
and was on the way to Willan.  
Luckily the king was on a visit to Willan and all of Koriscan and Willan was on the way to Kenobis.  
The three kings ride side by side into Kenobis.  
They made a plan to defend and strike.  
We got the promise to use the mind of the Dwarfs.  
The night came and they prepared the army to defend themselves  
The other rides through the mines to see what allies they could gather .  
I'll be back before sunrise.  
We will be here waiting for you.  
After a while they heard a rumbling sound.  
Then they saw them hordes of them.  
At least ten thousand of them.  
Load baust! Launch !!!!  
The first wave of darts flew true the sky and hit the orks.  
And the war began.  
The orks launched waves of darts at the fortress.  
And they had their's to.  
They tried to run up the wall.  
Ragador killed many orks, but then the cave-dwellers came.  
They hammered on the walls trying to beat it down.  
Fire!!!! Said Wirsiman kill them all.  
The humans launched a wave of fire through the air and they all hit the troll.  
It screamed in pain and it fell on the ground.  
Then came the monsters.  
When they came everybody took a steep back.  
Orks, humans and even the trolls took a steep back.  
Attack said Ragador and everybody run out on the flatground and then all hope was out came  
Barsamir with his allies and they were many.  
They came riding down from the hills and when it looked like they were going to make it came Exitor  
the leader of the evil army and he walked right against the three kings they took their swords and  
they began to fight.  
And right then when it looked worst Barsamir stabbed Exitor and all of evil army disappeared. The  
three kings went home to their countries to build them up and they all lived happily ever after.

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This text is clearly similar to the text, "The biggest battle", presented in chapter 7, section 7.5.3. The two writers have obviously cooperated in the preparatory phase and perhaps also when they wrote their narratives in the classroom.<sup>200</sup> The introductory phrases are identical; they have used the same names, but the battles described are dissimilar, as are the two stories. Thus the contribution by each pupil is seen as an individual contribution although the resemblance to the neighbouring text is conspicuous; however, the present study focuses on

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<sup>200</sup> It is also possible that the pupils have taken the basic ideas for their narratives from a PC game or film, so far unknown to this researcher.

the substantial thematic content; consequently any pupil narrative can be interpreted in spite of its possible resemblance to other pupil narratives.<sup>201</sup>

### 5.4.3 Response and editing

In the response and editing phase, the teacher or the other pupils, parents or friends may, of course, also influence the text by giving informal response. When studying the response and editing phase in general, Perez (2001) emphasises the teacher's role in encouraging revision by giving the pupils appropriate feedback. Perez stresses the importance of having writing conferences with pupils, asking questions about their texts, and encouraging them to revise. Pupils may also revise their own text based upon self-criticism. Using response-groups of two to four pupils is also a way of getting the pupils to improve both their own text and those of their peers. Dysthe (1987: 177) points to the importance of values and attitudes in this respect. She discusses the problems that may arise when comments automatically lead to editing without the writer reflecting on what s/he would like to do with the text.<sup>202</sup>

In TALE, the formal response is visible in Blackboard in the various triads' correspondence. Response in TALE has been carried out in the written form. This may differ substantially from face to face peer response in groups. To provide adequate feedback to someone who is not present in the room and can benefit from extra linguistic communication is different from conventional oral classroom response. Bäckström and Nilsson (2005) discuss the response and editing process in pool D in TALE and emphasise that the response must be experienced by the receiver as both informed and meaningful in order to instil a need for revision and improvement. Furthermore, they find that the power of response is two-sided. On the one hand, producing and sharing response connect the writer and the text and help individuals to improve their texts. The response gives credit to the writer. On the other hand, the response-giving is also a social relationship between the writer and the readers. The pupils communicate feedback on each other's narratives in a positive manner. In pool D, the fictional narratives were produced in pairs; consequently their texts are not part of the

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<sup>201</sup> Questions related to the authenticity of the individual narratives will be discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>202</sup> In TALE, there is uncertainty related to whether or not, or how, any informal feedback prior to publication in Blackboard has been carried out. Most likely this has been done differently in the four autonomous pools. Björklund (2005) discusses how this was done in pool A.

selection interpreted in this study, which focuses on the individually produced narrative. Whether this has led to a more active response phase in pool D compared to the other pools has not been scrutinised in the present thesis. Since peer response is not at issue in this study the quality of the revision work with regard to the attention paid to the response has not been analysed. To find instances where the pupil writer has changed the narrative profoundly as a result of the response is difficult. This may suggest that there is a tendency to pay little attention to the response in the subsequent editing phase. It may also suggest that the response has been given informally by, for instance, classmates and educators in the classroom before the first editions were even published in TALE. In a random selection of response sequences in the other pools, it is actually less demanding to find examples in TALE of ineffective response, in the sense that the pupil writer has not paid much attention to the response in the revised version. The following sample suggests how the response was often given in Blackboard. The first example shows the feedback given by a fellow pupil to “The Vampire” where Zidane is the main character. In order to make the pupils and students anonymous in the following excerpts, their names have been substituted by “xxxxxxx”.

<b>Author:</b> xxxxxxx	<a href="#">Previous Post</a>   <a href="#">Next Post</a>
<b>Creation date:</b> Monday, November 24, 2003 12:47:27 PM CET	
<b>Date last modified:</b> Monday, November 24, 2003 12:47:27 PM CET	
<b>Total views:</b> 5 <b>Your views:</b> 1	
<b>--<a href="#">Hide Parent Post</a>--</b>	
WEEEE!!!!!!!!!!!!	
<hr/>	
it was a nice story.... many funny names!!!! it was great!!!!	
hugs =)	

The example demonstrates the credit provided. A genuinely positive response helps construct the relationship between reader and writer, the final “hugs” likewise. However, there is little information to assist the writer in a subsequent editing phase. The response provides recognition, though, and shows the writer that there is a real life receiver of his narrative. It is also important to keep in mind that the response might be relevant and adequate even if it is difficult to trace it in the second draft. The fact that there is a real life receiver who will respond to what the pupil writer has written may influence the writing process prior to

publication. To know that a fellow pupil in a Nordic country will read the text may influence the process from the very start. Thus the notion of the authenticity of the writing process is supported.

The next excerpt shows the feedback provided by the student teacher on “The Vampire”.

<b>Author:</b>	<a href="#">Previous Post</a>
<b>Creation date:</b> Monday, December 1, 2003 4:22:03 PM CET	
<b>Date last modified:</b> Monday, December 1, 2003 4:22:03 PM CET	
<b>Total views:</b> 5 <b>Your views:</b> 1	
<b>--<a href="#">Show Parent Post</a>--</b>	
Hi xxxxxxx!	
Wow, what a fairytale..! You have in an interesting way managed get vampyries, dragons and wizards into one text. I really liked the names you gave the characters and the way you described Pomovio "He was the size of a truck". The story was very good!	
I would, though, like to know why the wizard Vivi came to Zidane for help and how they finally won the vampyries. Was it skill or magic?	
A small spelling check: "whit" should be "with", "webon" is spelled "weapon" and "greet" is "great".	
Best wishes, xxxxxxx	

The student teacher shows her enthusiasm for the narrative in the introductory phrase. Feedback is given both on the development of the plot and on language. A study of the final version of the narrative, which was submitted 8 December 2003, reveals that the student's feedback is hardly evident in the text.<sup>203</sup> It is difficult to find any changes made at all, except for the first “with” in line four and “weapon” in line five, which have been corrected. These are two of the three spelling corrections which are suggested by the student teacher. The third word, “great”, has not been corrected.<sup>204</sup> The changes from the first to the second edition are minor and involve spelling. The student teacher's question related to plot is overlooked. The first edition of the narrative seems to be the pupil's final edition with regard to the setting, the characterisation, the plot and the theme of the narrative.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> See the second edition of “The vampire”, which is included in the appendix to this thesis.

<sup>204</sup> The remaining four instances where “whit” has been used have not been corrected. Likewise, the two instances where “greet” is used, are left uncorrected.

<sup>205</sup> This again supports my decision to focus on the first edition of the narratives to get a substantial number of narrative to select from.

The following excerpt shows the feedback given to “The Big Batman”. There was no evident response in Blackboard given by the pupil members of the triad. This is the response the text received from the student teacher:

**Creation date:** Monday, December 15, 2003 5:02:09 PM CET  
**Date last modified:** Monday, December 15, 2003 5:02:09 PM CET  
**Total views:** 1 **Your views:** 1

Hi xxxxxxxx!

First of all: I'm sorry for the late response...

I think you have written a very funny fairy tale! It was nice to read a story like this about tough Batman.  
You have used a figure that we normally don't find in a fairy tale and made him a fairy tale creature.  
You have a wide imagination!

Have a look at some words that you could correct:

couldnt, should be "couldn't" (= could not)  
gaved Batman, should be "gave Batman"  
leaved him there, should be "leave him there"

I wish you a very merry Christman, xxxxxxxx (Batman...)!

Love xxxxxxxx

In this example, the comments are related to both content and language. However, it seems as if the quite essential ironic point of making Batman chase Puuha-Pete has been overlooked. The Norwegian student teacher is perhaps not aware of the Finnish names for Bob the Builder and the Sandman.<sup>206</sup> There are two comments that the student teacher makes which demonstrate that the EFL status of the students also influences the communication in TALE. Firstly, the student teacher writes, “You have a wide imagination”, apparently without recognising the ambivalence of the statement. The phrase is probably well-intended by the EFL student teacher, however, it is not entirely positive.<sup>207</sup> Secondly, she writes, “I wish you a merry Christman, xxxxxxxx (Batman...)!” Thereby she suggests that there is a connection between the third person main character of the narrative and the writer of the narrative.<sup>208</sup> To draw parallels between the fictional character, The Big Batman, and the writer of the narrative is perhaps not something she would have done if she had reflected on the matter and received

<sup>206</sup> The Norwegian names are Byggmester Bob and Ole Lukkøye respectively.

<sup>207</sup> To have a wide imagination may also suggest an unsound excessive inclination.

<sup>208</sup> In fact, she suggests that the pupil writer is the big, fat Batman.

advice from the teacher educators before she submitted her response. "The Big Batman" was not submitted in a second edition.

In the next example, "the red princess", the response was carried out according to the plan. Firstly, there were the two responses provided by the fellow pupils in the triad, finally, the student teacher's comment.

<b>Subject:</b> the red princess	
<b>Subject:</b> Re: the red princess	
<b>Author:</b> xxxxxxx	
<b>Creation date:</b> Tuesday, November 18, 2003 1:27:24 PM CET	<a href="#">Previous Post</a>   <a href="#">Next Post</a>
<b>Date last modified:</b> Tuesday, November 18, 2003 1:27:24 PM CET	
<b>Total views:</b> 1 <b>Your views:</b> 1	
<p>I like you fairy tale. You are missing a word in the sentece: The two frinds did.... How was the prince?</p> <p>Hallo from xxxxxxx</p>	
<b>Subject:</b> Re: the red princess	
<b>Author:</b> <a href="#">xxxxxxx</a>	<a href="#">Previous Post</a>   <a href="#">Next Post</a>
<b>Creation date:</b> Monday, November 24, 2003 12:52:44 PM CET	
<b>Date last modified:</b> Monday, November 24, 2003 12:52:44 PM CET	
<b>Total views:</b> 2 <b>Your views:</b> 2	
<p>--<a href="#">Show Parent Post</a>--</p> <p>That was a nice story! ;=)I don't really know what to say!?</p>	
<b>Subject:</b> Re: the red princess	
<b>Subject:</b> Re: the red princess	
<b>Subject:</b> Re: the red princess	
<b>Author:</b> <a href="#">student teacher</a>	
<b>Creation date:</b> Sunday, December 7, 2003 1:38:59 PM CET	<a href="#">Previous Post</a>
<b>Date last modified:</b> Sunday, December 7, 2003 1:38:59 PM CET	
<b>Total views:</b> 1 <b>Your views:</b> 1	
<p>--<a href="#">Show Parent Post</a>--</p> <p>Hi xxxxxxx!</p> <p>That was a really exciting fairy tale and different from other fairy tales - cool! You have used some good fairy tale elements like a hero (the prince) and once upon a time.</p> <p>However I would like to know some more about the prince. What is he like and is he a real hero? How do the meet exactly and do they just fall in love without talking to each other first?</p> <p>Remember a headline?</p> <p>Some spelling mistakes: the past tense of "try" is "tried" and not "tierd". "scond" is spelled "second". "The two friends did not what to do." You have forgotten to write "know".</p> <p>Best wishes, xxxxxxx</p>	

The first pupil gives feedback on both content and language, whereas the second pupil's feedback clearly demonstrates the inadequacy that the pupil may feel: "I don't really know what to say!?"<sup>209</sup> She says that the story is nice; thereby she provides the positive recognition of the narrative. The student teacher also starts with a positive remark related to the content. She then emphasises the narrative's placement in the fairy tale genre and adds questions related to the plot. In conclusion, she comments on the spelling mistakes.

In spite of the feedback, there is no second edition submitted in Blackboard of this text. It seems as if the pupil writer finished the story in one leap in the first edition. To draw generalising conclusions on the basis of such a limited sample of response excerpts is not advisable. Even if they were typical of the material, one should be careful about giving too much credit to such qualitative finds without interviewing the participants about the process prior to publication of the first draft. In this research connection, a discussion of this phase is relevant because it suggests that the basic content of the story that pupils narrate is not altered from the edition that was first published.<sup>210</sup>

#### **5.4.4 Evaluation and publication**

In general, both the teacher's evaluation and the pupils' self-evaluation and peer-evaluation constitute the evaluation process of any process-oriented writing project. Possibilities for publication of the texts are, for example, a reading corner in the school hallway, a class newspaper, a local newspaper, or an Internet-based network, like TALE, where the narratives are available not only to the teacher, but to others as well. This differs from the conventional school situation where teacher feedback reins supreme, to a more authentic situation where a relatively composite audience constitutes the reading public. In Rahbek (2005: 205), "The benefits of electronic publishing" are connected to the authenticity implied in the interaction with other pupils. Most pools have implemented evaluation tasks where the pupils can voice their opinions.<sup>211</sup> The positive conclusions that are drawn are based on the reports gathered in discussions with educators at exchange meetings. The reports from the evaluation suggest that

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<sup>209</sup> Giving feedback in English is perhaps challenging, and not something they have practised previously.

<sup>210</sup> Hence the decision in this thesis to study the first edition of the narrative may be justifiable; this issue will be discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>211</sup> These evaluation tasks have not been available to the researcher.

the pupils' reception of the writing activity in TALE is, on the whole, positive (Rahbek: 2005).

The TALE members share some concepts about narration which influence the response and the writing of texts. In addition, they have various preset rules defined by the teachers to act in accordance with. They meet each new text with some underlying ideas about what to expect from the narrative.

### **5.5 The formulaic TALE narrative**

In the different pools, the teachers have given different tasks to the pupils; there are different types of non fictional and fictional narratives, ranging from biographies to legends and from fantasy to fairy tales. The underlying formulas of the genre indirectly pave the way for the content of the pupil narrative. According to Cawelti (1980: 122), "A formula is a combination or synthesis of a number of specific cultural conventions with a more universal story form or archetype". In addition, the instructions from the teachers guide the pupils in various directions in the different tasks. The pools all had one or two introductory tasks where the pupils presented themselves and their hometown. These tasks are not accounted for in this overview of the formulaic narrative but examples are given in sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5.<sup>212</sup> Based on the information in Blackboard it is evident that the different pools had different frameworks for the narration, and according to the set-up in TALE, the task sample comprises the following type of tasks:

- A predefined topic where the teacher instructions were inspired by the legends attached to the different member towns in the pool
- A chain story written in turns by all the triad members
- A predefined setting where the teachers constructed preset beginnings and ends to the narratives
- A modern fairy tale, where the fairy tale introduction, "Once upon a time", was applied. In one pool, the pupils got props to write science fiction stories within this fairy tale frame.

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<sup>212</sup> The biographies and hometown tasks are also discussed in relationship to the selection procedures in section 6.2. of chapter 6.

Such different starters are supposedly intended to inspire the pupils in their own narrative writing. Simultaneously such instructions influence the pupil produced content. In pool A, for instance, there was a fourth task type labelled, “My story”, where the pupils were free to write anything they wanted. Very few pupils managed to complete this last task within the time stipulated, and therefore there was an insufficient number of narratives submitted by the finalisation of the TALE project.<sup>213</sup> The texts that were written within the four categories listed above were all what may be labelled narrative text. The TALE partners shared some notions about what a narrative is, and the narratives in TALE are made within the formulaic framework indicated above.

### 5.5.1 TALE’s definition of narrative

The term ‘narrative’ is used in various contexts in the present study, and there are many ways of defining the word ‘narrative’, depending on whether the context is literary theory or just part of everyday language. The former denotations of the term are discussed in chapter 2. In the present context of pupil-written stories, the latter denotations need to operate alongside the theoretical ones. In *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2000), for example, the term has five definitions: 1) an account or story, as of events, experiences, etc. 2) the part of a literary work, etc., that relates events 3) the process or technique of narrating 4) telling a story: *a narrative poem* 5) of or relating to narration: *narrative art*. According to the first explanation of the word ‘narrative’ in the dictionary, it is evident that the two concepts ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ are synonyms in everyday language. This seems to be the case in the TALE project as well. In TALE, many of the participants have shared a definition of the term ‘narrative’ made in one of the publications of the TALE network by Lassen (2003:1): “[...] it can be very short or very long or anything in between, and it can be told in any language.” Likewise, it does not matter whether it is fiction, or whether a narrative is based on a true story. What matters most is the way in which it is told. In order to be well-constructed, the plot must be whole and comprise a beginning, a middle and an end. The narrative starts somewhere, goes somewhere interesting or meaningful, and ends where it feels right that it should end. The simplicity of the definition underlines the everyday notion of the narrative. It

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<sup>213</sup> According to one of the teachers present in one of the classrooms during the production of these texts, most of the pupils initiated their narratives with the phrase “Once upon a time”.

is the kind of genre where everyone can produce something meaningful. The narratives can be told by pupils in EFL, too.

The following extracts from Blackboard are examples of submissions within the different narrative categories represented in TALE. The different task types will be discussed further in connection with the selection process accounted for in chapter 6. In the following section, the history of the participating towns in the TALE network is central.

### **5.5.2 A predefined topic**

The text type presented as an example of a narrative with a predefined topic is the legend-inspired narrative. This task caused a substantial amount of preparatory work for the class teachers. Table 5 shows the activity among the class teachers related to this topic. In the correspondence, the instructions for the pupils' task on legends is prepared and negotiated among the class teachers.

Table 5 Pool D Entries to discussions about legends

[POOL D FRIGHTENING WRITING](#) > [COMMUNICATIONS](#) > [GROUP PAGES](#) > [AA DYNAMIC RATHER THAN FORCED](#) > [GROUP DISCUSSION BOARD](#)  
> [COURSE DISCUSSIONS:ABOUT LEGENDS](#)



## Course Discussions:ABOUT LEGENDS

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/4/03 2:08 PM	<a href="#">texts</a>	Eriksen, Karin	Published	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/19/03 12:22 PM	<a href="#">To Karin</a>	Kallas, Liise	Published	8	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/28/03 8:50 AM	<a href="#">about posting the legends</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/28/03 11:26 PM	<a href="#">Legends and the deadline...</a>	Billkvam, Anne Marie	Published	3	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/2/03 9:02 PM	<a href="#">The deadline for the original legends +++</a>	Billkvam, Anne Marie	Published	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/5/03 12:47 PM	<a href="#">The original story</a>	Eriksen, Karin	Published	4	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/10/03 10:05 AM	<a href="#">legend webpage</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/16/03 9:58 AM	<a href="#">To Karin</a>	Kallas, Liise	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/16/03 11:59 AM	<a href="#">Responses</a>	Eriksen, Karin	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/4/04 4:43 PM	<a href="#">The oroginal legend of Akershus</a>	Billkvam, Anne Marie	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/9/04 3:14 PM	<a href="#">Back to school...</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/10/04 2:50 PM	<a href="#">check out legends</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/10/04 3:33 PM	<a href="#">HOMEPAGE!!!</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	4	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3/11/04 9:40 PM	<a href="#">Homepage - please respond!</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	3	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4/13/04 7:32 PM	<a href="#">Legends on the homepage</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/6/04 10:09 PM	<a href="#">legends homepage</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	4	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/12/04 8:16 PM	<a href="#">Again: legends' homepage</a>	Kindt-Sarojärvi, Krista	Published	6	6

Select All

As can be noted from the outline of the correspondence, the class teachers<sup>214</sup> presented the original legends attached to the various castles and fortresses. “The original story” was submitted by the Danish class teacher 5 December 2003. “The original legend of Akershus” was submitted by the Norwegian class teacher 4 January 2004. These stories serve as preparation for the work in class. The class teachers submitted the original story and also discussed forms of publication in submissions dating from 4 November 2003 to 12 May 2004.

<sup>214</sup> All names listed are names of class teachers, and not students or pupils. They are therefore not made anonymous.

Apart from the discussion in Blackboard, they met during three exchange visits in the same time span. The following text demonstrates the typical restrictive effect that the historic references seem to have on the pupil versions of the legends. It was submitted 8 December 2003 by a Finnish pupil in pool D and downloaded for the present research purpose 6 February 2006.

### **Why did Koldinghus burn down?**

A long time ago there was a castle. It was called Koldinghus. In March 1808 there lived a boy and a girl. They met at midnight. They went to the castle and found a table. They lit a candle, which gave them light. They kissed and accidentally the candle fell down. There was also a petrol lamp and they set the whole room on fire.

The castle was in flames for two days. All the other The girl jumped out of the window and died. The boy went down the stairs, but fell and burnt in the castle. people died too.

Koldinghus is the castle in the Danish town, Kolding, which was one of the member towns in this particular pool. This narrative is quite straightforward and sticks to the basic plot without adding too many imaginative details. The Finnish pupil wrote about the legend attached to the hometown of one of the other triad members, whereas the Danish or Norwegian triad member wrote about the Finnish legend. The purpose of cultural exchange is thus underlined.

The next text example presented here is written by a Danish pupil in 'AJ Triad 4 – Dewey' in pool A. It was submitted 6 November 2003 and downloaded for this research purpose 11 November 2003.

### **~The Micetower~™**

Once upon a time there was a Bishop in Germany, he was a BAD and EVIL mouse. On the time he was Bishop there was a BIG famine. The Bishop had enough food and things to drink because he was a RICH mouse, all the POOR mice didn't had any food or any thing. One day some poor mice came to the Bishop and begged him of food, but the Bishop

didn't give them any food, when he didn't want to hear them any more he put them into a barn and set fire to it and he laughed and said " Listen to the shrieking from the mice in the barn isn't it NICE to hear." In the evening when the Bishop set in his living room and ate, came a BIG troop of POOR mice and stormed the Castle and ate almost all his food and drink all his wine. The next day the Bishop got 40 cats to guard his Castle but that didn't stop the BIG troop of POOR mice.

And it didn't help that he moved out to another big Castle the troop of mice just followed him. He got some of his troops to build a wary tall and big tower in the middle of a lake he didn't believed that the troop of mice would try to get him here, but he was wrong, in a few hours the troop came and swim to the tower and crawled into the windows and the bishop ran to the roof of the tower, but the mice followed him and they eat him up.

This text was not submitted as a legend, but as a fairy tale. The title, "The Micetower", connotes the German castle with the same nickname. Although Germany is not included in the TALE project, it is a neighbouring country to Denmark where the pupil writer lives. The pupil has apparently been inspired by the legend attached to the German castle, The Micetower in Bingen.<sup>215</sup> The plot is closely connected to the legend of the castle. In the legend, the bishop exploits the population through his customs tower on the river Rhine. The pupil writer's contributions are imaginative, the novel element of making the bishop and the people into mice quite intriguing. This example shows that also outside the frame of the preset legend-task, there are legend-inspired narratives. It may look as if preparatory work intended for one separate task is applied in another task. But this text belongs to the category of pupil fairy tales although the reference to a specific legend is clear-cut.

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<sup>215</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.europe4kids.it/fairytales/micetower.htm> (Accessed 18 May 2009) for more information about the Micetower in Bingen.

### 5.5.3 A chain story

In both pools A and D, the pupils have written chain stories within the triads where one of the pupils in the triad starts the story, then sends it to a fellow pupil in the next country. This pupil writes the second part of the text within two weeks before sending it to the next triad member in the third country. In pool D, the teachers have provided the pupils with the following criteria:

- 1 chain story = 1 round (5 paragraphs)
- about 2 weeks / paragraph
- **min 50 words** (the intro has 43 words, so the paragraph should be about 5 lines min.)  
**Times New Roman, size 12**

The teachers have also created a ready-made introduction, which narrows both the characterisation and the setting down into being a family moving into a derelict house. Still there are numerous tales told from an introduction like this:

One fine summer's day the Wilkinsons moved into no. 13, Woodland Drive. The previous owner of the house had died 6 months before and the house had stood empty since then. After clearing all the cobwebs and removing old wallpaper, the Wilkinsons .....

From this start, a Norwegian girl in Oslo in triad 'AL Gibson' in pool D completed the beginning of the chain story. She published it in TALE 17 February 2004. Her contribution was downloaded 28 March 2006 for the present research purpose.

... found a very big dog. They knew that the previous owner had talked about his dog that went missing a year ago, but they couldn't believe that he had hidden the dog behind the wallpaper. They took the dog out from the wallpaper and gave him water. Amazingly enough the dog was still alive and he drank thirsty! It was a very cute dog, it was brown with white spots, but suddenly the eyes of the dog started to glow and a ghost entered the room!

This is a narrative which involves several pupil writers, and also the teachers through their introductory paragraph. In this particular story, the first writer determines that this is going to be a story about a dog and a ghost. This piece of the narrative is sent to a Finnish pupil, who writes his part, before sending it to a Danish pupil for continuation. Clearly this is not the work of an individual pupil. With regard to the ending of the narrative, no preset conclusion is

prescribed in the teacher instruction to this narrative, so we do not know if the main characters will survive their adventure, as is the case in the next formula presented here.

#### 5.5.4 A predefined setting

The chain story formula presented above leaves the ending open whereas the stories with a predefined setting, submitted under the headline, “A beginning and an end”, end with the main character being exhausted, but safely in bed. In pool C, for example, the title and the beginning of one of the stories are as shown:

*A beginning and an end...*

*That morning I was hurrying to school because I had overslept. At that moment I did not know what the day would bring. Just around the corner....*

*....I closed the door behind me and lied<sup>216</sup> down on my bed. I was exhausted after this day.*

These two phrases outline a story taking place on an ordinary weekday, told in the first person by a narrator who overslept and is either a pupil, works at a school, or at least has an errand at a school on that particular morning. The events that the first person narrator meets are exhausting, but not deadly; the first person narrator ends the day safely in bed. Between the two phrases, which outline the beginning and the end of the narrative, the pupils make their own individual narratives. Swedish and Icelandic pupils in the eighth grade exchanged texts with Danish pupils in the seventh grade in pool C. Backlund (2005) describes how the student teachers decided on this task. Pupils were encouraged to use their imagination, and other than that, no particular guidelines were provided. In spite of the relatively constricted boundary, the variety in terms of choice of topic is considerable. Some pupils write hair-raising narratives about accidents and gloomy scoundrels; others create everyday depictions of their

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<sup>216</sup> This teacher-made grammatical error has been published in Blackboard seemingly undetected by the educators in the pool. Every pupil narrative in this task consequently repeats it.

pop idols within this framework. A Swedish pupil has written the following text within this frame. The text was published 4 December 2003 for pool C in triad, 'Gr K Dunderklumpen', and downloaded 27 March 2004 for the present research purpose.

## *A beginning and an end...*

*That morning I was hurrying to school because I had overslept.*

*At that moment I did not know what the day would bring. Just around the corner I saw Elvis Presley singing for many kids on the sidewalk but Elvis is died and this was a man playing Elvis. I waste at him singing for a wiled, than I relies the time and vent to school. I was fife minutes late but the teeter did not nudists that. In the end of the school I went home but than I so Iron maiden guys was kicking Elvis and I start help him.*

*First I took one of the Iron Maiden guitar and give it to Elvis*

*And hi sang and sang in till the Iron maiden guys fell don and deaf. They give up and run a way. I got home and I closed the door behind me and lied down on my bed. I was exhausted after this day.*

The pupil has chosen to create a story about an Elvis lookalike within this frame. A conflict between the musical genre that Elvis Presley represents, and the heavy metal genre, which Iron Maiden represents, is what the main character, the first person narrator, gets involved in. The next narrative is totally different. The text was submitted in the triad, 'Gr P Kaldbakur', 4 December 2003 by an Icelandic pupil. It was downloaded 27 March 2004 for the present research purpose.

## *A beginning and an end...*

*That morning I was hurrying to school because I had overslept.*

*At that moment I did not know what the day would bring. Just around the corner I saw a man. He was watching me and when I got to school he was still watching me. I was so scared that I peed in my pants. And when I got home he was still there just staring at me. And I got in I watched TV, and after that I got upstairs and did my homework and when I stared out the window I saw that same man again. He was still there, in the same position as always and I was thinking about going outside and ask him what he was doing, so I did. When I got outside, and I was going towards him I just saw it was A ABERTASING sign. I was angry and happy at the same time. I turned around and went in again. I closed the door behind me and lied down on my bed. I was exhausted after this day*

The first person narrator, who is hurrying to school on this morning, gets scared because he thinks he is being followed. The pupil describes a complexity in the emotional state of the protagonist, who is angry and happy at the same time. This text is well written; suspense is sustained in a prefigurative manner. There are few spelling mistakes, and it is therefore remarkable that the word that gives the clue to the whole story is almost the only word with incorrect spelling: “A ABERTAISING sign” is most likely an advertising sign. The confinements that such props create notwithstanding, the individual responses to the task are versatile. Still, the thematic content is guided in the direction of creating a happy ending.

### **5.5.5 The modern fairy tales**

The next formula invites the pupils to write within the fairy tale genre. The introductory phrase, “Once upon a time”, is provided by the teachers in the instruction. In the following example, a pupil in triad ‘Group O The Rose Tree’ in pool B submitted the text, “Jack the jerk”, on 8 May 2003. It was downloaded 13 November 2003 for the present research purpose. Undoubtedly the title, “Jack the jerk”, suggests a story about someone who is stupid or unlucky, or simply a twerp or an anti-hero.

#### **Jack the jerk**

Once upon a time there was a jerk called jack and he lived in the city of fool and he was not interesting at all. He did no interesting thing. His only work was to be a jerk and everyone who knew him called him a jerk except an old fool who told him that he had courage because he did not know Fear. Ones he went to a dark castle he wanted to learn fear and the old man had told that the right Place was there. Inside he met goblins and orks and trolls but Jack was a jerk so hi did not fear. The monsters could not understand. They thought he had a reason to not fear them so they thought he was a wizard or something and ran away. After passing tons of orks and goblins he finally came to the throne room where the dark lord himself was sitting. He saw jack took him and tied him to the castle gate. Now jack thought that he had met fear and the only thing he could think of was that he was lucky that the dark lord didn’t turn him into a rubber duck. And of this story you can learn that you should not write stories that doesn’t make sense and that only stupid people forces students to make bad stories like this.

The finalisation is a direct message to the teachers and could have been an utterance in an evaluation of the TALE project. And if this narrative were subjected to interpretation, the playful approach would have been an issue. In the Bakhtinian sense, an anti-hero will

challenge the existing state of things. The name, Jack, also means an ordinary fellow, or jack. The project of this Jack is to learn to know fear. But no matter how many “tons” of monsters he meets, he does not experience fear before he is tied up by the “[...] dark lord himself”. To ask with Bakhtin: (1981: 69) “[...] is the author quoting with reverence or on the contrary with irony, with a smirk”, becomes relevant. A dawning suspicion of the ironic style involved in this narrative is confirmed when Jack’s fear of being transformed into a rubber duck is revealed. The travesty of the task and the ridicule of the teacher’s instruction are rebellious in the Bakhtinian sense. But not all the pupil fairy tales in TALE are as ironic and mutinous as this particular story.

The sci-fi genre is also represented among the narratives of this category. A pupil in Finland in ‘AT Triad 11 Kopernicus’, submitted the following text 29 September 2003. It was downloaded for the present research purpose 6 February 2007.

## The Spaceman

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Otto. His best friend was a spaceman. Always when Otto was in trouble, the space man came and saved him. One day when Otto was playing with his friends, Lucas and Vicky, they saw a light on the sky. It was an alien! Lucas, Vicky and Otto screamed. The alien came down to them.

- O no! said Otto. I must call my friend, the spaceman. Now the alien picked up a gun. Otto picked up his mobile phone and called the spaceman. The spaceman came and saved te children from the alien. When the children were saved he hit the alien and the alien flyed away and never came back.

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The title, “The Spaceman”, from the science fiction genre, blends unstrained with the fairy tale introduction “Once upon a time”. In a space setting with scary aliens, instead of fairy tale

trolls, the object which brings assistance and victory to the true hero is the mobile phone, not a magic stone or a magic sword, like Beowulf's Hrunting (Goodrich, 1997). In this narrative, the loyalty towards the space setting is consistent, a thorough genre mixture achieved. In an interpretation, this text would have been compared to the possible intertexts it refers to. The sword and the mobile phone as magic objects would have been juxtaposed.

With regard to the next text, written by a Finnish pupil in 'Ayy Triad 18' – Piaget 13 November 2003, the intertextuality aspect is more subtle. It was downloaded for the present research purpose 29 January 2004.

## **Nobody**

Once upon a time there was a girl, without a name. Everybody called her nobody cause she didn't talk, so after a time they didn't care about her.

The girl was really sad because when she was a little girl she loved to sing, where ever she was, what ever she did she sang. Everybody said that she where a really good singer, so every body knew her. But one day she couldn't sing, when she tried there came no sound. The little girl became so sad that she stopped talking.

One day Nobody where walking around the town where she lived thinking why she moved to this awful town. She had moved to this town because in the town where she lived when she was a little girl everybody wanted her to sing but she couldn't so she moved away to hide. Now ten years later she thought that no one would remember her if she would move back there.

One week later she walked in to the town from where she left ten years ago. When she walked through the town she saw a boy who looked familiar. When she was packing up her things somebody knocked on the door. She wonder who it could be when she opened the door. Behind the door stood all her friends (who now are grown up) and they shouted: welcome back Kim!

They remember her! Kim where so glad that she started to cry. What is wrong? Asked her friends?  
can't sing, she said.  
That doesn't matter, we still like you! They said, and we bet that you can sing if you want.

The rest of the evening was just like magic to Kim cause she and her friends find her singing voice and satt and sang all night to the morning light

This is the kind of story that clearly invites an interpretation, not necessarily because of the intertextual reference or the play with novel elements, but more because of its clear pronunciation of pupil produced content. This text shows that the narrative does not need an ambiguous turn of elements from intertexts in order to express pupil produced content. The narrative includes little reference to other intertexts.<sup>217</sup> “Nobody” is about a girl with no name where the lack of a name is perhaps a metonym for the loss of identity of the main character, which again is symbolised through the loss of her voice. She goes back to her old hometown in order to regain her voice and succeeds when she is included in society and taken into the friendly sphere of her former friends. The fact that she is accepted even if she has lost her primary talent for singing is crucial to her maturation into a whole person. The pupil writer did not make any corrections or changes based on the response from fellow pupils and the student teacher in the triad from the first to the final version of the text submitted in Blackboard but simply wrote, “My first version is my final version”, under the final submission. This may suggest that she was quite satisfied with her narrative. What about misspellings and grammatical errors? Is the writer either lazy, or just content with what she communicates? The communicative content is given primary importance and would have been of primary importance in an interpretation as well. The straightforwardness of the text in this respect does not seem to harm its meaning-constructive quality. An identity search is announced through the title and sustained “[...] to the morning light” at the very end of the narrative. Here the echo of other texts does not prevail upon the narrative. The pupil narrative is both unique and ordinary in its metaphorical apparatus; voice as metonymic to the whole person is quite common, but the collective effort in this voiceless character's circle of friends may be seen to develop voice into a symbol of solidarity in this particular text. This text

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<sup>217</sup> Perhaps with the exception of Tove Janson's oeuvre.

shows that the narrative does not have to lean on a specific intertextual reference in order to create pupil produced content. In the interpretation of narratives, it will be important not to force an intertextual reference upon the pupil text.

## **5.6 Summing up**

This chapter has discussed the TALE narratives and the pupils in the roles of reader and writer. Examples of the different formulas employed in the production of narratives are discussed to describe the framework in which the narratives are created. The effect of the discrepancy between age, proficiency in language and ICT, as to the construction of triads, has been commented on. Examples of how the pupils address each other and present themselves have been given. The TALE readers and writers share some notions about what a narrative is, and this shared understanding of the various stages in the production of narratives is considered. The pupils are not inclined to change their narrative content post-response. Even spelling and grammar may be left unchanged in later versions of their texts. The communicative and creative content of the text is focused by the writer. Ready-made introduction and finalisation seem to provide a structure that assists the pupils in their creation of coherent texts. Nevertheless, such formulas confine the narratives into certain settings, plots and characterisations. The fictional narratives written by the TALE pupils are influenced by traditional fairy tales, but also by global, contemporary, popular culture. Well-known elements from PC games and TV shows are often found. Likewise, films and novels inspired by Norse mythology, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, are sources of inspiration in the pupils' own narrative production. Their heroic main characters overcome obstacles, solve conflicts and win prizes. Thematically the pupils are also preoccupied with prevalent topics in popular contemporary culture, like becoming famous, or dieting, or game-addiction. The impact of modern media is overriding and a blend of elements from different sources quite consistent.



## **6 Methodological questions**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the methodological questions in connection with the interpretation of the pupil narratives are discussed. To discuss what type of narrative texts will be selected for further interpretation involves an assessment of the various text types in the material. As the presentation - in chapter 5 - of the different TALE narratives has already suggested, the different tasks provide various degrees of freedom of narrative scope for the pupil produced content in the various texts. Hence the quality of pre-given instructions and confinements needs to be considered. In this particular material, the fairy tale assignment seems to be the most unrestrained task, and texts belonging to this narrative genre are qualitatively selected for further interpretation. The traditional fairy tales seem to constitute what may be called the immediate intertexts for the pupil fairy tales. The fairy tale genre has been subjected to substantial research, which becomes part of the reception of fairy tales. The well-known research may be seen as part of the intertextual reference. Hence some of the well-established research on the fairy tale genre will be considered briefly. The pupil narratives will be studied with a focus on the intertextual practice. The aesthetic designs of the texts include both form and content, and the pupils respond to formal requirements differently. In some cases, for example, the exterior design may support the narrative content. A qualitative text interpretation method where the texts are approached as literary texts will be developed to study the pupil produced content. A literary analysis in this study, where text is juxtaposed to intertext(s), will focus on an interpretation of novel elements in pupil narratives. The pupils apply well-known narrative elements and rearrange them, and one may fairly ask whether the texts are still original. Are they valid, and consequently, is an interpretation of such texts valid? Is the comparison of text with its intertexts and the interpretation of novel elements going to give the intended information about those aspects of identity that are given voice to in this narrative discourse? But first, to determine which of the text submissions can be called narratives is central to the applicability of the material.

## **6.2 A corpus of narratives**

The determination of the number of narratives in TALE has been exposed to various estimates. Because some texts are submitted in the messenger file, and not as Word documents in attachments, the exact number is difficult to determine. Pupils write both short messages and longer narrative texts. The shorter messages are submitted in the messenger file. Some narratives are submitted as attachments as intended, whereas others are written straight into the messenger file. To count the narratives is therefore problematic without reading all submissions. The presupposed number of narratives one takes as a starting point for the estimate is also dependent on what text type qualifies as a narrative text. To differentiate between different types of texts is central in this research connection as the production of pupil produced content varies from one task type to the next as accounted for in chapter 5.

### **6.2.1 The size of the material**

In Kjartansson (2005: 89), it is claimed that there are “[...] some 5000 narratives” in TALE. Such a large number of narrative text types appears to be somewhat overestimated unless one chooses to regard all pupil submissions in TALE as narrative or count all editions of the same text. Probably the given estimate is a calculation of the total number of entries or submissions made by the pupils in TALE, irrespective of type of text. Given that there are approximately 400 pupils participating in the project, the indication is that each individual pupil has produced 12.5 narratives. This estimate could be a relevant figure for the approximate number of submissions per pupil and implies that there are around 5000 narratives altogether in TALE when second and third editions of the same text are counted.<sup>218</sup> In this thesis, the first editions, which were published in the TALE network in Blackboard, are studied; this question has been discussed earlier in the thesis.<sup>219</sup> Broadly speaking, one may claim that the substantial content is apparently created in the first edition of the pupil narrative. Several texts were only published in first editions or in second editions where no alterations were made from the first to the second edition. To include second and third editions would therefore only be possible

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<sup>218</sup> An unquantified number of texts are submitted only in the first edition.

<sup>219</sup> See chapter 5, section 5.4.2 and chapter 4, section 4.3.1.

for a small number of texts. A biased selection could be the result if only the texts from the pupils who managed to submit several versions were selected.

### **6.2.2 A narrative in this context**

In this research context, a more limited definition of narratives than the aforementioned estimate in section 6.2.1 suggests will reduce the number of narratives in TALE considerably. Shorter messages and exchanges of views in the responses to other pupils' narratives are not defined as narratives in this context and are therefore not seen as part of the category of narrative texts in TALE.<sup>220</sup> Judging from the plans for text exchange negotiated in TALE,<sup>221</sup> the number of narratives per pupil is three to four, which reduces the number of target texts to 1200-1600 narratives. In this calculation, there are all types of narratives; the shorter biographical statements, hometown presentations and the longer legends, chain stories and fairy tales are included.

### **6.2.3 The length of the narrative text**

The length of the individual narrative in the material shows great variation. Within the different text types, the pupils' narratives vary in length between two to three lines and two to three pages. The biographical presentations and hometown presentations are sometimes just two lines but averagely half a page. There are shorter texts among the other tasks, as well. In the fairy tale genre, for example, the shortest narratives are five to six lines, while the longest are two to three pages in length. Although the text probably must be of a minimum length in order to present any pupil produced content that can be interpreted, the length in itself is not a criterion. The meaning of the content may be legible even if the text is short, and an exclusion of texts based on a length criterion is not relevant to this study. In Backlund's study of adjective use in TALE, mentioned in chapter 2, section 2.2.4, the shortest and the longest texts are left out of her selection (Backlund, 2005: 61). The present study aims at showing the

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<sup>220</sup> See, e.g., chapter 1, section 1.3.5, chapter 2, section 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.8.6, and chapter 5, section 5.5.1 for discussions of the narrative concept.

<sup>221</sup> See chapter 4, section 4.3.

variety of contributions in the TALE corpus. Hence all texts that are submitted as narratives are seen as such, irrespective of length.

#### **6.2.4 Narratives with pupil produced content**

The extent of pupil produced content in the different categories of narrative texts varies depending on the confinements of the instructions. The discussion in chapter 5 demonstrated how the confinements of the various tasks may, in some cases, be somewhat too constraining to give a sufficient scope for the development of pupil produced content. Not all the narrative text types in TALE contain sufficient textual content of a narrative disposition which is produced by the pupil writer. In order to make generalising comparison between individual texts possible, a selection of texts from the same type of task, the same category, may be seen as advisable. A possible drawback in this connection is the lack of possibility of comparison between different task types. Selecting texts within the same category or the same task type will imply that texts of basically the same genre are interpreted, leaving a comparison of individual variety within different tasks impracticable. Keeping in mind that the scope of this thesis is to study the pupil produced content, the main focus is to single out the type of text which gives the best scope for such content. To determine the degree of pupil produced content in the various tasks involves a qualitative discussion which assesses the different tasks. Thus a task-wise/genre-wise comparison is carried out. To study individual texts within the same genre meets with the requirement to make concluding juxtapositions from the sample of narrative texts possible.

The following discussion will demonstrate how, in some narrative text types, the content is determined by the task and the instructions in a somewhat all-pervading way. What this study chooses to call the closed formulas provide less content of a pupil produced origin, while the more open formulas provide more pupil produced content. Thus, considering the difference between open and closed formulas is essential in order to determine which narrative text types to select for a closer reading and interpretation of the pupil produced content.

### **6.3 Selecting between open and closed formulas**

In the material, different instructions provided by the teachers influence the pupil produced content of the narrative. Even so, the different instructions influence the content of the narratives to a fluctuating degree. To some extent, one may argue that the ready-made introduction and finalisation seem to provide a structure that may assist the pupils in their creation of coherent texts. Nevertheless, the instructions given confine the narrative within certain settings, plots and characterisations which are, to some extent, predefined by the teachers. The forthcoming discussion of the various tasks in TALE, with regard to their room for pupil produced content, may suggest that some narrative text types are more relevant for interpretation of pupil produced content.

#### **6.3.1 Presentations of pupil biographies and hometowns**

Of the texts that can be called narratives, the biographical texts and hometown presentations are among the more closed narrative types. In principle, one would think that such personal narratives would provide scope for the pupils' ability to write innovative texts, containing pieces of novel content. A hometown presentation, for example, should leave room for an individual scope; the possibility of being able to elaborate on personal matters of interest should give the writer a wide scope in a biographical presentation. Contrary to what one could expect, such texts "[...] did not seem to be enough of a challenge to them, content-wise" (Björklund, 2005: 229). Biographical texts, which one could expect would give ample room for exploration of identity, are conspicuously predictable and formulaic in this particular material.<sup>222</sup> In the TALE corpus, these narratives seem to be somewhat cliché-ridden and standardised. This may indicate that the formulaic framework of biographical statements and hometown presentations may provide limited possibilities for pupil produced contributions with regard to the content. In the material, such presentations constitute a considerable part of the texts that can be called narrative texts. However, these text types seem to provide scarce substance for this thesis' focus on studying novel elements in pupil narratives. This suggests that an elision of these two tasks is purposeful. When the two narrative types, biographical

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<sup>222</sup> This point is also discussed in Larsen, 2005.

statements and hometown presentations, are omitted, the number of narratives in the TALE corpus is reduced to 400-800. The reason for this wide estimate, which indirectly suggests an uncertainty with regard to the exact number of texts, is related to variation in submission modes being applied by the pupils.<sup>223</sup>

### **6.3.2 Predefined topics**

Of the various instructions, the introduction to the legends is relatively restricted compared to, for example, the instructions to the fairy tales. The legend narrative is inspired by a limited number of legends related to specific castles and memorials in the participatory towns. Even if there were numerous stories that could be told within such boundaries, the task leaves less to the creative mind of the individual pupil and contains less pupil produced content than other more open tasks. When introduced to the legend attached to the castle in Kolding, for example, there are limitations to what variations the individual writer can make of the traditional plot. The boundaries of legend-inspired narratives are somewhat restrictive and will not be elected for interpretation of pupil produced content in narrative texts.

### **6.3.3 Chain stories**

The chain story is a co-production involving three writers, not in a cooperative writing effort, but more like a relay race where each individual pupil writer takes her/his turn. It seems as if a study of the process of writing chain stories would involve methodological considerations that are less relevant to this particular project, which focuses on the individually produced pupil narrative. To study the creation of a text, which starts out with the teacher-produced introduction, and then is continued in five paragraphs by the first pupil before being sent to the next country for continuation, and to the third country for the conclusion, is seemingly a different project. Firstly, it is not the pupils, but the teachers, who have decided what the introductory phrase will be; they have also made significant decisions as to what the content

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<sup>223</sup> In addition, not all pupils managed to submit the last task; two pools had four tasks and the other two had only three tasks.

of the narrative might be. Secondly, the teachers have also decided the length of the individual pupil's contribution. When the instruction to the task says that they are supposed to write at least five paragraphs, some pupils are perhaps likely to consider this as being the maximum length, and the opportunity for writing a longer piece is thus reduced. In other narrative types, like the fairy tale, there is a greater variation in terms of length. Some pupils write five to six lines, whereas others write two to three pages. Thirdly, the pupil writer has little choice and is required to write a particular part of the narrative. The first pupil has to write a continuation of the ready-made introductory phrase and cannot decide how the story will end. The next pupil has to build upon what has already been told, and the final contribution must end the already told tale.<sup>224</sup>

The possible creative content contribution that each individual pupil can provide is somewhat limited in this task. Take the introduction: "One fine summer's day the Wilkinsons moved into no. 13, Woodland Drive", discussed in chapter 5, section 5.5.3. The possibilities for continuation are numerous. None the less, the main characters have already been defined by the introduction as the Wilkinsons.<sup>225</sup> The teachers have determined both main characters and setting and, to some extent, also the genre. The introduction prepares for a ghost story. The address, no 13, the cobwebs, and the fact that the previous owner has died recently, suggest a spooky atmosphere. To study these narratives would become, in many ways, a separate project in which narrative devices or the discourse properties would be determined by other factors, for instance, the cliff-hanger suspense that the pupils may feel that they have to create during their five lines in order to create an exciting continuation. The considerations that the individual pupil writer needs to take are different in this instance compared to the narrative texts where each individual pupil decides how the story develops and where the story ends. Although the chain story is a productive genre, it is considered to be outside the frame of this study, which does not discuss the group-negotiated narrative, but the narrative that the individual pupil presents and its pupil produced content.

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<sup>224</sup> Note that there is no prerequisite to make a happy ending to this story. In this respect, this task is less restricted than the instruction which tells them to write "[...] and they all lived happily ever after".

<sup>225</sup> It is difficult to tell whether it is only this particular researcher/reader who associates this introductory phrase with the introductory phrase of the first Harry Potter novel. The address Privet Drive is mentioned in the introductory phrase of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Even if this is Woodland Drive and not Privet Drive, the spooky setting suggests similarities, perhaps also because Harry Potter's friends, the Weasleys, are called Wiltersen in the Norwegian translation, a name which is not totally unlike the name Wilkinson, which is used in the teacher instruction.

### 6.3.4 Predefined settings

Two other task types involve ready-made finalisations as well as introductions. For example, the ready-made: “That morning I was hurrying to school because I had overslept”,<sup>226</sup> is perhaps more restrictive than the fairy tale introduction, “Once upon a time”. In the first example, it is only possible to have a first person singular narrator, making, for example, a third person narrative perspective difficult to include. The introduction outlines a story, which is probably taking place during one day because of the ready made end, “[...] I closed the door behind me and lied down on my bed. I was exhausted after this day”. Since the finalisation suggests something exhausting taking place, the narrative scope is further restricted. It is also evident that the story probably takes place on an ordinary week day since the first person narrator has overslept, which is something people are more likely to do during the week than during the weekends or on holiday. The first person narrator, who is hurrying to school, is not necessarily a pupil; however, the pupil who responds to the task may easily identify with the first person narrator and therefore be inclined to make the fictional first person narrator into a pupil. In any case, the first person narrator at least has some sort of errand at a school, and the events that take place are exhausting. The ending is not necessarily happy; however, the story ends with the first person narrator home in bed. Between the two phrases, which outline the beginning and the end of the narrative, the pupils write their own individual narrative. The action of these narratives is confined within a school’s setting, the time span is restricted to one day, and the narrator is defined as a first person narrator. With regard to this last mentioned aspect, the first person narrator, one could expect ample space for the exploration of identity through the portrayal of first person main characters, and as such, the first person perspective in itself is probably desirable in this sort of narrative writing. But altogether such confinements narrow the scope of the pupil produced content to an undesirable degree in this research context. Narratives of this category will not be selected for closer reading as they are assessed as somewhat too restricting with regard to the possible type of content that they invite pupil writers to elaborate on and somewhat too prescriptive with regard to pupil produced content.

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<sup>226</sup> See chapter 5, section 5.5.4.

### 6.3.5 Modern pupil fairy tales

In the other task, the “Once upon a time”- introduction refers explicitly to the fairy tale genre.<sup>227</sup> In some cases, the pupils are also given a finalisation phrase like, for example, “and they lived happily ever after”, or “the end”, to conclude their narratives. Notwithstanding, the frame seems to be wider than in the case of the other narratives. The reason for this can be related to aspects in the genre itself. Although the pupils are, in some cases, given instructions about genre features like hero, villain and fairy tale numbers, such as three and seven, they seem to pick and choose among narrative elements of a wider origin and create their own fantasy stories. As has been exemplified in chapter 5, the pupils include elements from many fields of contemporary popular culture. Both Bob the Builder and Batman may become fairy tale heroes in the pupils’ narratives, and Zidane may be made into a Genenom vampire. Thus modern media and popular culture influence the narratives consistently. MacCabe (1986) points to the dual function of popular culture. Resistance against popular culture, on the one hand, coexists with awe, on the other hand. People are mesmerised by popular culture at the same time as they try to resist it. Whether there is such resistance in TALE pupil writers’ treatment of popular culture in self-produced narratives remains unexplained at this point of the discussion. In the pupil fairy tales, elements from the immediate intertext, that is the old fairy tale that the pupil’s text is most evidently pointing to, are included alongside the popular culture references. The fantasy tales, which Rowling’s and Tolkien’s work are examples of, are materialised in books, films, PC-games and other spin-off effects; such fantasy novels indirectly become part of popular culture. The concepts of popular culture and mass culture have been merged, for example, in Gopalan (2003) to account for the trade that popular mass-produced culture has become. Popular culture stories may also be seen as referring to the traditional fairy tale motifs, myths and legends in their narration of stories about heroic main characters. In the fantasy genre, “The world he or she discovers is not like our own, the rules are different [...] magic is a real power and mythological creatures like trolls and unicorns exist” (Lassen, 2003: 8). Even if the pupils are inspired by modern media, the basic influence on the modern texts that pupils refer to may also be seen to emerge from the traditional fairy tales.

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<sup>227</sup> For more information about this task, see chapter 5, section 5.5.5.

## **6.4 Selecting individual pupil fairy tales**

The first part of the selection process has made a qualitative assessment of the various genres involved in the narrative text types in TALE and substantiated that the pupil fairy tale is the best suited category because of its ample scope of pupil produced content.<sup>228</sup> The second part of the selection process involves a selection of texts within this particular category of narratives. Narrative texts within the genre of pupil fairy tales by male and female pupil writers from the participating countries in TALE are represented in the thesis as they were presented by their writers on submission of first editions. There is considerable variety regarding both the linguistic adequacy and the aesthetics of the narratives. Some pupils apparently struggle to get a coherent text submitted, while others experiment both with form and content, as the forthcoming examples will demonstrate. To what extent such features are important to the understanding of the narrative in question, and thus entitled to considerable notice, will be discussed briefly. The selection of texts aims to be representative of the pupil fairy tales in the corpus in the sense that the width, breadth and depth of the fairy tales are demonstrated.<sup>229</sup> The actual selection of texts for interpretation emphasises that male and female writers are equally represented. Also, the selection aims at representing an adequate number of texts without including an impracticable number of texts.

### **6.4.1 First editions**

This study interprets the first edition of the narrative texts. The minor alterations that some pupils make in their texts based on the received response will not be considered. The reader's response and the second and third editions of the same narrative will not be included.<sup>230</sup> The changes made are often modest and involve formal aspects more often than content, as exemplified in chapter 5, section 5.4.3, and the focus is on the first published edition and its premeditated content. An unquantified number of texts are published only in the first edition. Again, the reason for difficulties in exact quantification is due to the differentiation in submission mode as pointed to in section 6.2 of the present chapter. To choose to analyse, for

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<sup>228</sup> See section 6.3.

<sup>229</sup> This is not substantiated by external validation within the thesis.

<sup>230</sup> Quite a few pupils did not submit their texts in second or third editions; thus the first edition is the sole representation of the text.

example, second or third editions would have meant that an unquantified number of texts were left out from the interpretation phase. Such bias could have meant that, for example, texts by pupils who were less motivated for the task were omitted from the analysis.

#### **6.4.2 Qualitative and quantitative selection**

A set number of texts in the fictional narrative genre are selected for further interpretation. The narrative texts are submitted as fairy tale tasks in TALE. Regarding the qualitative selection of task type, a best-case scenario assessment has resulted in the choice of task. The first step of the qualitative selection process has thus assured the inclusion of the text genre that is most relevant to the thesis' focus on pupil produced narrative content as described in section 6.3. The next stage is to select a suitable number of texts for interpretation. Hence the task type has been through a selection process prior to the selection of individual texts for further interpretation. The qualitative selection that this implies does not exclude a quantitative sample of texts from the qualitatively selected text type. As pointed out in Grønmo (1982: 73-109), both qualitative and quantitative aspects can be connected to the actual object of study.<sup>231</sup> The interdisciplinary character of this study is indicated by the combination of qualitative and quantitative selection criteria. In literary theory, the qualitative aspects of the text will normally reign supreme, whereas pedagogical research will allow both qualitative and quantitative selection criteria.

An evaluation of how many texts can realistically be interpreted within the frame of this thesis needs to consider that a discussion of intertexts is also part of the interpretation. The interpretation of each text will thus be quite extensive, and for practical reasons, the number of texts selected needs to be reduced. An important dilemma involves the question of representativeness and how this concept is to be understood in this thesis. It is important to ensure that narratives of different quality are represented, but how is this achieved? The texts can be singled out for their textual characteristics: The text selection can consider, for example, the quality of the intertextual reference, the length of the narrative, or the number of mistakes. Or the selection process could assure that representativeness was understood as a

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<sup>231</sup> I here run the risk of clashing with schools within the humanities that are critical towards implementing aspects from the natural sciences (Gadamer, 1989).

quality attached to the writers of the narratives, that they come from different schools in different towns in different countries. Or the structure of the network that the texts are collected from could provide the confinements, ensuring, for example, that triads or pools were equally represented. None of these are seen to have an immediate priority compared to the others in the present context. A random collection, which is quantitative and arbitrary with regard to the aforementioned possible criteria, will best ensure that texts of dissimilar quality are represented in the sample.

An online quantitative selection was unrealisable because of the aforementioned deviations in submission procedures in the individual triads. A digital selection of, for example, every tenth fairy tale would either have left out the fairy tales that were submitted in the messenger file or those that were submitted as attachments or those that did not use the thread identification 'fairy tale' in Blackboard. The resulting manual selection ensures that the selection is not lacking texts from, for example, the group of pupils who for various reasons did not manage to submit texts as attachments.<sup>232</sup> To include texts only from the group who did manage to submit attachments would have given a biased selection where the digital competence of the writer or the teacher would become a prerequisite for the text being exposed to the interpretation of substantial content.<sup>233</sup> An infirmity of this manual method is the lack of testing procedures provided since a possible online re-examination of the selection process is difficult to accomplish for independent readers of the corpus. Fairy tales, which constitute the basis for the selection, must be sought for within the group discussion boards of the individual triads, instead of in a superset module of fairy tale submission.

### **6.4.3 Reduction of target texts and gendered representation**

There are a total of 178 submissions of narratives in the fairy tale genre, which have been manually coded as belonging to this category. The texts for interpretation in chapter 7 have been selected through the following procedure: A quantitative reduction of target texts has

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<sup>232</sup> The possible shortcomings of the registration mode are outside the control of the researcher when pupils aged 12-14 are responsible for submitting data although most of them were perhaps assisted by fellow pupils or educators. In some cases the educators submitted texts on behalf of individual pupils.

<sup>233</sup> For practical reasons, the number of texts submitted in the messenger file, the number of texts submitted in the thread 'fairy tale' and the number of texts submitted as attachments have not been quantified.

been made, omitting every fourth text. A total number of 45 texts that were submitted as fairy tales were printed out and subsequently read. Whether these narrative texts are representative of all narrative text submissions is of subordinate consequence at this stage of the selection process since the preceding qualitative selection of task type has already suggested that the content of this specific task - the pupil fairy tale - contains the highest level of pupil produced content. This quantitative selection will be seen as qualitatively representative of the texts submitted in the fairy tale genre.<sup>234</sup>

An inclination to take into account possible gender differences made it necessary to leave out three texts by female writers to make the number of texts submitted by male and female writers respectively, equal in number.<sup>235</sup> Of the 42 remaining texts, a total of twelve texts were qualitatively selected to illustrate the points made in the discussion in chapters 5 and 6.<sup>236</sup> Of the 30 remaining texts, every second text was selected for further studies. This selection method provided fifteen texts for further interpretation. The intended effect is that the quantitative selection may show texts of varying quality where both the linguistic and the thematic quality and the length are different. Notwithstanding, the researcher must decide how to attend to the aesthetics of the narratives in the selection process and to question whether all texts can be included. Some texts are decorated with big illustrative headlines, special font and colours, while others are written quite straightforwardly in Times New Roman size 12. In the following, the approach of this thesis to what may be called textual aesthetics is discussed in more detail.

#### **6.4.4 Linguistic inadequacy**

Whether the selection process should involve an evaluation of either linguistic or aesthetic variety needs to be discussed. Is it, for instance, suitable to include texts of poor linguistic quality? The following text was published in the triad, 'Grp P Sailing to Byzantium'. The text was submitted 8 May 2003 and downloaded 13 November 03 for this research purpose.

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<sup>234</sup> The selection of 45 texts is enclosed in the appendix to this thesis.

<sup>235</sup> And to have an extra narrative by a male pupil writer to compensate for the fact that the researcher is female. The three texts by female writers that were omitted randomly from the selection of 45 texts were "The three sisters", "The accident" and "Teddy".

<sup>236</sup> The nine pupil fairy tales in chapter 5 have been presented earlier in Larsen (2007); the three pupil fairy tales in chapter 6 have been presented earlier in Bjørklund and Larsen (2007).

Once upon a time a little prince he played in the garden and met a goblin. The goblin accede hem to du hem a favour he shout klid a dragon for hem der vhas 10,000 guldpiece behent the dragon. The goblin gave the prince a magic sword and a magic shield. The sword gave the prince double powers. The magic powers he use to fight a dragon and a giant. The prince vin the fight and he get the 10,000 guld piece and he lived happily to his days end.

The present researcher takes the narrative to mean the following: The prince meets a goblin while playing in the garden. He is looking forward to the reward, which lies behind the dragon. The prince is equipped with double powers achieved by a magic sword and a shield provided by the goblin. The prince fights down both the dragon and the giant and earns his reward.

The fairy tale introduction, “Once upon a time”, and the finalisation, “[...] he lived happily to his days end”, frame the narrative structures of the text in such a way that one understands that the prince, whom the tale is about, succeeds in some way. The text consists of several mistakes regarding grammar and spelling.<sup>237</sup> However, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are not of primary importance in this analysis of the content of the narratives and will only be considered when central to the meaning of the narrative. If a teacher had undertaken any corrections of this text prior to submission in TALE, it is difficult to trace this in the text. Although the text is short and contains several formal mistakes, a text like this constitutes a comprehensible narrative, at least to a researcher reader. A fellow pupil reader would perhaps need assistance in the interpretation of this narrative. However, this text is a narrative in spite of its formal shortcomings, and there is little justification for omitting a text like this from interpretation in this particular research context, which focuses on meaning. Hence, one side effect of this random selection is that an incomplete text like “A day in the school”<sup>238</sup> is included among the fifteen texts for interpretation in chapter 7.

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<sup>237</sup> Such mistakes would probably have been noticed if the text had been subject to correction by the teacher before it was submitted.

<sup>238</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.1.

### 6.4.5 Linguistic adequacy

In other cases, the pupils master spelling and grammar quite adequately. In 'Grp O Triad The Rose Tree', the following text was submitted 8 May 2003 and downloaded 11 November 2003 for this research purpose.

#### The Mirrors

Once upon a time there lived a queen in a beautiful castle. She had heard that a little poor had talked about a treasury in a cave guarded by a monster and a evil spell. The queen wanted the treasury so badly that she sent many soldiers to get the treasury, but they didn't came back. Then she those to go of herself. When she came many monsters were waiting for her. One of her soldiers ran over to one of the monsters, and then she became a monster. The queen became scared and mad. Suddenly they heard drums and trumpets play a march. The monsters went into the cave except one of the monsters. She asked the soldiers to attack the monster, but they wouldn't then she went of her own. She didn't walked into the cave or over to the monster, but she walked around the giant mountain. She saw that the cave was a tunnel. She was very suprised. She saw a huge castle in front of her. Bigger than her own. She went up to the castle and knocked on the gate. Another kind of monster opened the door. It was a very little one. She was just asking then the little monster pointed on a bigger door, than that door she just went trough. She went to the door and opened it. First when she had opened it she saw some words on the door. There said:

You'll know what to find in here  
Your worst enemy or your best friend.  
Use yourself.

Then she went inside. She didn't saw anything. There was dark in this room. Suddenly the light was lighted. She was in a mirror-hall. The mirrors covered the wall. The first mirror you'll see yourself as a monster in the next a very very thin me. She went from mirror to mirror, and she guessed who was her friend and who was her enemy. At last she came to the last mirror. She fell over a stone and into the mirror. The mirror fell with the queen and now she was in a tunnel. In the end of the tunnel there was a very fine room. It looked like one of the rooms in her castle. A wizard sat on the throne. He saw her and then he attacked her. Then she thought at the door she went through: use yourself. Then she took one of the queens sticks and she killed the wizard. The monsters beside her became humans. She realized that the treasury was herself and she went down the tunnel, and down the mirror-hall. Then she came to the little monster outside. Now it was a little boy. Then she went back through the tunnel over to her soldiers. She fell over something on her way and it was a very big treasury. She went over to her soldiers and they got her back to her kingdom. She gave the treasury to the little poor boy, and that is the story about the queen who learned herself to know, The magic mirror-hall and the littel poor boy as now wasent poor but rich now.

The end<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> "The Mirrors" is also used to illustrate the discussion in section 6.8.2.

This narrative is correctly written apart from some mistakes related to it/there and the past tense of the verb. It is possible to imagine that this text has been corrected by the teacher before it was published, but teacher initiated modifications related to language in this text could, for example, revise the use of the present continuous. However, the fact that there are few language mistakes in the text is not a criterion in itself for a text being selected or omitted. To the present study, such linguistic features are only of interest when they add to the understanding of the pupil produced substantial content of the text. A text like this will not be omitted; in fact, no texts are omitted from the random selection of fifteen pupil fairy tales for interpretation in chapter 7.

#### **6.4.6 Divergence**

Some texts have been published as individual narratives in the triads but are the result of co-writing in the classroom.<sup>240</sup> In such cases, the group-written narrative is evident in Blackboard and omitted from this selection of pupil fairy tales, which focuses on the pupil's individual narrative.<sup>241</sup> To render the group-produced texts relevant in this context would have meant studying the conversation and interaction between the group members during the production of the narrative, for example, to determine who decided what and how the communication in the group was carried out. Such an analysis would sidetrack this study's focus on the individually produced text.

In general, the pupil fairy tales have fixed beginnings and endings, as discussed in section 6.3.5. On the one hand, this pushes the narrative into a certain formula. On the other hand, it makes certain that the pupil writers keep their fairy tales within the narrative structure. For the most part, the texts start with either "Once upon a time", or "A long time ago". If the pupils made language mistakes in the introduction, this is not regarded as being derogatory and is no cause for their texts not being used. With regard to the ending, the pupils have apparently been instructed to write the phrases, "the end" or "and they all lived happily ever after", or something similar. When they write, "the end", it is possible to write a neutral or even

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<sup>240</sup> These texts are not counted among the total of 178 pupil fairy tales in the corpus.

<sup>241</sup> This is the case in the second task in pool B.

unhappy ending. Both categories are randomly represented in the selection.<sup>242</sup> Narratives are not excluded if they failed to meet any of these preset requirements but will be included with their minor formal deficiencies and aesthetic options intact.

The qualitatively, but also quantitatively selected fairy tales are aimed at being typical of pupil produced content in fairy tales, as it is represented in the corpus. The qualitative criteria are related to genre and gender. The quantitative selection involves a manual, random reduction of target texts.

In the pupil fairy tales, elements from the immediate intertext (the old fairy tale that the pupil's text is most evidently pointing to) are included alongside the popular culture references. Even if the pupils are inspired by modern media, the basic influence on the modern texts that pupils refer to may also be seen to emerge from the traditional fairy tales. The interpretative practice which is adopted in this thesis focuses on the relationship between text and intertext(s) with an emphasis on novel elements. In the literary interpretation, each text is read on its own terms. Texts from the common European fairy tale heritage constitute the immediate intertexts to the pupil fairy tales. Accordingly the traditional fairy tales and some of the research related to the genre will be looked into.

## ***6.5 Approaching traditional fairy tales as intertexts***

The fairy tale genre has been exposed to substantial study in many fields of science by, for example, folklorists and ethnographers. In a literary and pedagogical context, both structuralist and psychoanalytical approaches have been quite dominant from the previous century onwards, and the feminist and Marxist approaches have been influential from the late 1960s. Although just some examples can be included in the summary treatment of the genre given in this connection, such approaches will be looked into here.

When pupils write their own fairy tales, there are numerous parallels between their narratives and fairy tale elements, and to consider more closely the genre that constitutes the intertext(s) is necessary. The interpretative practice related to the genre is part of the public domain and

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<sup>242</sup> A quantification of either category has not been carried out.

indirectly part of the intertextual reference. The genre has been subject to studies of which some are perhaps commonly perceived in the reception of fairy tales. The intertextual referential practice that is studied in pupil narratives also needs to consider the reception of the fairy tales, and not just the fairy tales per se. Firstly, the fairy tale concept is discussed. Secondly, the structuralist contribution by Propp and Olrik will be presented. Thirdly, gender differences in fairy tales will be briefly looked into and fourthly, psychoanalytical studies of fairy tales and the process of individuation will be considered to increase the knowledge about the intertexts of the pupil narratives.

### 6.5.1 The fairy tales' development

Tale, fairy tale, folk tale and fairy story are aliasing concepts, which different researchers in the field apply to the tradition of oral storytelling. This study employs the term 'fairy tale', and only uses the terms 'tale', 'folk tale' or 'fairy story' when the researchers referred to apply these terms. According to Zipes (1988: 1), tales were narrated thousands of years ago by tribes and groups; tales created social bonds that explained and gave hope when people were confronted with the various challenges of life. The fairy tales' origin is still unexplained, and the epistemology of the fairy tale suggests that such stories belong to the Indo-European cultural heritage, but basic motifs, plots and themes are universal, though culturally distinguished, and occur in worldwide contexts.<sup>243</sup> In the era lasting from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the literary genre of fairy tales was established on the basis of structures from the oral fairy tales. The literary fairy tales are, on the one hand, created by established writers, like Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde; on the other hand, they are narrated as folk tales by ordinary people, and later modified and recorded by fairy tale collectors, like the Grimm brothers, Perrault, and the Norwegian collectors, Asbjørnsen and Moe.

Although many British fairy tales come out of a central European heritage, which is strongly pursued in the dominance of the versions of the Grimm brothers and Perrault,<sup>244</sup> fairy tales in

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<sup>243</sup> Early versions of fairy tales are the Indian collection, *The Fables of Bidpai* from the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and the Arabian collection *A Thousand and One Nights* from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, of which the first English edition appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Straparola's collection, *The Pleasant Night*, appeared in 1550-1553; in 1697 came *The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*. The titles are cited in Birketveit, 2005:112.

<sup>244</sup> Perrault, 1697. *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé*. Cited in Bettelheim, 1978: 326.

English have been collected and retold by, for example, Reeves (1954). In the case of some stories, there are English tales with a similar plot, for example, “Tom Tit Tot” (Reeves, 1954: 147-155), which is an English tale quite similar to “Rumpelstilzchen” (Grimm and Grimm, [1925]1985: 237-242). In the case of other stories, there are English tales that are typically English. For instance, “Dick Whittington and his Cat” (Reeves, 1954: 221-234), which is a “from rags to riches” story with a London setting, is definitely English. How the national culture and languages influence the content of the fairy tales is unclear. Examples of linguistic influence in the narrative content are often easily detected. The Sami Cinderella, for example, wears a “kommag”, a Sami shoe (Pollan, 1997: 111-113).

Earlier the fairy tale genre was not specified as children’s literature; the tales were intended for adults as well. The editions of the Grimm’s collection from 1810 to 1857 have been examined by Bottigheimer (1987), and it is demonstrated in detail how revisions have been particularly preoccupied with gender differences, making females less prominent and less outspoken. Others argue that the alterations are made to suit children.<sup>245</sup> To see modern fairy tales as replicas of old is well substantiated in the research literature in this field (Zipes, 1988; Bettelheim, 1976; Bottigheimer, 1987). To infer that pupils’ fairy tales operate along the same principle is therefore not controversial. According to Zipes (1988: 74), the process of modifying was initiated by the Grimm brothers primarily to suit the European bourgeoisie. The erotic and gruesome details were often clad in euphemisms. Such alteration practice may suggest that the Bakhtinian rebellious, carnivalistic aspects of the texts are modified. In modern fairy tales, the content takes new forms. Still the basic, repetitious formula, containing a quest and a happy ending, seems to prevail. Film and television have become the new media for fairy tales where mass-produced American versions seemingly dominate the global market. A recent example of the recycling of different formulaic traits from the fairy tale formula can be found in the 2007 film *Enchanted* (Walt Disney Pictures, 2007). As Zipes (2006: 1) puts it, “We respond to these classical tales almost as if we were born with them, and yet, we know full well that they have been socially produced and induced and continue to be generated this way through different forms of mass media”. Although the modern versions may include contemporary elements, the basic functions seem to be infinitely repeated.

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<sup>245</sup> The critique has come from diverse groups as, for instance, religious, marxist and feminist (Tatar, 1987).

## 6.5.2 Functions and laws in traditional fairy tales

In Propp's 1968 classic, *The Morphology of the Folktale*, a corpus of Russian fairy tales are analysed structurally. Different plot actions performed by various dramatis personae are identified. These personae are:

- The hero, who is the seeker but also the victim
- The villain, who serves as a contrast to the hero
- The donor, who provides the hero with magical objects
- The magical helper, who assists the hero in his quest
- The dispatcher, who makes some scarcity known
- The false hero, who falsely takes credit for the hero's heroic deeds
- The prince/princess, who marries the hero
- The victim, who is harmed by the villain, if the hero is not the victim.

In Propp's view, all folk tales share these stock characters or psychological roles. There is perhaps no folk tale which contains all the listed personae, but the functions that they represent are present in the fairy tale or their performances will probably occur. Hence some of these functions will be present in the pupil fairy tales. Several theorists in the field have developed Propp's structures. Greimas (1990) has constructed models of which the so-called actant-model is often applied. In another important contribution in the structuralist tradition, The Danish researcher, Olrik, maintains that the plots of fairy tales adjust to certain fixed laws (Olrik, 1992):

- Opening: fairy tales have an introduction such as "Once upon a time", or "One fine morning". At the outset of the tale the situation is simple and constant; the tale gets more complicated and dramatic as the characters gradually become more active
- Unity of the plot: a limited number of characters and motifs take part in the tale and only events or actions which are relevant to the development of the story are included
- Focus on a leading character: fairy tales focus on a hero's quest
- Two to a scene: usually fairy tales present two characters in the same scene; in cases where there is a third character present, this character is often silent
- Contrast: In scenes where two characters are present they represent opposite traits, like good versus evil and rich versus poor
- Twins: some of the fairy tale characters are similar or act in the same manner to such an extent that they appear as twins

- Three: Certain numbers like three and seven recur; the hero has to perform three tasks, or is given three objects
- Final stress: The third act is often the final which closes the plot and provides the solution
- The tale ends longitudinally, according to a certain pattern. Subsequent to the dramatic solution the listener/reader is told what happened to the hero: “they all lived happily ever after”.

The pupil narratives will not be measured against these lists systematically. Whether the pupils observe such laws and to what extent they make use of them will probably vary. The relevance of these laws to this study is that they systematise the genre and thus make it possible to identify novel elements in pupils’ texts. Such formalistic analysis may be seen to focus on what fairy tales have in common, and the structuralist approaches to fairy tales are noteworthy in order to identify the genre aesthetics. The object here is to identify deviation from formulaic traits. In this context, it is important to focus on the novel in the pupil fairy tale.

The awareness of what features, related to the fairy tale genre, influence the pupil fairy tales, directly or indirectly, clarifies where text and intertext coincide and where they clash. One such clash can perhaps be found between pupil versions of fairy tales and traditional fairy tales with regard to gender.

### **6.5.3 Femininity and masculinity in traditional fairy tales**

Traditional fairy tales generally portray a society where the roles of men and women are, at least on the surface, different from what pupil writers experience in reality. If taken literally, the fairy tales generally present a gender biased society. Kristiseter (2005: 7) points to the relevance of the anthropological study of Kabylia, which Bordieu (2002) carried out in Algeria in the 1960s and 70s, for the discussion of gender differences in fairy tales. Bordieu’s study is interesting in this connection because of the comparison that can be drawn with the society that one can catch a glimpse of in classical fairy tales. In the Kabyle cosmology, where the female is subordinated to the male, and where almost everything is ascribable to either male or female social status, gender roles are, according to Bordieu (2000: 51),

organised round mythical ritual homologous adversative pairs. Male action is marked by abruptness and change, whereas female action is repetitious, cyclic and marked by slow maturation. Furthermore, women are explained as being a transformed commodity, exchanged among men as a means for male accumulation of social and symbolic capital, which again requires management and protection against decrease in value. In Bottigheimer's (1987) study of the Grimm collection, she finds what she calls a gender antagonism. Because of the antagonism between the gender roles, elements that are symbolically attached to one gender become dangerous to the other, for example, water is threatening to male characters, whereas fire is threatening to female characters. According to Bottigheimer (1987) and Kristiseter (2005), this underlying antagonism contradicts the more superficial and fortunate unity of the plot between the male and the female. Some psychological approaches tend to mask such gender contrast by seeing the various characters as bearers of certain qualities within one personality.<sup>246</sup>

#### **6.5.4 Psychoanalytical approaches to traditional fairy tales**

From a psychoanalytical angle, fairy tales are often read as expressions of the psychological maturation of one human being. Brudal (1984) has compared different approaches to fairy tales in the Freudian and Jungian traditions. In his view, the principal difference between the two traditions is expressed in what aspects of psychology they emphasise. Whereas Freudian theorists, like Bettelheim, emphasise the relationship between family members and man and woman, the Jungian tradition sees fairy tales as dealing with the development of the personality, where the different characters represent different traits within the same individual (Brudal, 1984: 14-32). Both in Freudian and Jungian theory, fairy tales have traditionally been read on several different levels:

- Firstly, on the surface or social level, the fairy tale can be read as the exciting story it is, with the attention on the course of events of the plot and the relationship between the different characters.
- Secondly, there is a psychological level where each of the fairy tale characters may be regarded as representatives of different forces or sides of one person. This individual experiences a psychical crisis or a psychical process.

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<sup>246</sup> This is the case in Jungian approaches to fairy tales.

- Thirdly, fairy tales are considered to deal with universal existential questions of the human condition.

Studies of fairy tales often take all three levels into account where one level does not rule out the two others. Notwithstanding, the second level, the process of individuation, is relevant to this study's focus on identity communication in pupil narratives.

### 6.5.5 The process of individuation in traditional fairy tales

According to Jung, “[...] finding the inner meaning of life is more important than anything else and why the process of individuation must be given priority” (Jung, 1964: 224). The human psyche will almost automatically try to correct psychological one-sidedness. The aim of this self-creating project is the full realisation of the potential of the individual self. Jung says that collective thought patterns of the human mind are innate and inherited, just like instincts are. Physiological urges perceived by the senses, but instincts also, manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images which must be interpreted in the manner indicated by the whole life-situation of the particular individual to whom it relates. These symbols “[...] are pieces of life itself – images that are integrally connected to the individual by the bridge of the emotions” (Jung, 1964: 96). Jung maintained that human beings seek personal maturation, growth and development in life and constantly create themselves. This view may be seen to partly correspond to a poststructuralist view of identity as something which is constructed and which changes and flows and sharpens, and eventually disintegrates.<sup>247</sup>

Bettelheim emphasises the social significance of fairy tales. The child must learn gradually to understand herself/himself better and consequently become more able to understand others and relate to others in ways which are satisfying and meaningful (Bettelheim, 1976: 3). He claims that there is a widespread refusal to let children know the inclination that everyone has for acting aggressively, selfishly or out of anger and anxiety (Bettelheim, 1976: 7). Instead, he says, people want children to believe that inherently all men are good. According to Bettelheim (1976: 8), the fairy tales demonstrate that this idea is false. The fairy tale states an existential dilemma pointedly so that the child comes to grips with the problem in its most

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<sup>247</sup> See chapter 2 for a discussion of the identity concept.

essential form. The fairy tale confronts the child with basic human predicaments, like death. At the end of the fairy tale, evil characters often die. According to Bettelheim, a more complex plot could confuse the child; consequently the fairy tale simplifies. Characters are not ambivalent; they are typical, rather than unique. Antagonisms, like good and evil, are given body through the characters' actions. This duality poses the ethical problem and the struggle to solve it. The various fairy tales are seen as suitable for different age groups' ethical dilemmas. As Zipes (2006: 9) suggests, "Imparting knowledge through language and artefacts is an efficient and relevant mode that contributes to the formation and continuity of groups and societies and their specific cultural rites, norms and customs". Zipes emphasises the communicative function of fairy tales as "[...]public representation", "[...] when the fairy tale is articulated in a communication of some kind, it is made relevant through the brain that operates efficiently to draw the attention of the listener/reader to the inferred meaning of the communication" (Zipes, 2006: 7). In Heuscher (1974), the pre-adult development is divided into three phases, nil to seven years, seven to fourteen years and fourteen to twenty-one years.<sup>248</sup> According to Heuscher, the traditional fairy tales portray the challenges that are typical of the three different age groups. "Hansel and Gretel", for instance, deals with the first phase, "Snow White", with the second phase, and "Sleeping Beauty" deals with the third phase.

Nordic pupils possibly know the fairy tale genre well, first and foremost in their mother tongue, and not necessarily in English, and the reasons for pupils' relatively unlimited narrative scope in self-produced modern fairy tales in English may be related to the fact that they are writing in a foreign language. For instance, the opening phrase, "Once upon a time", would perhaps immediately connote fairy tales among pupils with English as their first language. The Nordic pupils are probably less familiar with the fairy tale phrases and jargon in the English language. To Scandinavian pupils the possible fairy tale associations that they would immediately get if the introductory phrase were presented in their mother tongue would possibly be different.<sup>249</sup> Future studies in the field, could perhaps address such questions more adequately than the present context allows. These questions notwithstanding, the basic patterns of the genre are seemingly sustained in pupils' modern fairy tales in TALE.

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<sup>248</sup> The psychologist Erik Erikson's eight stages (Erikson, 1959: 129) of identity development from infancy to mature age is another established frame of reference within psychology. Also Piaget's sequences of intellectual development can be mentioned here (Inhelder and Piaget, 1969).

<sup>249</sup> A comparative study of fairy tales written in the mother tongue and fairy tales written in English could explain the matter more substantially; however, such comparison has not been carried out in TALE to my knowledge.

In an intertextual perspective, a study of, for example, the various characters in pupils' narratives, in terms of which qualities or forces they may represent, is relevant. The realistic characters of the pupils' narratives are implicitly compared to mythical ones. The characters and plots of pupils' narratives attain resonance in archetypal conceptions when associated with the fairy tale genre. By applying myths that are familiar, the pupils play with images deeply rooted in culture. This adds to the meaning of their narratives. The focus on well-known fairy tale main characters is central in pupil fairy tales as well as in the intertexts.

## **6.6 Some traditional fairy tale characters**

Character portrayal in fairy tales is often simplified and depicts types, rather than fully rounded characters in the literary sense. The heroic main characters are young and inexperienced, but develop through hardships. In the pupil fairy tales, the references to texts include, for example, "Hansel and Gretel",<sup>250</sup> "Sleeping Beauty",<sup>251</sup> and "Snow White"<sup>252</sup>. In the following summary account, Beowulf,<sup>253</sup> and the British Jack, as depicted in "Jack and the Beanstalk",<sup>254</sup> and the typical fairy tale princes and princesses, brothers and sisters, will also serve as examples of the archetypes that the fairy tale genre portrays. The fairy tale casts of characters are representative of certain traits and are either good or bad. The main character's parents, kings and queens and stepmothers play certain roles in the hero's development. And the roles of witches and dwarfs in the heroic main character's development are also significant. In the forthcoming interpretation of some traditional fairy tale characters, the intention is to demonstrate the general connotations of characters in fairy tales and how their relationship to central aspects of growing up is often understood.

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<sup>250</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985:3-13.

<sup>251</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985:67-74. The story is called "Rosebud" in this edition.

<sup>252</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985:87-95. The story is called "Snowdrop" in this edition.

<sup>253</sup> See, e.g., Goodrich (1977: 36-37) and Crossley-Holland (1980: 228-229) for more details about Beowulf.

<sup>254</sup> Reeves, 1954: 127-146.

### 6.6.1 The hero

According to Olrik's laws, the focus on the heroic main character is prevalent in the fairy tale genre. The plot centres on the protagonist, who usually starts out as somewhat pitiful, but turns out to be the true hero of the tale after having fought off evil forces personified by a villain in one shape or another. The function of the villain is to serve as a counterpart to the positive traits of the hero.

In the story of Beowulf, for example, the heroic achievement involves not only conquering the monster Grendel, but fighting Grendel's mother in a cave at the bottom of a lake. Although Beowulf uses the fabled sword, Hrunting, the sword bends in the meeting with Grendel's mother. When all hopes of victory are gone, he miraculously gets hold of the sword that eventually kills the monster's mother. This second weapon has existed in the world forever, and Beowulf is amazed at the sheer luck that provides him with the deadly weapon in this critical situation.<sup>255</sup>

The archetypal hero fights off threats from both monsters and their mothers. Jung (1964: 110) says about the function of the hero:

These godlike figures are in fact symbolic representations of the whole psyche, the larger and more comprehensive identity that supplies the strength that the personal ego lacks. Their special role suggests that the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness – his awareness of his own strength and weaknesses – in a manner that will equip him for the ardour with which life confronts him (ibid:110).

In this quotation, it is apparent that the Jungian view of the hero is presented as if the hero were a phase in the individual's development. "Once the individual has passed his initial test and can enter the mature phase of life, the hero myth loses its relevance", (Jung, 1964: 110). The fairy tales generally put princes in this favoured position, but they may be seen as subordinate characters in the development of archetypal princesses like, for instance, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty. The essence here seems to be that the hero's most important task is to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual to make the individual fit for the mastering of the general challenges of life. Franz (1996: 62) maintains that "[...] the hero is

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<sup>255</sup> Goodrich, 1977: 36-37.

an archetypal figure which presents a model of an ego functioning in accord with the self'. In the development into a mature person, the hero, as a catalyst, may seem important.

### 6.6.2 The anti-hero

A typical fairy tale hero can be an adventurer or an action hero, but also a poor, insignificant anti-hero who goes from rags to riches. Asbjørnsen and Moe ([1851]1983: 460-464) depicted the adventures of Espen, who is the younger brother of Per and Paul,<sup>256</sup> in the Norwegian fairy tale heritage.<sup>257</sup> In a Bakhtinian sense, an anti-hero will challenge the existing state of things and appear novel in his parodying of the hero. In the English fairy tale tradition, Jack is typical of the apparent fool, who turns out to be the one who can solve the crisis in the end. Bottigheimer's (1987) discussion of the Grimm's collection shows that the male characters can be lazy but still be heroes. This correlates to the stories about Jack in the English fairy tales (Bettelheim, 1976: 183-193; Reeves, 1954: 127-146).

Since English is the target language of the pupils' narratives, which are the target of the present study, a typically English heroic anti-hero, Jack, is presented here as depicted in "Jack and the Beanstalk". Jack serves as an example of the archetypal anti-hero, but he is not a totally uncomplicated fairy tale character in the sense that he is just kind-hearted and noble. He is apparently a thief since he steals the ogre's<sup>258</sup> valuables. The title of this story adds together the name 'Jack' with a beanstalk, which functions as a ladder up to the sky. In the Old Testament of the Bible, Jack's, or Jacob's ladder, is the ladder reaching up to heaven that Jacob saw in a dream.<sup>259</sup> In a simplified manner, the fairy tale demonstrates how maturation must take place in steps; Jack needs to climb the beanstalk thrice. Bettelheim calls this an amoral fairy tale, which demonstrates that there is no clear polarisation of good versus evil (Bettelheim, 1976: 10). Jack is both thievish and lazy. Character portrayal in "Jack and the Beanstalk" is not marked by promoting choices between good and evil deeds. Instead, mastering and coping without the expectation of defeat is a central issue in the portrayal of

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<sup>256</sup> Called Pål in Norwegian. .

<sup>257</sup> Collected by the Norwegian fairy tale collectors, Per Chr. Asbjørnsen (1812-85) and Jørgen Moe (1813-82).

<sup>258</sup> In some versions the ogre is referred to as a giant, in Reeves (1954:127-146), which this study refers to, it is called an ogre.

<sup>259</sup> *The Bible*: Genesis 28:12-17 of the Old Testament.

Jack. The assurance of the possibility of success is communicated, and success is feasible even from a poor starting point. The story depicts the phases of development of the boy in becoming an independent human being. The seemingly unwise exchange of a cow for some seeds, and the magical seeds from which a tree grows into heaven, are important elements. Jack's mother ridicules his belief in the magic of the seeds, but contrary to her expectations, the seeds grow immensely during the night. In psychological terms, the conflict with the ogre can be seen as an oedipal conflict (Freud, [1917] 1992: 275; 1958) which Jack survives and wins when he defeats the ogre. Jack finally puts him down with the assistance of his mother and the ogre's wife, who finally takes Jack's side against her own husband. When Jack cuts down the stalk, which in somewhat vulgar psychoanalytical terms will be regarded as phallic, Jack enters an oedipal conflict with the ogre; the way towards the development of mature masculinity is initiated (Bettelheim, 1976: 187).

Jack's own initiative is required in this process. When he exchanges the cow for magic seeds, he does so out of his own free will. He climbs the magic beanstalk out of his own initiative, and not because someone else suggested it. He utilises the strength of his body very skilfully in his climbing of the beanstalk. Thrice he risks his own life to gain the magic objects, which the ogre possesses. He gains possession of the objects through his own cunning and cuts down the stalk after he has fled from the ogre. Thereby he secures his possession of the ogre's objects when he cuts down the beanstalk. The portrayal of Jack demonstrates that the maturation of character is a complex process, which requires both personal initiative and adequate assistance.

### **6.6.3 Prince and princess/brother and sister**

The complexity of the maturation of character is often illustrated by several fairy tale personae or characters.<sup>260</sup> When the male and female couples are seen as representatives of their actual sex, the gender differences in fairy tales are excessive. Eichler (1980: 16) points to

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<sup>260</sup> The term 'persona' is used in Propp (1968). This study will henceforward apply the term 'character'. Although fairy tale characters may not seem to be rounded characters in the literary sense, but rather flat, in that they are representatives of traits rather than complex characters, the term 'character' is seen as more suitable in this connection. From an intertextual perspective on fairy tales the personae may be seen as having been shaped and developed through generations. This ongoing process may make it more adequate to refer to them as characters.

the “[...] double standard” inherent when the identical actions of men and women are assessed by different standards.<sup>261</sup> Bottigheimer (1987) demonstrates how the same type of activity in the Grimm’s collection will lead to female characters being chastised, whereas male characters are rewarded. This applies to manual labour, for instance, where girls are generally punished for being lazy. In some psychoanalytical approaches to fairy tales, the prince and the princess may be seen as representatives of what psychoanalysis will term the active and the passive, or the masculine and the feminine, sides of one individual (Brudal, 1984). In the maturation of character, these sides ideally balance each other, creating a unity symbolised through marriage. *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*, for example, have to end their passive state and become active when they encounter the prince. The harmony which is generally achieved in fairy tales when the princess is woken by the prince is significant. When the two are married and the whole kingdom belongs to the prince and the princess, the individual has put to use both active and passive sides in the personality. According to Jung, art in general and fairy tales in particular treat the development towards this ideal aim, the process of individuation (Jung, 1964: 186). In the fairy tale genre, the maturation of character is time-consuming; *Sleeping Beauty*, for instance, must sleep for a hundred years, *Snow White* for a long time. But after this period, the individual is ready to develop into a whole person, as symbolised by the marriage between the prince and the princess.

A brother and a sister can function as representatives of different sides of one person in the same pattern as the princess and the prince. *Hansel and Gretel*, for example, want to stay in what may be symbolic of the pre-oedipal idyll forever, but they are banished from their own home, and the gingerbread cottage in the forest is not as golden as it may seem; it is apparently not a safe place. If one saw the siblings as representatives of male and female qualities respectively, both sides of the personality are necessary in order to mature. At the beginning of “*Hansel and Gretel*”, Hansel solves their problem, and they manage to return to their father. At the outset, Gretel relates to Hansel in a dependent manner: He is always there to show her the way. But the fairy tale tells that just following Hansel is not enough: The siblings are almost eaten by the witch no matter how they plead for their lives. Gretel is the one who solves the problem and obtains freedom for both by outsmarting the witch. She saves her brother and herself. Thus both sides of the personality need to be activated in order to survive, according to “*Hansel and Gretel*”.

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<sup>261</sup> Nevertheless, Davies (2003) finds that fairy tales which “correct” such gender differences are not necessarily approved of by their children readers as they are not seen as fairy tales are supposed to be.

#### 6.6.4 Grown-ups

The grown-ups surrounding heroes and anti-heroes, princes and princesses, brothers and sisters, form a complex group involving both kings and old men, as, for instance, the chap in “Jack and the Beanstalk”, who supplies Jack with the magical seeds, and, who is a donor, according to Propp’s list of folk tale personae.<sup>262</sup> The grown-ups can be parents, like Hansel’s and Gretel’s, and in-laws, like the prince’s parents in “Sleeping Beauty”.

The typical fatherly king can be seen as a metonymic representation of the patriarchal structure which is prevalent, for example, in the Grimm’s collection;<sup>263</sup> Bottigheimer (1987) has substantiated how male power has been successively strengthened in every new version. In several fairy tales, the king gives his daughter away in marriage, as in “Sleeping Beauty”. The king’s rank signifies power, but also the qualities of a strong and protective father, as opposed to the more ineffectual father figure of Hansel and Gretel; he lets their stepmother persuade him into expelling his children from home.

The queens, good mothers and stepmothers also have different functions. The threat against the ideal process of individuation is often represented by an elderly woman in many different shapes. She seems to have a double function of repudiation and guidance. In “Jack and the Beanstalk”, there are two older women, the mother and the giant’s wife. Jack exchanges a cow for some seeds, and instead of approving of Jack’s act of initiative and independence, Jack’s mother ridicules the exchange and is angry with him because of it; she even beats him. As punishment for having shown initiative and independence, she marches her son to bed without supper. At the same time, she tries to protect him against the dangers involved in striving for manhood. She fetches the axe, but when he has escaped from the giant, Jack has to cut down the beanstalk and kill the giant himself.

The juxtaposition of a good motherly character and an evil witch is central in many fairy tales. In “Sleeping Beauty”, there is the good mother, who tries to protect Sleeping Beauty, and an evil witch, who casts the spell. In “Hansel and Gretel”, there is an old witch in the cottage in the wood, but no good motherly figure. There is also their father’s wife, their stepmother, who persuades their father to leave them to fend for themselves in the wood. In

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<sup>262</sup> Propp’s list is referred in section 6.4.3.

<sup>263</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985.

“Snow White” and in “Cinderella” there are evil stepmothers, too. In “Snow White”, the real mother plays her supportive part before she dies. And then Snow White meets the dwarfs. Like the grown-ups in fairy tales, the dwarfs are also complex types.

### 6.6.5 Dwarfs

The thoroughly helpful dwarfs of “Snow White” are supportive and almost parental in their attitude, at least in the later versions of the Grimm’s collection, but in earlier versions the dwarf is apparently maleficent (Bottigheimer, 1987). In “Rumpelstilzchen”<sup>264</sup> and “Tom Tit Tot”<sup>265</sup> the dwarf is half harmful and half friendly. Heuscher compares dwarfs to processes, images and experiences during the long sleep: “They can be seen as subconscious entities or forces which the soul becomes aware of during the night” (Heuscher, 1974: 142). The dwarfs are seen as guiding spirits, who cherish the child’s beauty, but warn the child against materialism. Semi-human types, like dwarfs, may be seen as representatives of the border area between fairy tale characters and fairy tale motifs. In the forthcoming interpretation of some traditional fairy tale motifs, the intention is to demonstrate the general connotations of motifs in fairy tales and how their relationship to central aspects of growing up is often understood.

## 6.7 *Some traditional fairy tale motifs*

Fairy tale motifs,<sup>266</sup> like the long-lasting sleep or passivity in “Snow White” and “Sleeping Beauty”, a cosy cottage in the wood, like the gingerbread cottage in “Hansel and Gretel”, may reoccur in fairy tales worldwide and are perceived as bearers of significant meaning. When pupils create their own fairy tales, they juxtapose traditional fairy tale motifs with narrative features from modern society. As shown in chapter 5, the pupils mix their own content from different sources, seemingly unrestrained. In the following account, motifs of common occurrence, like fairy tale numbers, a trail in the wood, the fairy tale cottage and the long-

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<sup>264</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985: 237-242.

<sup>265</sup> Reeves, 1954: 147-155.

<sup>266</sup> The term ‘motif’ is here defined as ‘a unit of meaning’ as in *A Dictionary of Literary Devices* (Dupriez, 1991: 290).

lasting sleep, and their supposed association with the child's development, will be dealt with briefly.

### 6.7.1 Numbers

Certain numbers reoccur in fairy tales, and the numbers *three* and *seven* are frequently applied, related both to the action and the characters. This study does not aim to interpret the symbolic meaning of numbers in fairy tales but refers to their immediate connotations in a multicultural context. The three phases of pre-adult development are seven years long, as referred to in section 6.4.5.<sup>267</sup> Both three and seven connote totality and completion in a universal, cultural frame of reference. There are, for example, seven days per week. The seven dwarfs comprise a complete group of helpers in Snow White's development (Heuscher, 1974). In the Bible, the tripartite divinity of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit expresses entirety. The narrative structure itself is tripartite. It is also progressive. An activity which is repeated three times grows in degree of difficulty, and the final repetition of the action is often decisive (Bettelheim, 1976). Jack has to climb the beanstalk three times. This principle of progression is also manifest in the case of characterisation. The third-born child is often the most promising one. When there are three princesses or three brothers, the two eldest are generally portrayed as almost similar, like Per and Paul in the Norwegian tradition, whereas the youngest, Espen Ashlad,<sup>268</sup> is special because he is clever, or because she is beautiful and gifted, as in the case of Cinderella.

### 6.7.2 A trail in the wood

Children in fairy tales often find themselves lost in the wood, and according to Bettelheim (1976: 217), being lost in the wood is "[...] an ancient symbol for the need to find oneself". Goldilocks, for instance, roams aimlessly in the wood. Snow White, and Hansel and Gretel are put out in the wood on the instruction of evil stepmothers. Little Red Riding Hood

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<sup>267</sup> There are also other numbers which are often used in fairy tales, like, for example, twelve and hundred. However, the two numbers, three and seven, seem to dominate and are emphasised in this study.

<sup>268</sup> Askeladd in Norwegian.

wanders off the safe trail quite contrary to her mother's instructions. According to Jung (1964: 282), the wood is generally symbolic of an unconscious area of the psyche, a dark place where animals live, where the unconscious, non-rational, is given free scope, and a place where transformation takes place; it is the place where development is possible, leaving one phase of life to enter the next. Heuscher emphasises the frustration of repudiation the child must experience. The first phase the child must go through is weaning, and then there is the rejection, firstly, by the mother, and later on, by other people. Both Heuscher (1974: 116) and Bettelheim (1976: 159-166) see the frustration of repudiation as a central topic in "Hansel and Gretel". The children are lost in the wood, but some white pebbles that Hansel has strewn mark the path home. Heuscher (1974: 116-118) suggests that the trails represent a repression of the fact that life presents people with increasing demands. Hansel's second attempt to mark the path home by leaving a trail of crusts behind them is not successful; they cannot find their way home. Birds eat the crusts of bread and prevent the children from returning home without first meeting even greater challenges. Just like Little Red Riding Hood, they are exiled from the safe trail and have to face increasing demands.

### **6.7.3 Cottage**

The cottage in the wood is a place where fairy tale heroines like Snow White and Sleeping Beauty can restore their strength, the former in the company of dwarfs to avoid the evil stepmother, the latter in the company of fairies to avoid the spindle. But a cottage is not the everlastingly safe haven it is often set out to be. In "Hansel and Gretel", for instance, the siblings finally come across the gingerbread cottage on the third day in the wood. The nice old lady, who welcomes them, provides them with sweets and then puts them in two nice little beds. Heuscher (1974: 117) sees this as the child's regressive wishful-thinking. The nice old lady in the gingerbread cottage is the illusion of the self-effacing mother, who provides them with plenty of food and care. Hansel and Gretel want to stay in the cottage forever; they want to stay in what may be a metaphor for the pre-oedipal idyll, but apparently regression and dependence are dangerous inclinations. The nice old lady is not a good fairy; Heuscher (1974) sees the danger represented by the witch as the projection of the child's own wish to return to a past way of adjustment. It may be seen as the struggle within the person between two

conflicting needs, the need for regression, and the need for solving problems and getting on with one's life.<sup>269</sup>

#### 6.7.4 Sleep

In the fairy tale genre, the notions of sleep are perceived as more complex than the healthy restoration that people have between two days. Both Snow White and Sleeping Beauty fall into a deathlike sleep, and in both Bettelheim's and Heuscher's interpretation of this particular motif, it is emphasised that the sleep is symbolic of the passivity which is characteristic of adolescence. During adolescence, a person will reject some of the child's presuppositions about life and rebel against them. The inner self will temporarily stagnate while the person is overwhelmed by instincts (Heuscher, 1974: 164; Bettelheim, 1976: 225). Although puberty progresses differently for the two sexes, the tiredness and inward turn are seen to be common for both. The interpretation of, for instance, the two fairy tales - "Sleeping Beauty" and "Snow White" - suggests that the deep sleep or passivity is an inescapable part of sexual maturation. Apart from the active, aggressive dealing with the external world, the long, quiet concentration is also needed in the individual's struggle to develop. The sleep seems to be a metaphor for both inward withdrawal and passivity, and the fairy tales suggest that the quiet, time-consuming inner growth is necessary. The death or sleep that occurs, for example, when Sleeping Beauty touches the spindle may, according to Heuscher (1974: 164), represent the remnants of an earlier and infantile superego, which must be got rid of in order to live a mature life. Bettelheim (1976: 233) emphasises the protection that the sleep together with the wild rose thicket provide against premature sexual encounters.

The above account, in sections 6.5 – 6.7, presents some of the traditional fairy tale motifs and characters that are central in the intertexts of the pupil fairy tales. The interpretative reception of fairy tales has become an integrated part of how such old texts are generally perceived, and indirectly they become part of the intertextual framework of pupil narratives.

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<sup>269</sup> In the pupil fairy tale "The red princess", which is presented in chapter 5, section 5.3.4, the protagonist does not live in a cottage, but in a castle in a princess's fashion; still she is addicted to slot machines, perhaps a more modern variant of passive bluntness than the fairy tale sleep of the traditional heroines.

## **6.8 Studying the pupil fairy tales**

When the pupil narratives are studied closely, the interpretation that the reader/researcher makes is informed by the context, as accounted for in chapters 3, 4, and 5 and the intertext, as accounted for in sections 6.5- 6.7 of the present chapter. On the surface level, the pupil writers seemingly add bits and pieces from all sorts of narratives that they are already familiar with. They apply well-known narrative elements and rearrange them, and one may fairly ask whether the texts are still original. Are they valid, and consequently, is an interpretation of such texts valid? Is the comparison of text and intertexts and the interpretation of novel elements going to give the intended information about those aspects of identity that are given voice to in this narrative discourse? The attitude one takes to possible interference in the actual pupil fairy tale by other texts and other persons, the teacher or fellow pupils, is crucial to how one chooses to read the individual pupil fairy tale. Also the attitude one takes to the relationship between text and intertext is relevant in this connection. On the one hand, one may maintain that pupil fairy tales are poor copies of old narratives from the fairy tale heritage. On the other hand, one may claim that the pupils' fairy tales constitute original pieces of art that could only have been written by the individual pupil writer in question. The pupil fairy tale can be placed somewhere between these two extreme views.

### **6.8.1 Novel pupil narratives**

The pupil writer chooses some narrative features at the expense of others, some themes instead of others. The individual pupil's design of plot, theme, setting and character portrayal constitute a unique representation of narrative content. Although the level of consciousness behind such choices can be questioned, the pupil text may be seen as representing something novel. The actual representation of the individual pupil's fairy tale is a result of decisions made by the pupil writer as well as the genre boundaries and the instructions given in the task. The individual pupil's blend of these different aspects is seen to constitute something novel. The novel, to apply Bakhtin's concept, but also the general adjective, makes the individual narrative unique.

## 6.8.2 The layout of pupil narratives

The pupils' narratives, which are included in this study, are presented in their original form. Both font and size are kept in the form the pupil writers chose when they initially published the texts in TALE. Evidently many pupils in TALE have worked thoroughly with finding adequate formulations and expressive decoration, as demonstrated in chapter 5, sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3. Such formal aspects are only dealt with in the interpretation when significant to the pupil produced content of the narratives. For example, in the narrative cited in section 6.4.5, the title, "The Mirrors", suggests the significance of a mirror in the narrative and may connote the fairy tale world of Snow White and her stepmother's mirror. The treasure hunt on which the queen sets out in the pupil narrative is quite unconventional. What starts out as a traditional search for a guarded treasure at the innermost end of the cave turns out to be what can be understood as a quest of identity; "[...] she realized that the treasury was herself, and she went down the tunnel and down the mirror-hall". Like an Alice in Wonderland, she stumbles across various obstacles on her way, through doors that lead to yet another mysterious room. The way in which she experiences others, whether they are human beings or monsters, changes when she finds herself. The moment she realises that she is the treasury, the monsters that surround her turn into human beings. Although content and intertextuality have the main focus in the interpretations and are superior to the layout in this context, design and format are not overlooked. In some cases, design and format are applied to underline the content. In the narrative, "The Mirrors", in section 6.4.5, the pupil writer has centred three lines of the text in the middle of the narrative. Perhaps something which is central to the understanding of the story is marked in this way? Quite adequately the words of wisdom have been singled out like this:

"You'll know what to find in here  
Your worst enemy or your best friend.  
Use yourself."

The thematic point is underpinned by the aesthetic expression, and the message of the individual quest is emphasised: To relate to others in a meaningful way, it is essential to find out who one is. The centred text can be viewed as a mirror where the two parts of the narrative are of almost equal size. The aesthetic design of the text emphasises the topic, is essential to the meaning of the narrative and would have been included in an interpretation of this narrative. This example shows that the lay-out is sometimes an important literary device

in the sense that it may underpin the theme of the pupil fairy tale. Also the various fonts and colours applied in the pupil fairy tales may add to the meaning of the text.

### 6.8.3 Font and colour

The choice of font and colour is sometimes significant to the reading of the narrative, and in some cases, such aesthetic choices seem to have a clear motive. The following text was submitted in 'Grp Q Triad A Windy Day' 29 April 2003 and downloaded 13 November 2003.

#### THE PRINCESS AND THE 9 SILVER-COINS.

Once upon a time there was a princess. She lived at a palace with her mother and father.

The princess had a dwarf as friend. One day the princess went to pick blackberries in the forest, she went further and further in to the forest. She lost her way and she called her mother and father.

Then there came a wicked witch and conjured the princess to a stone. After some time the princess's mother and father got afraid and sent the dwarf in the forest to find her. The dwarf came to the place where the princess was conjured to a stone. He found a fine little stone with a crown on.

He picked up the stone, and went home. When the princess's mother and father saw the little stone they cried.

The dwarf fetched a magic book. He read and read and at last he found something

“ you have to find 9 silver-coins, place them round the stone and then she should return princess again.” The princess's mother and father sent their servants out for searching as

they arrived back home they placed the silver-coins round the little stone and the dwarf said some magic words and the stone became a princess again...

**THE END**

The title announces that this is a narrative about a princess. The princess, who lives with both parents in the castle, has a dwarf friend, who eventually saves her after she has been turned into a stone, an allusion to the biblical wife of Lot, who was turned into a stone because she looked back. For no apparent reason, the introductory space between the headline and the text is disproportionately generous. It is difficult to infer that this bears any significance in the reading of the narrative. The choice of font seems to have been made more consciously perhaps to underline the genre category of the narrative. Bradley Hand ITC gives the impression of traditional handwriting, which perhaps fits the oral tradition of the fairy tale genre better than more formal font faces, like Times New Roman. The choice of font supports a fairy tale reading of the narrative. The narrative seems to present itself like a traditional fairy tale where characterisation, setting and plot are conventional. In this text, almost every second line ends near the middle of the page. This pattern is evident in several texts when a new sentence is started on a new line.<sup>270</sup> This is not the case in this example as the sentences are cut in the middle and then continued on the next line. It is possible that this has been done deliberately by the pupil writer, resulting in a text looking compact on the left side and sparser on the right side. It is difficult to discover any sound reason behind this choice apart from this perhaps being an aesthetic form of presentation. Even in an unintended way, it will probably have a slight influence on both the silent and the oral reading of the text. To devise such designs demands time and effort and cannot be overlooked in an interpretation of pupil narratives although the content side of the narrative text is at the centre of attention. The selection of the cool and clean lavender colour is also a matter of aesthetic choice which perhaps may be seen as being of less importance to the analysis of the narrative. Possibly the pupils try to express themselves further through the choice of font, colour and other variations. Since the pupil writers obviously spend both time and effort on decorating their texts, such factors need to be considered in the interpretation of the individual text.

All the texts are interpreted by the researcher. This implies that the role of the researcher needs to be briefly considered as it has some significant bearing on the actual interpretations made.

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<sup>270</sup> This corresponds to the findings of Korsvold (2000: 89). She claims that pupils at the intermediate level often start a new sentence on a new line.

#### **6.8.4 The role of the researcher**

The researcher in this study is also a reader of narratives with the general implications involved in the reader's role with regard to literature. In the role of reader of a literary text, the researcher has to maintain a level-headed attitude towards the material. The researcher attempts to take an unbiased approach to the texts. Nevertheless, the intertextual references which the researcher is able to discover in the pupil narratives will depend on the literary experience of this particular researcher. The researcher will only be able to detect intertexts referred to in the pupils' texts that she is familiar with already.

The researcher approaches the pupils, their texts and intertexts with respect and interest. Without having ever met or knowing any details about the TALE pupils' background apart from the information they publish in Blackboard, the present researcher is preconditioned with a positive attitude towards both the pupils and their narratives. Thus the trustworthiness of the researcher's interpretations is linked to such a positive view. The pupil narratives will be interpreted with a focus on the intertextual and novel elements.

#### **6.8.5 How the pupil fairy tales will be read**

In the interpretation of the individual pupil fairy tale, the traditional fairy tales, novels and stories which to the present researcher seem to be the immediate intertexts will be considered, and text and intertext will be juxtaposed. The old fairy tales are traditionally read for entertainment, but their psychological interpretations are, to some extent, known among the general population. Such realisation constitutes a part of the general - but often non-conscious - understanding of fairy tales. Thus they indirectly become part of the intertextual reference. The pupil fairy tales will not be regarded as copies of traditional fairy tales, but considered as new fairy tales written by individual pupils. Some of the fairy tales do not refer to specific traditional fairy tales, but allude to universal plot structures or elements of popular culture in general.<sup>271</sup> These narratives are also approached with a focus on the relationship between text

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<sup>271</sup> Some narratives refer to narratives from *the Bible*.

and intertextual references. The novel elements of the pupil narratives are emphasised.<sup>272</sup> The pupil narratives will be studied with a focus on the intertextual and the novel aspects of the text as this researcher interprets them. The reader/researcher constructs the meaning based on the information available but also based on the foregoing attitudes and values. Possible prejudice and knowledge of intertexts and context inform the interpretation that she is able to make. As such, her interpretation is subjective, and cannot become truly objective, no matter how hard she tries. What comes out of any interpretation can be contradicted, rendering other readings of the text of equal value although the researcher's literary interpretation is well-grounded and relevant.

### 6.8.6 Validity in text interpretation

In order to evaluate the validity of this study one needs to consider whether the method that is chosen will adequately illuminate the research issues. Will the literary method for text interpretation reveal those aspects of identity that are expressed in the discourse that the narratives are seen to constitute. The degree of originality of the pupils' texts is not easy to assess, and the validity of such new texts by pupils may seem difficult to determine. A general comment in the plan for English in LK06 is noteworthy in this connection: "English texts, films, music and other art forms may also inspire the pupil's own artistic expression and creativity in many genres and media".<sup>273</sup> On the surface level, the mixture of narrative devices from different genres and different media seems to be randomly put together by the individual pupil writer, but on a deeper level, the pupil-made selection of narrative elements have been put together by the individual pupil writer in exactly this way and seemingly different from all other versions. The intertextual nature of any text production may deem pupil texts as original as any other text.<sup>274</sup> Hence each narrative will be read as an original text. The pupils' narratives are seen as being written by individual writers, who communicate something novel and genuine of intrinsic value. An approach like this will make the texts valid and their

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<sup>272</sup> Since no second evaluator has examined and validated the results of the interpretation, the finds have to be treated cautiously.

<sup>273</sup> [http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM\\_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laereplanId=1547&visning=2&scope=ScopeLaerAns&epslanguage=NO](http://skolenettet.no/lkt/TM_Laereplan.aspx?id=36376&laereplanId=1547&visning=2&scope=ScopeLaerAns&epslanguage=NO). (Accessed 3 October 2007)

<sup>274</sup> Still the aforementioned evaluation of the various narrative text types in sections 6.2 to 6.3 suggests that the pupil produced content is more genuine in some genres than in others.

reliability unblemished. To interpret the texts as expressions of various aspects of identity is thus possible and trustworthy.

### **6.8.7 Reliability**

The reliability of the interpretation of the narratives is an issue where the researcher's interpretation may be seen, not only as one out of many possible ways of reading the text, but as a trustworthy interpretation where knowledge related to the context, the intertexts and the method of interpretation makes the researcher's interpretation reliable.

The reliability of the material is another issue in which the present study depends to some extent on the reliance of the pupil writers' sound attitude towards the origin of their own texts. It presupposes what van Maanen (1979) would refer to as an ideal situation in which sources of error, such as dishonesty, self-deception and misunderstandings, have been skimmed off. This situation is perhaps a rarity in any human activity. Nevertheless, one needs to take any material at face value, and to speculate about the intention of the writer and the role of exterior influence is perhaps futile in this context. At the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind that other co-writers might have been involved, precisely because no text comes into being in a vacuum, but is contextual and dialogical. The Kristevian principle that texts are intertextual by nature is significant in this respect (Kristeva, 1974; 1980). In general, all writers, and therefore also the pupil writers, enter into dialogues with other writers and other texts. Disqualifying narratives from this study viewed against this background is therefore somewhat irrelevant.

In the interpretation of texts, the aspects which can be considered novel will be accentuated. The individual pupil's response to the genre, the task instructions, and the dialogue with other texts and other people is seen to constitute the novel. The classroom activity in EFL is the primary context, and the narrative writing takes place in TALE. The project and its participants, to some extent, define what matters that can be dealt with and how. The primary context is the TALE network's discourse system. And the teachers play their part in this respect.

### 6.8.8 Teacher interference

Even though the possibility of copying other texts or interference by other co-writers, such as the teachers, fellow pupils, parents, siblings or friends, is considered, no texts have been omitted here because of the presumption of such conditions. When Björklund (2005: 229-230) questions the role of the teacher in the production of narratives in TALE, she points to an example where the teacher clearly interferes with the writing process to such a degree that it is difficult to speak of an individual pupil's narrative. She demonstrates how the teacher may interfere both with regard to content and form, suggesting words that are too advanced for the pupil in question, correcting grammar and syntax and spelling to such an extent that the pupil does not recognise her/his own text. Whether such interference is representative of the material, or the exception that proves the rule, and thereby an untypical example, is actually difficult to determine. Björklund suggests that the teacher will offer this type of assistance to pupils with special needs. There is no systematic analysis within the TALE project which illuminates this particular aspect. As a consequence, one has to accept the fact that some texts are invalid in the sense that they have been exposed to substantial interference by the teacher or others. To figure out the number of such invalid texts is, however, difficult. In the selection of pupils' fairy tales, which are presented in this study, it is difficult to point to texts which are conspicuously well or correctly written. This is, however, a possible source of error, which has to be taken into account. Björklund's observations relate to texts written early in the text exchange programme, whereas the fairy tale is written at a later point.<sup>275</sup> One may assume that by then, the teachers had become more accustomed to their role in the exchange programme and understood the project design better. The corrections and comments were supposed to be made visible in Blackboard in the student teachers' response, and not cleared away prior to publication. There may have been an inclination on the part of the teacher to correct these before publication especially the first time. The pressure of wanting the pupils' first published texts in Blackboard to make a favourable impression might have encouraged teachers to present the pupils' work as positively as possible. Another tendency, which has been pointed to in chapter 5, sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3, is that the corrections made by the teachers are mostly connected to language, rather than content. The corrections influence the content to a lesser degree.

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<sup>275</sup> The fairy tale is written as the fourth task in one pool and the third in the others.

### 6.8.9 The interpretative practice

The theoretical basis, as discussed in chapter 2, presupposes that the novel elements which the pupil writer adds to the formulaic genre provide significant information about the pupil produced content. The literary analysis that is carried out in this thesis involves a method for interpretation which focuses on the novel in the interface between text and intertext. The novel is the force which represents something new. The study uses the somewhat inaccurate term ‘novel elements’ to denote the alterations that the text makes to elements in the intertexts; the wide term ‘element’ is applied to account for the variety of literary devices, for example, character portrayal, setting, plot and motif that this may involve. The change that the pupil makes to an established element of the intertextual reference is seen as significant to the interpretation of the pupil produced content.

Contemporary education rhetoric, as accounted for in chapter 3, legitimates an analysis of what pupils communicate in their texts, of the pupil produced content as meaning, and not just as examples of language practice. In this study, the strictly linguistic aspects of these texts have been almost overlooked deliberately in order to focus on the substantial meaning of the narratives. Based in the research fields of literature and pedagogy,<sup>276</sup> the pupil narratives, which have been produced as EFL texts within the frame of the TALE project in English as a school subject, are read by the researcher as bearers of meaning.

The interpretation will be conducted in the following way: Each text is interpreted separately in order to indicate how each text constructs its meaning negotiated with intertextual references. The first mentioning of any intertextual reference will normally lead to a short summary of the intertext if the intertext is seen as being of central importance to the interpretation of the pupil narrative. Novel elements in the pupil narrative will accordingly be discussed. For practical reasons, any intertext, a traditional fairy tale, for instance, will only be summarised when it is used for the first time: the first summary of the intertext will be used in subsequent interpretations of the next fairy tale and the next, and so on.

In the forthcoming interpretation, the texts appear in groups of three, which indicates that one may perceive a thematic link between them. Although the texts deal with related topics in

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<sup>276</sup> And within these two broad fields, narratology and psychology respectively.

different ways, the fifteen narratives are here arranged in this sequence to comprise a whole as this researcher perceives it; they could most likely have been arranged in a different order by others. The order in which the narratives appear is influenced by the narrative structure itself. The interpretation of narratives may be seen as a narrative in itself in that it has a beginning and that it, “goes somewhere interesting or meaningful, and ends where it feels right that it should end” (Lassen, 2003: 2). The discussion of the outcome of the interpretation takes place in chapter 8 and is thus not part of the analysis of each individual pupil fairy tale in chapter 7.

## **6.9 *Summing up***

This chapter has debated the methodological aspects with regard to the reading of the pupil narratives. Firstly, the qualitative selection process is presented, secondly, the quantitative selection process is described, thirdly, the intertexts of TALE pupil narratives are discussed, and fourthly, the method for interpretation is discussed.

The aptitude of various text types for finding pupil produced content is discussed to select adequate texts for further reading and interpretation. The selection process involves several stages where the first is a qualitative assessment of the most adequate genre of pupil narratives for interpretation of pupil produced content. The next stage involves a manual and random reduction of target texts, and the next stage is motivated by considerations which secure gendered representativeness. The last stage is a quantitatively based selection of the actual sample that is interpreted in chapter 7.

In TALE, the pupils have been given different tasks, and some of these tasks are relatively restricted while others provide a wider scope to the production of pupil content. Within the TALE project, the pupil fairy tales provide the less restraining confinements, concerning pupil produced content. In the other tasks, the instructions limit the scope of the narrative to an undesirable degree. Thus the pupil fairy tale is the narrative category that has been selected for further interpretation. Some of the old fairy tale motifs manifest themselves in the pupil fairy tales, making the old fairy tales the more immediate intertexts for the pupil fairy tales.

Both fairy tales and traditional interpretations<sup>277</sup> of such tales constitute important intertexts in the pupil produced fairy tale. Hence some traditional fairy tale characters and motifs have been discussed. The pupil narratives will be studied with a focus on the intertextual and novel elements. Although the pupil writers are influenced by other texts and other people when they create their narrative, it is theirs. Each individual pupil is here seen as an individual, who puts his or her special mark on the text. Thus Bakhtin's concept 'novel', but also the adjective 'novel' with the denotation 'new', is relevant in this connection. Even when the pupils write within a relatively formulaic fairy tale genre, they make some choices which are significant to the understanding of how they communicate as individuals. They give voice to aspects of identity in the discourse that the narratives are seen to constitute.

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<sup>277</sup> Although it may seem as if this involves adding new theory into the discussion, this has been done to illuminate the traditional interpretation of fairy tales, as they are seen to constitute an important part of the intertextual reference.



## **7 The literary interpretations of fifteen pupil narratives**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, a selection of fifteen pupil narratives is interpreted. The intertextual references applied are based on traditional stories from fairy tales and popular culture. The references may also involve literature that can be called ‘high literature’, depending on whose literary canon one chooses to rely on. A discussion of such canonical issues will not be pursued in this thesis as it would sidetrack this thesis’ focus on the pupil narrative.<sup>278</sup> Each text is interpreted on its own terms; the pupil texts are not compared to each other, only to the intertexts. The texts have been selected from the fairy tale genre in the TALE project and have not been presented earlier on in the thesis. The interpretation attempts to juxtapose the text and its intertext(s) in order to identify the novel elements. In the forthcoming analysis, the pupil narrative constitutes the text, and the traditional fairy tales and popular stories, the intertext(s). The first time an intertext is referred to, a short résumé of the course of events in the traditional narrative is presented when the intertext is of significance to the interpretation of the pupil narrative in question. The interpretation attempts to identify intertextual references and possible novel elements in the pupil narratives. This method is based on the hypothesis that a study of the meeting between text and intertext(s) makes the pupil produced meaning of the pupil narrative evident. The texts are thematically grouped in triads and may be seen to appear as a narrative about the pupil narratives.

### **7.2 Diversified fighters**

In the first three narratives, the struggles encountered by three different main characters are depicted. They have to find solutions to challenges related to their personal situation. An unconventional princess is the heroine of the first narrative. In the second, a worm finds himself a new home, and in the third, a dog helps his friends out of a difficult confrontation.

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<sup>278</sup> So-called high literature texts will be mentioned in connection to pupil fairy tales if, and when, they are referred to, without taking into consideration their apparent status as either ‘high’ or ‘low’ literature. There are also biblical references in the pupil narratives.

The three main characters are faced with existential dilemmas of various dispositions. Traditional fairy tales, comics and films constitute the intertextual references in the pupil narratives.

### 7.2.1 The ugly princess

The first narrative, “The ugly princess”, is written by a girl and has previously been presented in Larsen (2005).<sup>279</sup> The text has been published in the triad, ‘Yellow Island’, in TALE. The triad consists of two boys and a girl, a student teacher and a teacher trainer. The text was submitted 7 November and downloaded 13 November 2003 for the present research purpose, prior to feedback from the triad members.<sup>280</sup>

## The ugly princess

Once upon a time there was a beautiful little princess how lived in a beautiful castle witch her father.

One day the beautiful princess was playing in the wood and an ugly witch came and made a cursed spell on the beautiful princess. Suddenly the princess came out really ugly: She was so ugly that all the animals the princess played with before ran away...

The witch had before this spell been so jealous at the princess because of her beautifulness.

Now the witch was so happy, because she wasn't the most ugly person in the world anymore.

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<sup>279</sup> The four narratives: “The Ugly Princess”, “The boy and the magic word”, “The biggest battle” and “The three trolls” have previously been presented in Larsen (2005) in a discussion of identity in narratives.

<sup>280</sup> All narratives presented in this study may have been read and commented upon by teachers or fellow pupils in school or others; however, the nature of such informal feedback is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on the actual unpremeditated content of the narratives, prior to any formal revision.

Before the witch ran away, she was just able to shout that if the princess ever should be beautiful again a handsome prince should come and kiss her....

Now the poor princess looked in the mirror she had in her pocket. And cried, because she faced the most ugly princess she had ever seen in her hole life....

That day and the rest of the year the princess never came home, because her father should not see her like this.

The poor ugly princess went out searching for a handsome prince, who had so much compassion with her and dared to kiss her.

The poor princess went to many castles but there was no one who would kiss her because she was so ugly.

But one day the princess came to a castle, where there lived a handsome prince.

She knocked on the door and waited a while and a very handsome prince came out. The prince asked what a poor girl like her was doing at his castle and the princess said that she just wanted a kiss from the prince so she could get beautiful again. The prince didn't understand why but he was so confused that he kissed the princess. There was a big bang and suddenly a beautiful princess stood in front of the prince.

The prince looked astonish at this beautiful princess and asked for an explanation. She told all about the witch and the cursed spell.

The prince invited the princess to stay for dinner at the castle – and they talked and talked and talked the whole night.

A year after everybody in the whole country were invited to a royal wedding at the castle.

And the royal couple lived happily after.

As the title suggests, “The Ugly Princess” is on the surface a fairy tale about being ugly. The father and the daughter live together in a beautiful castle, and it is when the girl is playing in the wood that an ugly witch casts a spell on her: “Suddenly the princess came out really ugly” (line 5).<sup>281</sup> A princess who is ugly turns the princess concept upside down. But the princess with animal friends is a character recognisable from fairy tales, like “Snow White” and “Sleeping Beauty”: “She was so ugly that all the animals the princess played with before ran away...” (lines 5-6). The intertextual references to these two fairy tales are more firmly established through the old witch’s spell and the awakening by the prince’s kiss. The Brothers Grimm’s version of the fairy tale about Sleeping Beauty can be summarised, as follows:

The King and the Queen get a longed-for daughter, and during a celebration party for the princess’ birth, an evil spell is cast on her by an uninvited fairy. There are thirteen fairies in the kingdom, but only twelve are invited, and they shower upon her gifts of virtue, beauty and riches. In the midst of this, the thirteenth fairy interrupts the proceedings, determined to take her revenge for not being invited. She places a curse on the princess, stating that in her fifteenth year a spindle will wound her, and she will die. The twelfth fairy, who has not yet given her gift, cannot undo the spell, just modify it. She states that the princess will not die, but fall asleep for a hundred years. All the spindles in the kingdom are destroyed; nevertheless, on her fifteenth birthday she meets an old woman who is spinning, and the needle sticks into her. Everyone in the castle falls asleep. The hedge surrounding the castle grows for a hundred years until one day the right prince manages to cut it down. He finds the princess and kisses her awake; everyone wakes up, and they celebrate the prince’s and the princess’ wedding.<sup>282</sup>

The fairy tale about Snow White can be summarised, as follows:

Snow White lives with her father and stepmother until the stepmother’s magic mirror suggests that Snow White - and not her stepmother - is the prettiest woman in the country. Snow White is left all alone in the forest by the servant, who is supposed to kill her. Here she comes across the dwelling of seven dwarfs. She becomes acquainted with them, and agrees to take care of

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<sup>281</sup> The lines of the pupil narratives are not marked in the text. Since the texts are relatively short this has not been seen as necessary. When lines are pointed to in the discussion, it is done to help the reader of the thesis identify the quotes from the pupil narratives.

<sup>282</sup> The story is called “Rosebud” in the version of Grimm and Grimm, ([1925] 1985: 69-73).

their home. Her stepmother in disguise sets out to find her, and on the third attempt, she manages to poison her. The dwarfs place Snow White in a glass coffin. It is while she is in the coffin that a passing prince happens to find her. He brings her home as his wife, and the evil stepmother dies of envy and fury.<sup>283</sup>

In “The ugly princess” the girl is “[...] a beautiful little princess” (line 1), and she lives with her father “[...] in a beautiful castle” (line 2), as the story begins. Apparently there is no mother present. Whether she has left her family, or whether she is dead, is not told in the story. The mother is absent; in fact, she is not mentioned at all. Instead there is a witch present. In the introductory sentence, the word ‘with’ is misspelled ‘witch’ (line 2), a rather common misspelling: “Once upon a time there was a beautiful little princess how lived in a beautiful castle witch her father” (lines 1-2). In the next sentence, the witch is introduced properly. Like Snow White’s stepmother, the witch in “The ugly princess” is motivated by jealousy of the princess when she casts her spell; “The witch had before this spell been so jealous at the princess because of her beautifulness” (lines 7-8). Snow White’s stepmother becomes vindictive when she consults her magic mirror for reassurance of her own beauty, and when the magic mirror puts Snow White in the most prominent position, the stepmother takes steps to destroy Snow White. In the pupil fairy tale, the motif from “Snow White” has been turned upside down. Unlike the relatively beautiful stepmother in “Snow White” the witch in “The ugly princess” is an ugly witch. However, she is happy when she has made the princess ugly because she is herself no longer the ugliest person in the world. As often with fairies’ and witches’ spells, there is a slight modification in the spell cast on the ugly princess. For example, in “Sleeping Beauty”, the last fairy is able to modify the evil fairy’s gift, predicting Sleeping Beauty’s death, by changing this so that she will not die, but sleep for a hundred years. The witch in “The ugly princess” modifies her spell before she runs away by declaring that the princess will become beautiful again if a handsome prince kisses her. The novel element of turning a princess ugly instead of pretty opens the princess role to even more change. The princess is overwhelmed by her own ugliness to such an extent and is so ashamed of herself that she stays away from home for a year to avoid being seen by her father in such a state.

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<sup>283</sup> This story is called “Snowdrop” in the version of Grimm and Grimm, ([1925] 1985: 87-95).

The motif from the traditional fairy tales is reversed; unlike Snow White and Sleeping Beauty her passivity is not persistent. In this narrative, the girl refuses to be victimised. Indeed she is unattractive, but she will not submit to the traditional passive role predetermined for her sex. There are two stories in Asbjørnsen and Moe ([1851]1982; 1983) where a motif in sequences of the fairy tales tells about a woman who “[...] is smeared with fat and soot and does not know herself anymore and thinks that she is an animal or devil” (Hodne, 1984: 248). Likewise, in “The ugly princess”, the value of appearance and the traditional gender roles are challenged. The ugly princess is far more enterprising than her predecessors. In the traditional fairy tales, the right prince seeks out the princess. The prince is the active party; he has to conquer several obstacles to find the princess and bring her back to life. In the pupil’s narrative, the ugly princess embarks upon the pursuit herself. When she starts searching for a prince who is willing to kiss someone as ill-favoured as herself, she is looking for someone with compassion and courage, someone who “[...] dared to kiss her” (line 20). It turns out to be quite laborious to find a prince who is willing: “The poor princess went to many castles but there was no one who would kiss her because she was so ugly” (lines 21-22). At last, she comes across the right castle with the right prince, and the transformation can take place. On reaching puberty, the girl is newborn. The modern concept “[...] big bang” (line 30) is used in this narrative. What happens to her when she is kissed can be likened to the initial start of human life and emphasises the radical nature of the change involved in the girl’s development.

### **7.2.2 The superworm**

The following text was submitted in TALE 29 September 2003 in the triad, ‘Fröbel’, by a girl and downloaded for this research purpose 13 November 2003. The triad includes two girls and one boy. Altogether six student teachers and teachers are members of the triad.

# THE SUPERWORM

Once upon a time there was a worm that lived in an apple. The worm lived the whole summer in the apple until it ruten. This worm was not a normal worm, he was a SUPERWORM! The worm had a name, Jörgen Mask. Nobody knew that he was a SUPERWORM. Jörgen had a problem, he must find a new home. He flew up in the sky looking for a new home. Suddenly Jörgen saw a bird that was flying right in to him. Jörgen flew around and the bird flew after him. They flew very long the cloud got a new form. In the clouds was written SUPERWORM IS THE BEST! When the bird was gone he looked for a home. He found a perfect place! He moved in and lived happy ever after.

The title introduces a superworm, which is the larva which pupates and later emerges as a darkling beetle.<sup>284</sup> The change between the two colours, blue and red, in every second letter of the title may hint to the costume of Superman, whose dress is blue and red and perhaps also to the double identity of the main character. In addition, this title, “The Superworm”, has a phonetic similarity to *The Superman*. The Superworm lives in an apple. The name of the superworm is Jörgen Mask. The first part of the name, Jörgen, is an ordinary Scandinavian boy’s name.<sup>285</sup> The second name, Mask, is not an unusual surname in Swedish and Danish. In addition, the word ‘mask’ means something you can hide behind both in the Scandinavian languages and in English. The comics’ hero, Superman, also wears a mask and a costume. Thus the title, “The Superworm”, connotes *The Superman* both phonetically and thematically; *The Superman* (Siegel and Shuster, 1938) is the obvious intertext to this pupil narrative. The American comic book character, Superman, is a conventional hero in the sense that he exposes himself to grave danger in order to save people from serious threats.

Superman is originally from the alien planet, Krypton, but lands on earth disguised as Clark Kent when Krypton explodes. His alter ego, Clark Kent, grows up in a Kansas family. The boy gets superhuman qualities in the transition from boyhood to adolescence. Clark is a journalist with the local newspaper. He works together with Lois Lane with whom he

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<sup>284</sup> ‘Zophobas morio’ in Latin.

<sup>285</sup> The Scandinavian languages are Danish, Norwegian and Swedish.

develops romantic affiliations. The various Superman stories picture him solving different problems for the benefit of humanity.<sup>286</sup>

Unlike his literary forefather, Superworm does not necessarily help other creatures; at least such heroic acts are not depicted in this narrative. Still his connection to Superman suggests such characteristics although the only action that the worm is involved in is to find itself a home. There is no Lois Lane awaiting Superworm in his new home. Apart from the name, the parallel between the two stories is first and foremost connected to the quest for identity. In the pupil narrative, Superworm hides in an apple, and he is only known in the world as Jörgen Mask. Superman disguises his unusual capacity in the more realistic character, Clark Kent, his alter ego. In the pupil narrative, Superworm's identity is also hidden. No one actually knows that he is a superworm, and not just an ordinary worm. The irony involved in the implicit contrast between the problems the two superheroes have to cope with is effective. Whereas Superman often has to solve catastrophic problems inflicted on humanity by an evil enemy, Superworm's problem is to find a new home since his old home, the apple, has become rotten. The novel element of making the hero of the narrative into a worm may transform the challenges that superheroes are confronted with into trivialities. Superworm's problem echoes Superman's initial problems when Krypton exploded, and he had to find his new home on earth. Superman cannot exist on earth as Superman, but has to hide as Clark Kent in order to fit into his new home. The worm is suddenly able to fly and can pretend to be a bird in order to fit in. When Superworm flies out to look for a place to stay, he meets a bird. Usually worms are the birds' food, and the bird flies after him for a while. As they fly together, a heroic tribute to the worm is seen written in the sky, "SUPERWORM IS THE BEST" (lines 6-7). It is somewhat unclear whether the bird is chasing the worm or just following him. Most likely he is helping him to form the sentence in the sky. The contact with the bird is apparently important to his later happiness. He has somehow been accepted, as the bird does not attack him or simply eat him, but meets him in an apparently friendly manner. His search for a new home is successful. The quest for identity is successful, and Superworm enters the next phase of his development. "The Superworm" gives no indication about any possible sexual or romantic fulfilment, as is suggested by the presence of Lois Lane in *The Superman* stories. It appears that Superworm has not reached that phase of life yet. He is still young.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.superman.com/> (Accessed 31 May 2007) for more information about *The Superman*.

<sup>287</sup> Besides, he is a worm, and strictly speaking, holometabolic, and in no need of a Lois Lane to fulfil his life.

The narrative suggests the importance of being a hero and reflects a sense of innocence. Even in the small and insignificant settings of life, heroic acts are vital in order to mature.

### 7.2.3 The karate dog

The next text was published in the triad, 'Ekaisa', by a boy. The text was submitted in TALE 30 October and downloaded 13 November 2003. In addition, the triad consists of a girl, a boy and two teacher trainers and two student teachers.



Once upon a time there was a dog. He lived in a house in the city. He worked as a pilot in the British Airways. He was on a trip to Tokyo in Japan and one of the hostesses had an uncle there that trained karate. He had the eight black belt. The dog got curious and visited the uncle in his house.

They said hello and the dog asked him to train him so he could learn to defend himself.

Then the uncle said. Wash the floor for me and then you can paint the house for me. And so he did. After he did that the uncle said. Now, now i can learn you the secret of karate. The uncle walked in to the house with the dog after him. They went in a secret passage in the hall. There it was a very big training platform with weapons hanging all around it. This is a big place you have here. Said the dog. They trained for many days. And he staid there a couple of days and then he went home to England. He did not tell anyone about his trip to Tokyo so his friends did not know that he had studied karate. After some days he flied to Tokyo again to visit the uncle. This time he learned even more of him. He was with the uncle just one day then he went back to England. His friends arranged a party at a clubhouse in the city. On their way home they met a gangster gang. The leader of the gang said: give us your money and we will not hurt you. The dog answered: that we will not do for such pathetic creatures as you. Then the whole gang run towards them. The dog did nothing before they where just an arm length away. Then he exploded of energy and threw all of the gang back. He picked up a stick of wood almost one and a half meter long the leader run against him again. The dog punched him in his stomach with the stick he had and the leader of the gang fell down on the ground then the dog said: do you want some more, com and get it! The gang helped the leader up and they run away. Are you all alright. The dog asked his friends. Yes. They all answered. What about you, are you alright. Thanks for saving us but, what was that? Yes I am alright. And it was karate you just saw, learned it in Japan. He answered. And then they all went home and lived happily ever after

A significant feature of the title is the choice of colour and font; the yellow headline practically shines with energy. The title, “The karate dog”, resembles the film title, *The Karate Kid*. The education in karate that both the main characters of the film and the pupil narrative go through suggests that the connection between the two is more than a coincidence, and that Avildsen’s 1984 film, *The Karate Kid*, is the immediate intertext.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087538/> (Accessed 31 May 2007) for more information about the film.

*The Karate Kid* portrays a teenage boy in New Jersey, who moves west together with his widowed mother to make a fresh start after the death of his father. The Japanese janitor at their apartment building becomes his karate teacher, who assists him in his attempt to confront the local bully, who is the former boyfriend of Karate Kid's girlfriend. In the resulting fights, Karate Kid eventually defeats his enemy. Ethical codes and the aesthetics of karate are dealt with. The importance of balance in life is essential.

A novel element in the pupil narrative is to alter the generic and national identity of the main character. The hero is transformed into a British dog. The karate dog has a job; he is a pilot, and he seems to be living a bachelor life in a big city where his mates are his closest social relations. The story deals with the possibility of impressing one's friends, by surprising them, while committing a truly heroic act in a moment of crisis. The dream of being able to save one's friends from evil attacks comes true in this narrative. The setting is highly urban; British Airways in England is the place of employment mentioned. Most probably the big city where the pilot dog lives is London. The dog goes to Japan to learn his secret tricks. He is fortunate; his air hostess colleague has a resourceful uncle in Tokyo, the modern centre of artificial intelligence and technology, and karate, apparently. He goes back and forth between the two big cities, twice between east and west.<sup>289</sup> His colleague's uncle teaches him the techniques of karate. But before the uncle is willing to teach him anything at all, the karate dog has to perform some chores, domestic chores. The dog has to wash floors and paint the house. In the film, the Karate Kid has to wash and wax his teacher's many cars, and he has to paint his fence. This is an important feature in many heroic tales; the hero has to be willing to do something unpleasant, something trying in order to achieve anything at all. Quite literally in this narrative, the hero has to be willing to get dirt on his paws before he can be placed in the right position to achieve anything at all. In addition, the laborious work is supposed to be a part of the karate training where the various arm movements strengthen the defensive ability both of the mind and of the body. Eastern karate, which emphasises the spiritual part of physical training, is brought into western culture. The east west dichotomy in both narratives underlines the theme of balance between mind and body. To import features from the foreign culture is accentuated in the individual's attempt at becoming a hero among his friends.

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<sup>289</sup> Not thrice as in the fairy tale fashion.

### **7.3 Villainous creatures**

As the three first narratives have shown, there are various novel elements in the pupils' texts, like the ugliest princess in the world, instead of the prettiest, a worm with superpowers, and a dog with skills in karate. In the next three texts, the destinies of quite different creatures are accounted for. The narratives involve three rag dolls, three bugs and three bears. The intertextual references are made both to TV series and traditional fairy tales, and the narratives address the complexity of the challenges that the main characters are involved in.

#### **7.3.1 Pou's comeback**

The following text was created in the triad, 'Galilei', by a boy. The triad also includes two girls and a student teacher and a teacher trainer. The text was submitted 3 November and downloaded 13 November 2003 for the present research purpose.

## **Pou's comeback**

Once upon a time it was a show called the teletubbies on TV. It was 4 of the teletubbies, but one of them got kicked out of the show because she had ugly clothes. The show was in Las Vegas but Pou was in Mexico. So she had to walk... so she walked and walked. She walked for years. After 100.000.000.000.000.000.000.000.000 years she had come to Las Vegas. Now she had to get a job. She hadn't eat at all on

the time she walked so she was pretty hungry. Tingky Vinky was another of the teletubbies so he gave Pou a job on burger king with he owned. But the evil Lala had her plan to take over da world. So she didn't thought that if Pou would get the job her plan would be destroyed! So she gave Tingky Vinky 16,12\$ if he would not give Pou the job. So now Pou was whiteout a job... she thought that she can sell her self on the street. Many men come to her for a little bit of the thing she sold. She took only 2\$ for one night. After 100.000.000.000.000 ears she had enough money to new clothes. So now she can go to the show. She got in to the show and they started play in new programs. Butt... one minute after they started play in the show a very, very big bomb exploded. Every living thing on the planet earth died and the planed vent to very, Very small pieces.

## THE END

The green headline is succeeded by a grey shadow repeating the headline and thereby pointing to the denotative meaning of the word 'comeback'. The intertextual reference of this narrative is stated in the introductory phrase. The shadow headline might also suggest that this is a parody of something well known already, a shadow narrative slightly altered. The pupil text refers to the *Teletubbies* quite explicitly and uses almost identical names for the dolls, Tingky Vinky, Lala and Pou.<sup>290</sup> The BBC television show about the four Teletubbies, Tinky Winky, Laa-Laa, Po and Dipsy,<sup>291</sup> was produced from 1997 to 2001. *Teletubbies* show quite mechanical figures who repeat simple activities several times.<sup>292</sup> For example, Laa-Laa throws a ball repeatedly, and the phrase, "Laa-Laa throws the ball", is repeated while one sees the action performed by the doll. In the pupil's version, the idea of the original work is

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<sup>290</sup> The deviant spelling might be misprints or deliberate modifications.

<sup>291</sup> The fourth teletubby is not mentioned by name in the pupil's version.

<sup>292</sup> For more information about the *Teletubbies*, see, e.g., <http://www.teletubbies.co.uk/> (Accessed 31 May 2007).

parodied and exaggerated to such an extent that the text becomes ironic. When Pou was in Mexico, “[...] she had to walk... so she walked and walked” (lines 4-5). The repetitious activity typical of the action in the original TV series is slightly exaggerated: “She walked for years” (line 5).

The BBC’s Teletubbies are nice entertainment figures aimed at entertaining babies and preschool children, but the pupil’s teletubbies are corrupted power-seeking scoundrels whose actions are described, for example, in the following way: “Lala had her plan to take over da world” (line 9). The use of the word “da”, apparently taken from the hip-hop culture’s modern slang instead of “the”, underlines the rebellious attitude portrayed in the narrative. The innocent Teletubbies are turned into prostitutes and terrorists, and although the tone is ironic, the narrative is rather depressing. Pou is kicked out because of her ugly clothes, and when she tries to get a decent job, she fails. She earns her money through prostitution to get new clothes. In the BBC’s *Teletubbies*, the dolls are without specific clothing. The novel element of having modern designed clothes on the teletubbies, instead of the original jumpsuit ones, may allude to the focus on dress and individuality in modern media. The promise of success if one becomes involved in dressing stylishly and finding one’s own personality through clothing is ridiculed. Pou has to sell her body in order to get clothes that will fulfil this desire.

The narrative seems to deal with the idyllic portrayal of society that some TV series for children present. The text satirises the escapist content of modern media and disassociates itself from society as it is portrayed in unrealistic TV shows like *Teletubbies*. The irony is sustained to the very end. There is no happy ending to this story. But the mimicking of the repetitious style is maintained throughout when the “very, very big bomb exploded” (line 20), and the planet turns into “very, Very, small pieces” (lines 21-22). In “Pou’s comeback”, the superficial focus on appearance does not pay. When the girl is corrupted into selling sex to promote her career, everything else in society is corrupted as well, and the world falls apart.

### 7.3.2 The three bugs

A girl has written the following text and published it in the triad, 'Easter 1929'. Date of submission is 29 April 2003 and downloading 13 November 2003. Her fellow triad members are a boy and a girl and two student teachers and two teacher trainers.

The three bugs

Once upon a time. Three bugs lived under a tree on a field. They were distant related.

The oldest were called Carl Bille, the next Peter Spider and the youngest was Myg. They were three happy bugs living under a tree on a field.

Not far away, lived a family. The mother Jenn, the father Tim and their son, Simon. Simon hated bugs. He wasn't scared of them, he just thought they were ugly.

One day, Simon walked in to an anti – bug shop and bought a big bottle of very poisoned bug spray.

He was obsessed with killing the little devils. Then he went to the field where the three bugs lived.

Carl was outside enjoying the sun, and suddenly a very big cloud of very poisoned poison killed him. Simon went home, his hunger for kill was satisfied for now.

When Peter saw what had happened, he told Myg and they agreed to revenge their "brother".

Suddenly it knocked on the door. Myg went to open it, and outside in the dark was a mole.

- Hello friends.
- H-hello. Said the Myg surprised
- I have come to help you. Your "brother" is dead, right?
- Yes, who are you? The Myg asked
- I'm the good fairy.
- I think you look more like a mole
- Well, I am a fairy, now let me help you revenge your "brother"
- All right, come in.

And they sad a little while and they agreed to do horrible things to Simon.

The next day they were going to revenge Carl, and they began the long walk to Simons house. Thirty meters.

Meanwhile, Simon was at home, he had killed three ants, one spider and a butterfly. He was getting hungry again. He was getting mad, crazy, insane.

After an hours walk, the to bugs and the mole had come to Simons home.

Suddenly Simon came out of the door, luckily he hadn't got his spray. He screamed and ran inside to get it. When he came back, mole was prepared, he

through a spell on Simon and he began to float up in the air, suddenly he flew like a rocket far away. Now Peter and Myg could go home and live happily ever after, and they did.

You want to now what happened to Simon? He ended up in the most bug full place in Afrika. There he will live to the end of his days in fear of the smallest fly.

The title introduces the three bugs, who live happily beneath a tree. Not far away, there is a family of human beings. The story is told from two perspectives, from an insect universe, and from the universe of human beings. The boy, Simon, does not like bugs, and unfortunately the two universes meet. The fact that there are three bugs - and not any other random number - adds significance to their lives and connotes universal cultural symbolism. In Christianity, for example, the number is holy and symbolises the trinity of Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit. The three bugs are perhaps out to safeguard the world and do good deeds. At least, that is what the number *three* may imply. Since there are three animals together, and they are attacked by a much bigger enemy, a possible intertext to this narrative could be “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”. The Asbjørnsen and Moe version of the text can be summarised, as follows:

The three goats are sent to their summer pasture but have to cross a bridge. Under the bridge, resides the troll, who threatens to eat them. The smallest billy goat goes first but begs the troll to spare him, and the second billy goat does likewise, promising the troll that the next goat is bigger and better. When the biggest billy goat starts to cross the bridge, the troll speaks his usual threat; however, the third billy goat is not frightened by this threat, on the contrary, he butts the troll out of the way.<sup>293</sup>

The novel elements of changing the billy goats into bugs and the troll into a human being help to stress the importance of the relativity of the relationship between the parties of a conflict. In the pupil fairy tale, the three bugs are threatened by outer dangers, in the shape of a human villain, named Simon. The boy has the characteristics of a bad person, but he is just a child with some sadistic streaks, which are common enough for the adolescent reader to recognise, not necessarily to be found in him or herself, but in other literary characters. These traits are not severely dangerous; however, the boy is a major threat to the lives of these little bugs. He bears resemblance to the tormentor, who harasses others just for fun. The typical fairy tale troll does evil deeds for no particular reason but is at the same time somewhat stupid. In the

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<sup>293</sup> See Asbjørnsen and Moe, ([1851]1982: 155-157).

pupil fairy tale, the boy attacks one of the little bugs and actually kills him. Compared to the Billy Goats Gruff, the bug has no chance to defend himself against the threat that the boy represents. But the bug is not alone in the world. He has two bug friends, or distantly related family, the two other bugs, who decide to avenge their fellow bug together with a mole. To get assistance from another animal figure, in this case, a mole, is not unusual in fairy tales. The mole is not a very heroic animal, but neither are bugs, for that matter. Yet the mole manages to put a spell on the cruel boy in his lodgings, and Simon is deported to Africa. The other two bugs feel satisfied since they have avenged their fellow bug, a primitive impulse, but still they gloat.

The names of the three main characters are typical insect names, like Peter Spider and Myg, which is the Swedish word for mosquito. The third bug is called Carl Bille. Bille is the Scandinavian word for bug. The bug's name is very similar to the name of the Swedish politician, Carl Bildt.<sup>294</sup> Carl Bille is the victim of Simon's violence. Identity is explored by comparing society to fauna. The text suggests that the powerless creatures must join forces against threatening forces. When many small units unite, they can fight down a powerful tyrant. The question of self-development involved in this narrative, on the one hand, suggests that the negative traits of the character must be suppressed or deported to a foreign place, or to Africa as in the case of Simon. The human being is the villain of this narrative. If the insects that he attacked had been bigger reptiles, like snakes or perhaps mythological dragons, his action could have been seen as heroic. Since the bugs are such harmless and small creatures, human cruelty becomes impossible to defend, and the villain is punished. On the other hand, the heroic defence of their fellow bug, the revenge that Peter Spider and Myg seek, is disturbing. Ethics that advocate principles, like an eye for an eye, are not culturally desirable; however, this is what the narrative suggests. Fortunately this is a bug's universe. Different rules apply to different worlds. Human aggression is punished while entomological revenge is asserted. The relative strength of the two species and the relationship between them are important in this respect. In the conflict with an omnipotent enemy, common ethical codes are set aside and different codes apply: codes that make it justifiable to take revenge.

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<sup>294</sup>The non-Swedish younger readers would perhaps not grasp this similarity; perhaps the pupil writer is not aware of it herself. The similarity between the two names, Bille and Bildt, might be purely coincidental.

### 7.3.3 The three bears

The next text by a boy cast three bears in the main roles. The text was submitted in the triad, 'Anaximandros', in TALE 3 November and downloaded for this research purpose 11 November 2003. In addition, the triad includes two boys, two student teachers and two teacher trainers.

#### The three bears

Once upon time was three bears live in forest. The three bears was hero. The bad person was the dragon. The Good person was the birds. The dragon lived in a little house in the forest. The birds live in tall tree. The bars is very good friends white the birds. The birds and the bears is very good friends white the birds. The birds and the bears are waking in the forest then the dragon is running after them. Birds and bears are running to the tall tree some the birds are showing them. They lived happily ever after.

As the title suggests, the narrative portrays the lives of the three bears, who are the heroes of this fairy tale. The cast of characters also includes a bad dragon, who lives "[...] in a little house in the village" (line 3), and some friendly birds. When the dragon starts chasing them, the birds and the bears manage to escape together from the dragon. They find shelter in a tall tree.

Irrespective of the actual content of the pupil narrative, the title of this text gives immediate allusions to the traditional fairy tale, "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", since the first printed version of this story, according to Briggs (1970), was entitled, "The Three Bears", ergo identical to the title of the pupil fairy tale. The traditional fairy tale can be summarised, as follows:

A young girl, Goldilocks, who is lost in the wood, comes across a nice house, which is temporarily deserted by its inhabitants. She does not know that it belongs to a family of three bears. In the house, each bear has its own personal bed, chair and dish. Once inside the house, Goldilocks tries out different things in an effort to find what might suit her. But the porridge is either too hot or too cold, and then the third bowl of porridge is quite right for her, and she eats it. The furniture in the house is either too big or too small. After trying the largest and then the middle-sized chairs, she finally tries the smallest, which she thinks will suit her. The

bottom of it falls out when she tries to sit in it. Later, Goldilocks falls asleep in the smallest bed and is awakened by the bears when they come home and find her in their house, and she runs away.<sup>295</sup>

According to Bettelheim, there is general agreement that the original source of this tale is an ancient Scottish tale of three bears whose lair was intruded upon by a she-fox. It is called “The bears devour the trespasser” (Bettelheim, 1976: 216). The traditional text is a cautionary tale, warning people to respect other people’s property and privacy. Over the generations, the story has been modified several times into its present version. Apart from the title, there is little outward resemblance between the traditional fairy tale and the pupil narrative. However, the endings are related in the sense that there is no actual resolution of conflict in either story. In the traditional tale, the three bears establish that there is an intruder in their home, and the intruder disappears without further notice. There is no depiction of what happens next. Goldilocks just leaves the cottage, end of story.

In the pupil fairy tale, the dragon lives in a little house in the forest. When he comes out of the house, he represents a threat to the bears and the birds. Although they manage to get away from the dragon, the dragon is not defeated; the threat it represents is still there. The bears are friends with the birds, and they actually manage to escape the monstrous dragon with the aid of the birds, their friends. The novel element of indirectly comparing the sweet intruder, Goldilocks, to the monstrous dragon helps clarify the criminal side of intrusion. Everyone has to stick to their part of the forest and respect the domain of others. In the traditional fairy tale, the innocence of the girl draws the attention away from the dubious business of intrusion. In the pupil fairy tale, the dragon steps out of his house to chase the bears in the forest. He does not succeed. Intrusion into someone else’s domain is not advisable in either of the two stories. To fight against the intrusion of others is encouraged, be they sweet girls, or monstrous dragons.

The pupil narrative also portrays the unlikelihood of the formation of friendship between two such dissimilar species as birds and bears. Who would expect that the birds could actually manage to save the big bears? The text suggests that small creatures can help those who are bigger and that muscle is not all that counts. Identity is explored through the assessment of the

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<sup>295</sup> Bettelheim, 1976: 220-221.

relative strength of different groups in society. Being either small birds or young people does not mean that one is powerless. Friendships can emerge in strange or uneven relationships, and a variety of qualities, a distribution of competence, is needed to solve difficult problems. It is necessary to cooperate and to make the best use of the traits within the group. In a way, the narrative is comforting, the monster dragon has not disappeared; it is still there under the tree. But the threat it represents has been easier to bear in the company of friends.

## **7.4 Siblings**

The three preceding narratives have shown that novel elements, like a nasty teletubby, instead of a cosy one, bugs instead of billy goats, and a dragon, with connotations of Goldilocks, rendered new approaches to traditional themes possible. The following three narratives picture different relationships within the family, the relationships between sibling couples and witches and the break up between a boy and his parents. The intertextual references are made to biblical stories, to fairy tales, but also to popular culture in general.

### **7.4.1 The witch as lifesaver**

The next text is published in the triad, 'The Rose Tree', by a girl. The text was submitted 8 May 2003 and downloaded 11 November 2003 for this research purpose. The triad consists of pupils, student teachers and teacher trainers.<sup>296</sup>

#### **The witch as lifesaver.**

Once upon a time there was a witch. She lived in a cottage in a cave. The witch was not a very normal witch. Most witches are evil, have warts and a long pointed nose. But this witch was sweet, helpful, no warts and no pointed nose. No, this witch was actually good. She had saved many animals and actually also people. Well this story is strange to say about the witch saving a person. And the story is called:``  
The witch as lifesaver.

It was a lovely Saturday morning, the sun was shining and the birds was singing. Lise and Jonas were out for a walk. Lise and Jonas were brother and sister and went often out for a walk together. They

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<sup>296</sup> Based on the information available in Blackboard this triad consists of twelve pupils, both boys and girls. If, and in that case, how, they have been divided into smaller units, is not legible in Blackboard.

went down to the beach, nearly day they walked this trip. Today it was very special day, it was Friday the 13 of February. Jonas was going close to the waters edge. Suddenly something popped up from the water. Jonas could not see what it was, but he could see it as it came closer. Suddenly it was next to Jonas and it took Jonas down in the water. Lise shouted for help. And suddenly the witch showed up. Lise told the witch that the animal, which showed to be a 7 armed cuttlefish, had taken Jonas down to the water. The witch flew out in the water on her flying broom and said a magic jingle: `` Cuttlefish, cuttlefish, come up from the water, anyway you will catch it for me. And the cuttlefish came up from the water. The witch hid the cuttlefish 3 times in the head with the broom and the cuttlefish died. Lise and Jonas thanked the witch and went home. From this day Lise and Jonas became great friends with the witch. And Jonas learned that that you never shall go down to the waters edge. And then the story is over.

This fairy tale is different from the other pupil fairy tales; it has an introduction of five lines where one of the central characters of the story is presented. The introduction summarises the story. The title is repeated, and it is made quite clear that this is a story where the witch is a saver of life. The portrayal of her character is drawn by juxtaposing this witch to the stereotypical apprehension of the witch as an evil, warty and long-nosed creature. She is sympathetic both in appearance and in deeds. All the characteristics of the witch character are wiped out; there is no pointed nose and no evil spell.

When the unsympathetic qualities associated with the witch character have been removed, and she is no longer evil, there is actually very little left to connect this particular witch to her fellow sisters. But she lives in a cottage. It is not an ordinary cottage in the wood, which is the common habitat for her lot; the life saver witch lives in a cottage in a cave, hence a double dissociation from the world outside. She fulfils the criteria for being called a witch by being capable of executing magic.

After the introductory five lines where the witch has been presented, the story starts on a sunny Saturday morning. The inconsistency involved in the contradictory dating is most likely a mistake. The day is both a Friday and a Saturday. However, this oxymoronic dating perhaps unintentionally emphasises the contrast between the lovely morning and the ill-fated action to come. The action takes place on a highly unfortunate February day; it is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Some kind of misfortune will surely interrupt the seeming idyll where birds are singing when Lise and Jonas are out for a walk. A story which features a boy named Jonas, and where Jonas fights with a big fish which drags him into the sea, connotes the biblical story about Jonah and the Whale.

Jonas or Jonah of the Old Testament was called by God to Nineveh in order to convert the inhabitants. This was believed to be an impossible task, and Jonah tried to avoid such a mission. The ship that he used for his attempted escape nearly sank. Jonah confessed his sins to the perturbed seamen. They threw him overboard, and he was swallowed by a whale. Three days later he was thrown ashore, and he set straight out for Nineveh. There the inhabitants were converted when they heard Jonah's preaching, and God withheld his punishment.<sup>297</sup>

After having tried to escape his destined role, the biblical Jonah is given a new chance. The fatalistic attitude of the Old Testament story emphasises the effect his remarkable recovery has on the congregation. The inhabitants are converted into believing in God.

When the action on the beach in the pupil fairy tale is taken out of its everyday context, it seems to be interwoven in a wider existential context and connected to the dilemma of the biblical Jonah. In the pupil fairy tale, the warning against the danger of crossing unknown territory is accentuated. Simultaneously the fairy tale associations are clear. One can easily perceive the slightly modified echo of Red Riding Hood's mother, warning her daughter against taking detours from the path in the wood: "And Jonas learned that you shall never go down to the waters edge" (line 18). Imminent danger threatens he who deviates from the path or the designated plan. However, the anticipation of a happy ending is implicated in the reference to the intertext; Jonah escaped the whale and landed safely ashore. Also the nature of the cuttlefish that drags Jonas into the sea softens the threat; it has seven arms - a number which brings luck - at least in the fairy tale genre.

The presence of siblings and a witch may give connotations of the fairy tale about Hansel and Gretel. The Brothers Grimm's version of this fairy tale can be summarised, as follows:

The parents of Hansel and Gretel are very poor, and Hansel and Gretel's stepmother persuades their father to try to get rid of the children. Hansel, who suspect her intentions, leaves pebbles on the path, and they manage to find their way back home the first time they are lost in the wood. The second time, however, Hansel leaves crusts of bread on the path to mark the way home. Since the crusts are eaten by hungry birds, the children are lost in the wood. They discover a gingerbread cottage, and are welcomed by a nice old lady, who gives

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<sup>297</sup> See *The Bible*: "The Book of Jonah" of the Old Testament.

them plenty of food. However, the nice old lady turns out to be a witch, who plans to eat them. Gretel outsmarts the witch by fooling her to get into the oven. Apparently they inherit (or steal?) the witch's jewels and escape. They have to cross a river and are faced with some difficulties on their way; they get home and provide their father with riches. His wife has died while they were away. The three live happily ever after.<sup>298</sup>

In "Hansel and Gretel", the girl outsmarts the witch to help her brother. In "The witch as lifesaver" the girl gets help from the witch to save the boy. The novel element of making the witch good and making her someone that the girl wants to get help from, instead of someone the girl fights against, draws attention to the importance of grown-ups. The solution to problems in this fairy tale seems partly to be sought through interaction across the generation gap. The positive assistance of someone older is welcomed. The siblings become great friends with the maternal witch. Thus a friendly grown-up supports the children in their development.

#### **7.4.2 The boy and the magic word**

The next text, "The boy and the magic word", is created by a girl and published in the triad, 'Herbart', additionally consisting of two boys, a student teacher and a teacher. The text was submitted 7 November 2003 and downloaded 12 November 2003 for this research purpose.

The boy and the magic word

Once upon a time there was a boy, he's name was Frederic.  
He lived in a forest with he's sister Jessica.  
The boy was a poor boy.  
There was an evil witch who hate kids.  
The evil witch was causing trouble by killing little children.  
The boy needed help to be fighting the witch, so he and Jessica not should be afraid for the witch the rest of there lives.  
Suddenly there appeared a bear who told I'm the talking bear that can help you  
To be fighting the witch.  
The boy and the talking bear ask in 30 minutes.  
The talking bear gave the boy something to help him.  
It was a magic word that could give the boy magic power.

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<sup>298</sup> Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985:1-13.

Next day took the boy the first task.

The first task was to come into the witch castle.

This was difficult because here was a moat, but with help of the magic power

He jumped over the moat and he succeeded.

The second task was to find her on the big castle.

This was even more difficult because the castle was built as a labyrinth,

But with the help of the magic power he cut look throw the walls and he succeeded.

The third and final task was to pacify the witch.

This was the most difficult because she was a very clever witch,

But with help of he's magic power he made her to a good witch and he succeeded.

So the boy wan the happiness and he and he's sister should not be afraid of the witch anymore, and he and Jessica lived happily ever after.

The end

The title, "The boy and the magic word", gives connotations of the title, "The Boy and the Magic Beanstalk"; in some versions this tale is called "Jack and the Beanstalk" .<sup>299</sup> A collection of British folk tales, "The Jack Cycle" ,<sup>300</sup> tells several stories about this young man (Briggs, 1970). Jack is a typical everyday name in English, and the dictionary denotation of Jack is man or fellow.<sup>301</sup> The British version of the folk tale, "Jack and the Beanstalk", retold in Reeves (1954: 127-146), can be recapitulated, as follows:

A poor widow lives in a cottage with her idle son, Jack. After a dry summer they have to sell their cow. On his way to the market, Jack meets an old man, who manages to take possession of the cow in exchange for five beans he claims are magic. Jack's mother gets angry when he arrives home. After she has thrown the beans out of the window, she sends him to bed with no supper. During the night, the beans have grown enormously, and Jack climbs into the sky. There he meets the wife of an ogre while her husband is out. When the ogre returns, he threatens to kill Jack. But Jack is saved by the ogre's wife. Jack steals their money on his first visit. He returns twice to steal more of their valuables.<sup>302</sup> The ogre's wife helps him escape every time. The last time, however, the ogre chases him down the beanstalk. And when they hit the ground, Jack kills the ogre with an axe provided by his mother. When the ogre dies, the beanstalk withers. What becomes of the ogre's wife is unclear. Jack and his mother live a life

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<sup>299</sup> A Disney version calls it "Mickey Mouse and the Beanstalk".

<sup>300</sup> Discussed also in Bettelheim (1976: 184).

<sup>301</sup> See, e.g., Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2000.

<sup>302</sup> First the hen which lays golden eggs, then the magic harp.

of abundance in their little cottage after they have killed the ogre. Whenever they want money, the hen lays a golden egg, and whenever they are bored, the magic harp plays.

The hero of poor origin, who becomes rich and mighty when he conquers the giant, is a universal figure. In “Jack and the Beanstalk”, the assistance of the mother is required to conclude the business. She provides the lethal weapon. In the pupil writer’s narrative, the boy is also a poor boy: like Jack he gets hold of something magic which helps him gain immense power. Likewise, he has to manage three difficult situations in order to succeed. The final difficulty involves pacifying an evil creature. In “Jack and the Beanstalk”, this is the ogre; in the pupil’s narrative the evil creature is a witch.

Frederic and Jessica live together in the wood, and apparently there are no parents involved in the story. Siblings who wander about on their own in a fairy tale context can hardly avoid connotations of Hansel and Gretel especially since there is a witch involved. In the original fairy tale, it is actually Gretel, who helps her brother in such a way that they manage to outsmart the witch. In “The boy and the magic word”, the girl, Jessica, has no such heroic trait; she is entirely passive and has no influence whatsoever on the outcome of the crisis. She is saved by her brother, who is assisted by an animal, a bear. “Suddenly there appeared a bear who told ‘I’m the talking bear that can help you To be fighting the witch’” (lines 8-9). Talking animals are, of course, no rarity in fairy tales. Besides, the bear is often cooperative and kind in this genre (Heuscher, 1974: 213). The bear provides the boy, not with magic seeds, as does the old man in “Jack and the Beanstalk”, but with a magic word. The meeting with the bear connotes other fairy tales, for example, “The Princess and the White Bear”<sup>303</sup> (Asbjørnsen and Moe, [1851]1983: 132-140), and “East of the Sun and West of the Moon”<sup>304</sup> (Asbjørnsen and Moe, [1851] 1982: 230-242). The coinciding points of the two stories can summarily be recapitulated, as follows:

The bear wants the youngest daughter in a neighbouring family to become his wife, and reluctantly she accepts. During the nights, the white bear is transformed into a beautiful prince, but the girl is not allowed to see him in this state. Before she visits her parents, she is instructed by the white bear to avoid private conversations with her mother, an instruction she fails to meet. Her mother tells her to light up the bear-prince’s face when he has fallen asleep

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<sup>303</sup> “Kvitebjørn Kong Valemon” in Norwegian.

<sup>304</sup> “Østenfor sol og vestenfor måne” in Norwegian.

so that she can see what he looks like. When she returns to the bear's home, she does this, and the prince wakes up and tells her that by looking at his face, she has sealed the spell: He has to leave her and marry an old witch. However, the girl follows him, and after much trouble, she finds him and proves her right to have him by doing various domestic tasks.

In the fairy tale, the bear is the prince in disguise. In the pupil's narrative, the bear holds the magic power. Both stories provide the bear with positive traits. In the original fairy tale, the bear turns into a prince when the girl has passed all kinds of practical tests to prove that she is the right bride for the prince, and they live happily ever after. The bear points to the happy ending in the pupil's fairy tale. Despite Jessica's action, or rather lack of action, it has no influence on the outcome of the crisis. In the fairy tale, "East of the Sun and West of the Moon", the girl has to wash the bear-prince's shirt to prove her suitability. No such task is expected to be carried out by the girl in "The boy and the magic word". In the pupil's text, the talking bear provides "[...] a magic word that could give the boy magic power" (line 12). A magic word is also of significance in the fairytale, "Rumpelstiltskin", written down by the Grimm brothers (Grimm and Grimm, [1925] 1985: 237-242). This fairy tale is also known in a slightly different English variant called "Tom Tit Tot" (Reeves, 1954: 147-155). The main points of "Tom Tit Tot" can be reinstated, as follows:

The king asks Joan to marry him on the condition that she spends one month per year spinning. She must spin five skeins of flaxen thread every day. Even though both Joan and her mother understand that this requirement is impossible for anyone to meet, she accepts the proposal, thinking that when the time is due, some way out of the difficulty could be found. A little black nameless imp steps forward and promises to weave for her, but she must manage to guess his name before the spinning is completed or else he will take her firstborn child away. Coincidentally the king overhears the imp revealing his name, and unknowingly he solves the problem when he tells Joan about it.

The titles of both texts are magic words: "Rumpelstiltskin" in the Central European version and "Tom Tit Tot" in the English version. The girl has to find the right word in order to escape her cruel fate. In the pupil's text, one never gets to know what the magic word is exactly; the novel element of keeping the word a secret seemingly makes the plot incomplete. However, one learns that the word gives magic power to the boy. The boy has three assignments he must solve: "The first task was to get into the witch' castle. This was difficult

because here was a moat, but with help of the magic power He jumped over the moat and he succeeded” (lines 14-15). The second task is more advanced; he has to find the witch. A reference to a labyrinth (line 18) of Greek mythology emphasises the complexity involved in this task. Again, the magic power provided by the bear’s gift, the magic word, provides the solution. The magic word makes it possible for the boy to look through the walls. The third task is naturally the most complicated one, that of pacifying the witch. The magic power turns the once evil witch into a good witch: “So the boy wan the happiness and he and his sister should not be afraid of the witch anymore” (lines 23-24). The problems in “The boy and the magic word” have been solved, and the outcome, “[...] he and Jessica lived happily ever after”, is presented. But the magic word is not revealed. The formulaic happy ending is somewhat unsolved. Such an outcome of the sibling relationship in “The boy and the magic word” is also addressed in “Hansel and Gretel”; but unlike “The boy and the magic word”, the fairy tale about Hansel and Gretel involves a union with one of their parents. Seemingly there is no such reunion with parents or other members of the family in “The boy and the magic word”. Only the boy has taken part in the action. There is actually no activity related to the female part of the sibling couple. Frederic has successfully conquered all the troubles he met on his way.

The primary denotation of the name, Jack, is “a man or fellow”.<sup>305</sup> The boy in the pupil writer’s narrative is called Frederic, which is also an ordinary name. However, it is also the name of a prince, and the name, Frederic, may connote the Danish Crown Prince Fredrik, and also his late grandfather, King Fredrik. Although the boy is poor, he has a name worthy of princes and kings. The royal connotation of Frederic prepares for the sister being regarded as a princess. Her name is Jessica, which is not a typical fairy tale name. In popular culture, however, the name is associated, for example, with the American pop singer, Jessica Simpson,<sup>306</sup> or the American actress, Jessica Alba.<sup>307</sup> Thus the name, Jessica, produces connotations of female blond, long-haired, long-legged, slim beauty. Consequently the pupil narrative has constructed its own princess.

On the surface, this story could be interpreted in the same way as a romance, but the fact that hero and heroine are brother and sister disturbs such an interpretation and gives way to a more

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<sup>305</sup> Collins English Dictionary &Thesaurus, 2000.

<sup>306</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.jessicasimpsonuk.com/>. (Accessed 27 April 2007)

<sup>307</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004695/>. (Accessed 18 April 2008)

profound analysis. In Jungian inspired approaches to fairy tales, it is quite customary to view the sibling couple as a unity where brother and sister are representatives of different qualities in one individual.<sup>308</sup> In Larsen (1992), it is demonstrated how siblings in a fairy tale may represent dual qualities of one individual, for example, the ability to be active and passive. Applied to the pupil's text, "The boy and the magic word", the story can be seen as a narrative about the maturation of one individual where Frederic and Jessica are representatives of the male and female qualities of one individual.

In "The boy and the magic word", the female traits of the character are not put to use at all. If brother, Frederic, and sister, Jessica, were viewed as dual sides of one personality, the female passivity needs to be balanced with male activity. The witch seems to be representative of certain negative qualities of mothers. The fact that the evil witch in "The boy and the magic word" turns into a good witch supports such an interpretation. To liberate the child from the mother and the pre-oedipal idyll is central in Freudian psychology and part of the complex Oedipus conflict (Freud, [1917] 1992: 275; 1958). Instead of addressing the necessary liberation from the good mother, the fairy tale formula liberates its heroes and heroines from the evil stepmother or the evil witch, who are representatives of suppressive aspects of the mother-child relationship. The fact that the witch is both clever and evil and that she can be transformed into a good witch supports this interpretation. Thus "The boy and the magic word" can - at one level - be read as a story about the transformation from the pre-oedipal idyll to the oedipal stage where the relationship to the father, to society and to language is essential. The novel element of replacing magic beans with magic words helps to underline the importance of language in this process. Identity can be constructed and negotiated through language. "The boy and the magic word" can be read as a story that addresses the challenges that face the young girl or boy when they have to let go of the constant support of the good mother and face up to demands from society. A key role in this story has been given to the word and to language. It is the magic word that provides the child with the possibility to overcome the challenges involved in identity construction. However, the magic word is not revealed in this narrative.

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<sup>308</sup> See, e.g., Jung, 1964.

### 7.4.3 The fairytale about the big fat boy

The following text was submitted 3 November 2003 by a boy in the triad, 'Quesnay', and downloaded 29 January 2004 for the present research purpose. Fellow pupils in the triad are a boy and a girl and two student teachers and two teacher trainers.

#### *The fairytale about the big fat boy*

Once upon a time there was a happy farmer family in a country far away. They lived like a "fairytale" family, they were poor but still happy, and they lived a good life. They had three sons and one day something terrible happened. The youngest boy had been working in a mill and when the work was finished he got his reward. It was money and the little boy was so happy because now he could buy something. He went home and told his parents. The next morning he went to the town. In the town he did buy a cookie. The cookie was so sweet so he wanted more of them. He started working in the mill everyday and once every week he went to the town to buy cookies. He became bigger and bigger for every cookie he ate, and one day he became so fat that he didn't fit in the house. The parents told him to go out in the forest and that he wouldn't come back before he was normal again, the boy did as his parents told him to do and no one has ever seen him since that day.

#### *The end*

The title emphasises that the text belongs to the fairy tale genre. Instead of saying, for instance, "The big fat boy", it is called "The fairytale about the big fat boy". Furthermore, the "Once upon a time" introduction maintains the ties to the genre. The narrator even underpins this connection by stating that the main character and his family "[...] live like a 'fairytale' family" (line 2). They are happy, and in fairy tale fashion they have three sons, and the youngest is the main character. The immediate intertextual reference is, for example, to siblings, like Per, Paul and Espen in the Norwegian fairy tales. The youngest of the three is portrayed as a heroic young fool, who finally ends up with the princess and half of the

kingdom.<sup>309</sup> However, the fact that the title announces a “[...] big fat boy” disturbs these connotations somewhat. The boy works in the mill until “[...] something terrible happened” (line 3). It is not immediately revealed what the terrible thing is. Trouble of some sort has a tendency to turn up in fairy tales as a variety of obstacles that the hero has to conquer before he can finally succeed. However, the expectation of a happy ending, that this fairy tale has so far constructed, is not met. Is the terrible thing related to the money? In the fairy tale formula, a treasure like this is often a blessing. Yet the money that the boy has earned honestly in the mill provides him with a kind of freedom that he is seemingly unable to master. When the big fat boy is referred to as “[...] little boy” (line 5) it gives a hint of bodily development but also of the adolescent alternation between acting like a child and acting like a grown-up. Indirectly the boy makes an attempt at placing the responsibility for the spending of the money on his parents: He tells his parents about the payment, but the parents do not interfere. The responsibility related to the money turns out to be the terrible thing. The boy can not contain himself. His prodigious consumption of cookies gets out of hand. In this narrative, identity construction is perceived as a balance between freedom and responsibility. Things turn out badly for the little boy precisely because the fine distinctions between what responsibilities he can cope with, and what he needs assistance with, are not expediently met. Perhaps a subtle warning against the educative principle of self-regulation is suggested. The novel aspect of making such a sad end to a story that has insisted upon its fairy tale identity intensifies the ending of the narrative. The fat boy’s misery becomes extra tangible within the confinements of the fairy tale genre’s expectations of a happy ending. Hansel and Gretel were also expelled from home, but they found their way back and were reunified with their father. Unlike Hansel, the fat boy has no sisterly guide. The absence of the female is maintained through the gender-neutral reference to parents.<sup>310</sup> Male predominance is also prevalent in another intertext to this narrative, “The Prodigal Son”.<sup>311</sup> The biblical parable can be summarised, as follows:

A man has two sons. While the father is still alive, the youngest demands his share of the inheritance and goes away to a foreign country where he wastes his fortune right away and subsequently has to work as a swine herdsman. Eventually he decides to return home and throw himself on his father’s mercy. His father greets him with open arms, and even before he

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<sup>309</sup> See Asbjørnsen and Moe, [1851]1982: 460-464.

<sup>310</sup> Instead of mother and father.

<sup>311</sup> See *The Bible*, Luke 15:11–32 of the New Testament.

has got a chance to ask his forgiveness, the celebration of his return is prepared. The older brother reacts to the favoured treatment of the younger, but the father reassures the faithful older son of his importance while still valuing the return of his youngest son.

The connection to the biblical text is first and foremost constructed through contrast. In the pupil fairy tale, the son is forever lost; “The parents told him to go out in the forest” (line 11). The powerful effect of this narrative conclusion is initially established through the previously mentioned break with the fairy tale formula’s happy ending, secondly, through a latent contrasting of the parental attitude of the father of the Prodigal Son with the parents of the big, fat boy. The former is welcomed and even forgiven before he has had time to ask his father’s forgiveness. The latter is chased away from home by his own parents because they cannot accept his obesity. “The parents told him too go out in the forest and that he won’t come back before he was normal again” (lines 11-12). When he does not fit into the house anymore because he is too fat, he is seemingly made into an unforgivable sinner. Both parents reject their son, and there are poor prospects of any reunion between the parents and the boy. Being corpulent, the boy is excluded, not only from his parental home, but from society as well, “[...] the boy did as his parents told him to and no one has ever seen him since that day” (lines 12-13). In this narrative, it is as if fat people were the lepers of modern society. The main character is lost, not only in the domestic domain, but in public life as well. The exclusion from society is without mercy and can only be redeemed if the fat boy becomes “[...] normal again”, according to the conclusion of “The fairytale about the big fat boy”.

## **7.5 *Species of all kinds***

In the three narratives above, novel elements, like a good witch, a magic word, instead of a magic beanstalk, and an utterly unhappy end of a prodigal son story, portrayed different relationships within the family sphere. Social relationships beyond the family are dealt with in the next three narratives. The first depicts life among hippos, the second, the friendship between various animals in the forest, and the third, the cooperation between different human-like species and human beings. The intertextual references are to the notion of romantic heroic tales in general, popular films and novels.

### 7.5.1 The hippo

This text is written by a boy in the triad, 'Bruner'. The text was submitted 29 September 2003 and downloaded 11 November 2003 for the present research purpose. Fellow triad members are two boys, two student teachers and one teacher trainer.

#### The hippo

Once upon a time there was a hippo that wanted to marry a hippo girl so he went to a girl and said “möööööööööööh” and the girl said “im so not interested” so he said the same thing to every girl in the river but nobody wanted to marry him. Then when he saddly swimmied in his privet pond he heard some bullets and ran to the river. He saw hippos runing in every direction and behind them where some hunters so the hippo stod in there way and burpd. He burpd so hard the hunters flew to china. Now the hippo is surrounded by girl hippos that want to marry him so he marryd the fatest hippo and they lived happely ever after.

The title, “The hippo”, denotes the big, fat African mammal. The main character is a big, fat male hippo, and the romantic topic of courtship is suggested in the introductory line of the fairy tale. The hippo wants to marry a hippo girl. When he tries courting the girl, he is rejected; in fact he is constantly rejected by the opposite sex. The marriage aspect makes the animals slightly personified, and the modern slang of negation, as in “[...] im so not interested” (line 3), locates the hippos in the younger generation of modern society.<sup>312</sup> His pick up line, “möööööööööööh” (line 3), is not appreciated by his fellow hippos. The fact that there is no particular hippo girl he fancies, and that he tries to pick up all of them one after another, helps portray an unromantic hero, who seems to be quite desperate in his search for a mate. Luckily for the hippo, a moment of crisis occurs in the hippo gathering by the river. A chance of demonstrating his true heroic nature appears. The hippos are attacked by hunters,

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<sup>312</sup> See, e.g., Drange, Kotsinas and Stenstrøm (2002) and Maegaard (2008) for further discussions of slang in Nordic youth language.

who attempt to shoot them. Panic breaks out in the hippo gathering. The lovesick hippo gets an opportunity to show off. He burps heavily. That his weapon is related to a bodily malfunction helps towards suggesting an ambiguous atmosphere which is both smutty and sensual. His malodorous burp is so powerful that it blows the hunters to China. By chasing all the hunters away, the hippo manages to save his fellow hippos. Afterwards, he is surrounded by female admirers. Everyone wants to be his girlfriend.

Alliterations like in the misspelled introduction, “Once upon a time there was a hippo”, are frequent, and regardless of their faultiness, they actually help to create a poetic style. The moment of crisis is conspicuously alliterative: “Then when he sadly swam in his privet pond he heard some bullets and ran to the river”. “Sadly swam”, “privet pond”, “pond he heard” and “ran to the river” (lines 5-7) are sequences of alliterative language, which may soften the vigilant edge of the action involved. It is as if the poetic style suggested that harmony may be achieved in spite of the trouble the bullets may cause: “He saw hippos running in every direction” (lines 6-7). Luckily everything turns out well in the end.

Seemingly this narrative has no particular intertext but refers to predominant plots in popular culture in general; the male has to carry out a heroic deed to attract the attention of the female. However, the main character does not fit into the formula of the archetypal romantic hero.<sup>313</sup> He lives in hippo-land, a different society, like a hippy gathering perhaps. In the alternative culture that the narrative presents, other values apply. In hippo-land, there is no point in being the slimmest hippo-girl around; quite the opposite is the ideal here. Fatness is approved of and made into a positive attribute. The novel element of twisting the significance of corpulence affects the way in which identity can be constructed and negotiated. When society perceives fatness as an unwanted trait, the implications on personal identity construction are severe. By portraying an alternative setting, this narrative suggests that fatness can be attractive. The hippo chooses the fattest hippo-girl. His choice is self-evident in hippo-land.

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<sup>313</sup> See, e.g., Radway, 1984.

### 7.5.2 Philip the fox

The following text, “Philip the fox”, is written by a girl, submitted 29 September 2003 in the triad, ‘Eikasia’, in TALE. In addition, the triad consists of two boys, a student teacher and a teacher trainer. The text was downloaded 11 November 2003 for this research purpose.

#### Philip the fox

Once up on a time there was a fox. The fox lived in the forest with many other animals. They were always happy and played with each other. It was a nice life for the fox. But one day everything was different. Nobody wanted to talk or play with the fox whose name was “Philip the fox”. Philip asked everyone if they would like to play with him. He asked the wolf, the mouse, the squirrel, the bear and the elk, but they didn’t even talk to him and Philip got very sad. Philip the fox didn’t know what he has done wrong. It was like this for many days. The other animals almost hated him. One day when Philip was at home, a blue letter fell down in the postbox. He got curious and read the letter. It said “*CUT OF YOUR TALE*”. The fox didn’t understand, why would he do that? But he had no other choice if he wanted his friends back. So Philip fetched the scissors and cut off the tale. Now I have to get my friend back, he thought. He walked out in the forest with his tale in his paw. The fox walked slowly to the others and asked why they were sad that he had to cut off the tale? The bear answered that it was too nice and everyone else also wanted a tale like that. Suddenly it hurt so much in his back that he shouted as hard as he could. Everyone stared at him. What? A new tale grew out on him. Everyone ran to him and looked at his new tale. They were impressed. “Wow”, the mouse said. You are really a magicfox! Now everyone wanted to play with him. And Philip the fox and all the other animals in the forest lived happily the rest of their lives!

The title, “Philip the fox”, introduces an animal, which is first and foremost associated with sly cleverness, but the rhythm and alliteration of the title are poetic and aesthetic devices that perhaps suggest something else, perhaps something harmonious. Quite rightly, Philip lives a happy life in the forest with all his animal friends as the story begins. The breaking of the idyll is marked by an aesthetic alteration of font: “*CUT OF YOUR TALE*” (lines 10-11), written in LithographLight, is the message Philip receives from his fellow animals. The intertextual associations to other narratives which feature animal societies - like *The Animals*

of *Farthing Wood*<sup>314</sup> and *Animal Farm*<sup>315</sup> - help outline a story about an animal community. The main character in the pupil narrative is a fox, but not necessarily clever and sly as fairy tale foxes often are. Philip is good-looking, and he has perhaps more in common with *The Fox Widow* in the Norwegian fairy tale.<sup>316</sup> The fox widow is also beautiful. The story about her can be summarised, as follows:

Mr. Fox has recently died, and the widow mourns him deeply. Her feline maid, Korse, accompanies her in her empty house in the wood. Then new suitors start knocking on her door, first a bear, then a wolf, and finally a fox. The fox widow greets them all, but favours the handsome fox and ends up marrying him.

The parallels between text and intertext are not conspicuous, but a thematic link is formed in both texts' view on the value of equality. The Fox Widow is only comfortable with the fox suitor, her congener. In "Philip the fox", the main character is faced with a conformity demand. Society expects him to fit in with the other animals. However, Philip the fox is too beautiful. He loses his other animal friends, the bear, the wolf, the mouse, the squirrel and the elk. Philip does not understand why until the bear has explained it to him. In Norwegian fairy tales about the bear and the fox, the relationship between the two is often close, and the fox tends to outsmart the bear.<sup>317</sup> In this narrative, the bear acts on behalf of the other animals that are envious of Philip's beautiful "tale". The ambiguous denotation,<sup>318</sup> tail, or "*TÅLE*" (line 11), as the text says, perhaps unintentionally suggests that Philip's tail may symbolise his tale, or his narrative. Philip has to cut off his tail/tale. Philip gives in to his friends' demand, but when the tail/tale grows out again, everyone admires him, and he gets his friends back. The fact that he was willing to cut it off is rewarded. Although the animals in the forest are of different species, they form a society where it is important to be like the others, not to outshine one's friends. Phillip is willing to get rid of his beautiful tail/tale in order to get his friends back. However, when the others see that his tail/tale is really a part of who he is, they accept him, even admire his beauty and become his friend again and actually "[...] lived happy the rest of their lives" (lines 21-22).

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<sup>314</sup> See Dann, 1980.

<sup>315</sup> See Orwell, 1946.

<sup>316</sup> See Asbjørnsen and Moe, [1851]1982: 144-147.

<sup>317</sup> See Asbjørnsen and Moe, [1851]1983: 431-432.

<sup>318</sup> Possibly a misprint.

In “Philip the fox”, the exploration of identity seems to involve two opposing dispositions. Both insisting upon one’s own cultural distinctiveness, but simultaneously being willing to let it go, and to conform to other cultural codes, is advocated. Identity formation seems to be a matter of negotiation, and not only construction. Personal development is challenged by the fear of being different from the others. The negotiation of identity is an underlying theme where the importance of being included in society as a fully accepted member is emphasised.

### 7.5.3 The biggest battle

“The biggest battle”<sup>319</sup> is written by a boy. It is published in the triad, ‘Herbart’, consisting of two fellow pupils, a girl and a boy, and a student teacher and a teacher trainer. It was published 3 November and downloaded 12 November 2003 for this research purpose.

The biggest battle

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Once upon a time there was three mighty kings who ruled the three biggest human countries in the world.

Korisican, Villan and Keobis. But unknown to the kings there was an fourth big country witch, was ruled by an evil creature, who all kinds of living life was afraid.

The evil creature has build an big army with orks, goblins and monsters.

The army was at least 10 000.

In this country noting good could ever live, it's was only swamps, rocks and pure evil.

One day the alfs came running into the Kings country. The Alfs was good friends with humans, so they got well received by the kings.

The alfs king sad to the three kings: they come from everywhere, we properly killed 500 in an army on 3000 but we send an scout to aisendoor.

"what!!! Sad the three kings at the same time, in the deep land of noting " yes it's looked like something's going on up there so we send him up to look, the evil creature is planing to do something's big.

He has build an army on at least 10 000 sad the scout and the gonna attack hard, I think they gonna strike here first.

O shit we Goth to gather all our allies.

Suddenly one man come in the door and sad my lords the dwarfs are here, the dwarfs king come in to speak with they other kings and he sad: they took us of guard if we not have ran away I think they killed us all.

Ok we got have a secret meeting sad one of the kings but first we got to call on the three big

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<sup>319</sup> There is a very similar text, “The battle of humanity ,(see section 5.4.2 of chapter 5) which is published by one of his classmates in a different triad. The texts are evidently a result of some formal or informal cooperation. Only “The biggest battle” has been interpreted here.

wizards I think they would help up in this battle.

After two hours at the meeting they agree, Barsamir and Ragador from humanity, grumpy and Gloin from dwarfs and Loganas and Arawaks from alfs is gonna get out to look fore the big army, hey sad grumpy can't we call us the six an that was all agree in so there names are the six. Mean vile the kings gather all the people in villan,kenobis and Korisican in a fortress in Korisican because the kings thought that the army would strike in Kenobis first.

Just before the six is going to get out to look for the army the three big wizards came in the door, two of them are going to help the people to get to the fortress and the last one is going with the six.

After riding like 50 miles they saw an big black spot on the flatground a couple of miles ahead them it's was the big army to the evil creature an it came fast agent Kenobis.

The six riding back to warn the kings.

When they have arrived in the castle but now they were only five an that the kings reacting on so they ask: were is Ragadon,

He's going to rode to droids(an big village under ground who people has an small army on 500)to ask for help.

We has saw the army, it's was so big an it's marching agent the fortress in Korisican there the people are.

But our allies are her saes the kings, now Gloin stands up an says: that just help

A small bit, because they have an army on 10 000 and we have an army 4 000.

Right now that doesn't matter.

We have to prepare to battle, the big battle.

Our little army have to go to the fortress there we have gather all the people in our countries, and defend them.

When they came from to the fortress, they got an message from one of the soldiers who all ready have came from: my lords, the army has stormed Kenobis and coming this way.

Ok, all soldiers go in fight position!! Properly some of you will die and many of you will get injure in this battle. But one thing I now, we will win an that's for shore.

My lord we can see the army, ok don't loose your courage.!

So it's begin. (an couple of hours out in the battle) I think they soon storm the fortress.

Hey look there, there is Ragadon and the help is with him. Finely only the evil creature was left and he and Ragadon is facing.

The evil creature stabs Ragadon so he fall down.

The evil creature runs agents Ragadon, and the swords pointing at his head.

Ragadon get down and stabs the evil creature in his chest. Two seconds after the evil creature disappear and the same does the bodices to his army.

A couple of months later all evil ware gone from the fourth big country.

Now there grow grass, trees, bushes and flowers there.

Sense the alfs and the dwarfs country was destroyed by the army, build the dwarf and the dwarf an country together.

So all live happily ever after.

“The biggest battle” is influenced by universal, heroic tales about good against evil. A royal casting and the number *three*, which also alludes to the Christian trinity, are both narrative features that are put to use in the introductory sentence: There are “[...] three mighty kings”.

The names of the kingdoms are quite expressive. The first name, “Korisican”, alludes to Corsica, Korisican resembles the word ‘Corsican’, and the Emperor Napoleon, the historic European militarist, comes to mind. The second name, “Villan”, is more problematic; the closest word in the English dictionary is villain, a word that prepares the reader for something malevolent. Whether this is connected to this particular kingdom or not is another question; at least it suggests something negative and prepares for something bad. In Scandinavian and in some of the other Germanic and also the Romance languages, this is the name of a house: a villa.<sup>320</sup> The villa can also be a metaphor for a country, a community. The third kingdom is named “Keobis”, an Italian name.<sup>321</sup> Later on in the text the name of this country is spelt with an ‘n’ and becomes “Kenobis”, a name used for one of the characters in Lucas’ *Star Wars* films.<sup>322</sup> This character, Obi-Wan Kenobi, is the chief hero, who remains good and honourable through thick and thin. Moreover, there is a “fourth big country”, “witch” (line 3), probably meaning “which”, was ruled by an evil creature.<sup>323</sup> The chief of the fourth country is referred to as “the evil creature” throughout the story. The fourth country is not referred to as a kingdom like the other three countries. In the evil creature’s army, there are “[...] orks, goblins, and monsters” (line 5). All groups are well-established in literature, and the term ‘monster’ has leapt into everyday language. The folkloristic species, goblins, are small grotesque supernatural creatures, which are regarded as malevolent against human beings.<sup>324</sup> The orks belong to the literary universe of Tolkien where they are evil and cunning.<sup>325</sup> The alfs are also involved in “The biggest battle”, and, as commonly denoted, they are friendly towards human beings. They have sent a scout to find out what is going on in the fourth big country. The reference to the scout connotes warfare and army-life but also the everyday frame of school children’s activity. It connects the world of fairy tales to the real world where the pupils live. Another, perhaps not so accidental, but nonetheless humorous, misspelling is of the word ‘got’, which turns into “Goth” in the sentence, “O shit we Goth to gather all our allies” (line 17). Goth is used in popular culture almost as a synonym for spooky. It denotes a

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<sup>320</sup> In Swedish it is the definite form of the noun “villan” which means the villa and may connote to Astrid Lindgren’s character, Pippi, who lives in her villa (Lindgren, 1997).

<sup>321</sup> See, e.g.,

<http://www.cancaonova.com/portal/canais/especial/campanha/vida/assinatura.php?int=16&show=C>. (Accessed 12 May 2006)

<sup>322</sup> See, e.g., *Empire of Dreams: The Story of the Star Wars Trilogy* (Accessed 20 July 2007) for more information about *Star Wars*.

<sup>323</sup> The possibly accidental spelling mistake might bear some significance here: when it says “witch” instead of “which” in this sentence the resourceful nature of the ruler, who is just referred to as “the evil creature”, is emphasised.

<sup>324</sup> See, e.g., Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2000.

<sup>325</sup> See Tolkien, 1965.

rude or barbaric person but apparently has its origin as the name of an East Germanic People from Scandinavia who lived in the first centuries AD.<sup>326</sup> The name of one of the humans, Barsamir (line 23), is possibly a Malay word that can be found in older English texts.<sup>327</sup> The Malay word ‘semir’ means oil (hair oil, body lotion), and ‘bersemir’ might be an adjective indicating that a thing has been oiled or greased. Dwarfs also take part in this story. One of them is called grumpy (line 23), which is the name of one of the dwarfs in “Snow White”. The other dwarf is called Gloin (line 23), which is the name of a dwarf in *Lord of the Rings*. In Tolkien’s novel, the character, Gloin, is kind-hearted, and the intertextual reference transfers this trait to the character in this pupil narrative. There are two characters that represent the alfs; one is called Loganas (line 24). Loganas is the name of a Greek island and is used as a family name as well. The other name is Arawaks (line 24), which is the name of the group of people, who lived in North America; in folklore, the Arawaks are held to be among the first American aborigines.<sup>328</sup>

The two human beings, Barsamir and Ragador (line 23), the two dwarfs, grumpy and Gloin, and the two alfs, Loganas and Arawaks, form an alliance called the six. The universal theme, to join all good forces in the fight against evil, is apparently at play here. Barsamir with his Malay name and Ragador<sup>329</sup> with his Gaelic name, and their connotations of colonial Britain, belong to the same species and have to join forces despite their differences. They have to cooperate with creatures from different species, as well, not only with grumpy and Gloin, the dwarfs, but also with the alfs, represented by Loganas with the Greek name, and Arawaks with his aboriginal, American name.

A novel element in this narrative is the lack of clearly defined main characters apart from “the six” and “the three wizards”. Identity is seen as something that is negotiated when all kinds of people and creatures from all over the world have to cooperate despite their differences. This makes the issue of individual personal development slightly de-emphasised.<sup>330</sup> A global unity of good forces is required in order to succeed in the fight against evil. No nation or unity of countries can take this fight alone. The universal theme of uniting all good forces is reinforced in this modern version by the use of names, some constructed and others borrowed. However,

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<sup>326</sup> See, e.g., Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2000.

<sup>327</sup> See [http://www.anu.edu/asianstudies/mcp/N/BKW\\_words.html](http://www.anu.edu/asianstudies/mcp/N/BKW_words.html). (Accessed 12 May 2006)

<sup>328</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01680c.htm>. (Accessed 12 May 2006)

<sup>329</sup> This name is spelt with an ‘n’, Ragadon, from line 34 onwards.

<sup>330</sup> However, another possibility is to see the whole group as representatives of different traits within one personality. Such a line of interpretation will not be pursued here.

the idyll of unity is somewhat disturbed by the name of this heroic group; “the six” (line 25) is not usually associated with blessings, quite the contrary, it signifies evil itself. Some ambiguity is created when such an infamous name is given to the group of heroic savers. Possibly it may suggest that the war against evil cannot be all good. In order to fight evil, one actually has to be able to do something cruel. One of the three wizards joins the six, making them seven, and thus making their mission holier. The group of seven forms a fairy tale like union against their enemy. To develop identity within the group is accentuated. To put aside old divergences and join forces with others to fight for what is right is advocated in this narrative.

## **7.6 Villains**

In the previous narratives the novel elements of redefining the meaning of fatness, portraying vanity in a male, and a battlefield with no specific hero were used in the depiction of different kinds of relationships. The last three narratives deal with confrontations in different settings, in an everyday school situation, between two tough guys, and among trolls. Intertextual references to fairy tale witches and trolls operate alongside general allusions to popular culture. The villain teacher, the mixture of roles between the hero and the monster, and the three sibling trolls, who kill their parents, are all untraditional fairy tale characters who announce a rebellious attitude.

### **7.6.1 A day in the school**

The next story is published by a boy in the triad, ‘Herbart’, consisting of two fellow pupils, a girl and a boy, a student teacher and a teacher trainer. It was submitted in TALE 3 November and downloaded 12 November 2003 for this research purpose.

# A day in the school!

Once upon a time there was a boy in the school. Then a horrible old lady. The boy had a lesson and then the old lady came and disturbed him so he called “Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto”. The next day they came and took the horrible old lady and then they shot her up in the sky and blew up her. But then it came a magic man and saved her and then she went to the school and she said sorry. Lady was

Notwithstanding the colourful headline, this text has been published in an unfinished version. Apparently it has not been submitted in a developed version at a later point in the process either.<sup>331</sup> There is an expression, which sounds as if it is in Finnish or Finno-Ugrian; “Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto” (line 3) definitely resembles a Finnish word; however, the term has no denotative meaning. In spite of this, it may be seen as an example of code-switching.<sup>332</sup> The first part of the word is, in all likelihood, the name of the Finnish statesman, Gustav Mannerheim (1867-1951).<sup>333</sup> The term “Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto” in the pupil’s text is quite similar to the word ‘Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto’ and might therefore share the connotations of this particular word. Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto, The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, is an organisation in Finland which was established by Mannerheim and his sister, Nurse Sophie Mannerheim (1863-1928),<sup>334</sup> in 1920. The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare is a humanitarian organisation, which was established to secure the health and physical well-being of orphans and children from poor families in

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<sup>331</sup> It is interesting to note that the pupil has spent time and energy on aesthetic features, for instance, selecting the appropriate colour and font for his catchline, but seemingly overlooked other formal features; this story stops in the middle of a sentence, quite abruptly: “Lady was.” The text contains several spelling mistakes: ‘there’, ‘horrible’, ‘lesson’, ‘disturbed’, ‘them’, and ‘called’. The mistakes are substantial as they are so severe that they may hamper the possibility of other pupils comprehending the narrative although teachers can manage to interpret it. This means that fellow pupils would probably need some help when they read it.

<sup>332</sup> Although the material has not been subject to substantial research with regard to code-switching, the overall impression of this researcher is that code-switching is rare in the narratives in TALE.

<sup>333</sup> For more information about Mannerheim see, for example, [http://www.mannerheim-museo.fi/mheim\\_eng.htm](http://www.mannerheim-museo.fi/mheim_eng.htm). (Accessed 18 May 2007)

<sup>334</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.nursing-school.org/famousnurses.htm> (Accessed 9 August 2007) for more information about Sophie Mannerheim.

Finland. The action in the pupil narrative involves a school boy, who calls upon the organisation that helps unfortunate children when his class is disturbed by an old lady. The humanitarian organisation helps out and gets rid of the lady. The attack on the lady is softened by a magic man, who even manages to make her go back to school and apologise for her behaviour. Although the obligatory fairy tale introduction is included, there is no conspicuous reference to any particular fairy tale, and there are few fairy tale elements applied. Apart from a magic man, who can play around with people, there is little reference to magic or other unrealistic features. There is a conflict between a young boy and an old lady. The main character is the boy, and the third person omniscient narrator tells the story from the boy's perspective. The lady is horrible, meaning that she is given the role of the villain in this narrative. It is when she disturbs his class during their lesson that he calls out for help. One does not know exactly what the old lady is doing in the classroom. Is she the teacher? If she were the teacher, she would not disturb the pupils, would she? There is no other teacher mentioned as being present in the classroom, meaning that one cannot rule out the possibility that the old lady is, in fact, the teacher. Being old, and being a lady, and being in a narrative that starts with "Once upon a time", makes it convenient to view her in the role of the old witch, as well. The fairy tale heritage gives authority and power to the old woman and makes her representative of a female threat to the boy. She certainly represents power of some sort. The narrative explores the possibility of rebelling against female authority. If she were the teacher, the story plays with the possibility of questioning the authority of the teacher, too. After she has disturbed the boy and his classmates at school in their lesson, "Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto"<sup>335</sup> takes her, and she is shot up in the sky. The welfare organisation actually blows her up. A magic man enters the scene, and he saves her. It seems as if the old woman managed to change into a better person; she visits the school and apologises to the children for her previous behaviour. This novel element of making the old woman into someone who apologises and says that she is sorry seems to leave the established power structure open to change. The name Mannerheim may provide connotations of the Finnish Winter War (1939-40), where the Finns, under the leadership of Mannerheim, fought

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<sup>335</sup> In the above text, the national identity of the writer is betrayed through the term "Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto". This term will perhaps be recognised by most readers in TALE as Finnish or Finno-Ugrian. It is difficult to decide whether this fact will influence the reading of the text, and to what extent the national impact is comprehended by different readers. Perhaps a prejudiced Norwegian or Swedish reader might be led by to expect that there is a stronger discipline in the Finnish schools. This will influence the understanding of the conflict in the pupil's text between the boy and the old lady and will support an interpretation of this relationship being one of power.

back Soviet invasion.<sup>336</sup> Indirectly the battle between the small country and the big empire becomes a comment on the conflict between the young schoolboy and the old lady. In the narrative, the distribution of power between the two main characters is uneven and related to gender, age, and profession. The boy gets help from someone outside the classroom setting in his dealing with female authority. The boy, who is young and just a pupil, manages to overcome the threat inflicted upon him by the woman, who is old and who is his teacher. The boy's view is accepted, and the woman has to comply with the terms of the younger generation. Identity seems to be explored as a conflict of power distribution among different professions, different generations and different sexes.

### 7.6.2 Hero - monster

The following text is by a boy, who published the narrative in the triad, 'Sailing to Byzantium', consisting of fellow pupils, student teachers and teacher trainers.<sup>337</sup> The text was submitted 8 May and downloaded 13 November 2003 for this research purpose.

Once upon a time there was a hero... His called "Monster"  
And his worst enemy the monster is called "hero" "!!!!!!  
The hero "monster" lived in the east end of the forest and  
The monster "hero" lived en the west end of the forest...  
It was Monday morning and "monster" was in Rema 1000 for to buy Cornflakes met he  
"hero" with the cash Counter then "monster" find his MP5 and start to shout after "hero" then  
find "hero" his magic pencil and painted hole Rema 1000....  
After they fought they be come god friends and they burn down Rema 1000.  
On the way home they find out of they shut be gay... and they lived happy ever after.....

This narrative has no title.<sup>338</sup> The main characters are introduced as a hero called "Monster" and a monster called "hero". The narrative deals with the development of the relationship between the two. The play with names suggests the duality in the roles of hero and villain and the reciprocal relationship between the two. As in Propp's (1968) survey, the main function of the villain is to serve as a contrast to the hero, as referred to in chapter 6, section 6.5.2. In the

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<sup>336</sup> More information about Mannerheim can be found on various websites, for example, [http://www.mannerheim-museo.fi/mheim\\_eng.htm](http://www.mannerheim-museo.fi/mheim_eng.htm). (Accessed 18 May 2007)

<sup>337</sup> Based on the information available in Blackboard, this triad consists of twelve pupils, both boys and girls. If, and, in that case, how they were divided into small units is not legible in Blackboard.

<sup>338</sup> The title "Hero - monster" is applied by the researcher to make it more convenient to refer to the text.

present narrative, this function is overstated. The villain is a monster; nevertheless, his name is “hero”. An uncertainty with regard to his role in the narrative is created. The general function of the villain is to expose the excellence of the hero, according to Propp.<sup>339</sup> In this narrative, the relationship between hero and villain is marked by equivalence and ambiguity. Certainly the third person narrator introduces the hero first: “Once upon a time there was a hero”, but otherwise, the development of the action is seen from both characters’ perspectives.

It is difficult to find intertextual reference to any particular plot structure or narrative tradition apart from the reference to the two character types, the hero and the villain monster. Switching the name and function of the two opposing roles becomes instrumental in pinpointing the similarities of the two. The pupil writer manages to uphold the casting throughout the narrative by putting the names in quotation marks. The novel element of confusing the two names - and not only the roles - suggests an alternative understanding of archetypal roles. The narrative seems to suggest that the roles of hero and villain are almost coincidental, and that they may change. The two concepts and the distinction between them become fluid. Important cultural values are consequently questioned.

On Monday morning the hero of the narrative, “monster”, is shopping in Rema 1000<sup>340</sup> (line 5). Rema 1000 is owned by a wealthy Norwegian family, and connotes cheap rather than exclusive groceries. There is a subtle contrast between the rich owner and the cheap shop. The hero called “Monster” lives in the east end (line 3), and the monster called “hero” lives in the west end of the forest (line 4). A possible class issue is suggested through the geographical distinction. One can dimly perceive an east ender hero struggling against a west end snob. The hero, who is named “Monster”, is an east ender who owns a gun. The monster, who is called “hero”, is a west ender who owns a pencil; they may, to a certain extent, be looked upon as belonging to different social classes. The east ender hero called “Monster” chooses violence, while the west ender monster called “hero” chooses language as a solution to conflicts, just like any stereotypical middle class citizen would do. What does the hero do with his MP5, shoot or shout? Is the MP5 a gun (line 5)? Or is it a musical player, like an MP3 in an upgraded level. It is most likely that the “shout” (line 5) is a misprint, but this inconsistency creates some uncertainty in the text. What does the monster, called “hero”, do

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<sup>339</sup> See section 6.5.2 of chapter 6.

<sup>340</sup> The pupil writer treats the Norwegian name of the shop, Rema 1000, as if it were an international brand, requiring no definition or explanation.

with his magic pencil (line 7)? Apparently he does not write anything; he paints the shop. The pencil turns out to be an effective weapon against the gun, perhaps because it is magic. How the fight actually progresses is somewhat unclear, but the outcome is seemingly successful. After the two opponents have fought against each other, they become good friends. The division between hero and villain is totally blurred, and what happens to the distinction between good and evil is unclear. After they have become friends, “[...] they burn down Rema 1000” (line 9). Together they set fire to the shop, not a heroic deed at all, quite the opposite in fact. The bad, and not the good, gains ground in the outcome of the unification. The destructive part of the human repertoire is put to use.

Identity seems to be explored as the dissolution of fixed roles. To define good and bad and to distinguish between the two becomes almost impossible. The relationship between “hero” and “Monster” becomes unclear; they have been enemies, but now they become friends. The distinction between being friends and being lovers is also challenged. “On the way home they find out of they shut be gay” (line 9). Seemingly they either enter into a homosexual relationship, or they just decide to be gay, as in happy. Although the “[...] happy ever after.....” (lines 9-10) suggests that they form a successful union (even if there are six dots, and not three or seven to conclude the phrase, “happy ever after”), the ambiguity suggested by the arson makes the outcome of their affair quite uncertain.

### **7.6.3 The three trolls**

The last text presented here is “The three trolls”, which is written by a girl in the triad, ‘Galilei’. The triad consists of two fellow pupils, a boy and a girl, one student teacher and a teacher trainer. The text was published 30 October and downloaded 12 November 2003 for this research purpose.

The three trolls

Once upon a time there were three, very big and ugly trolls! The trolls were left from there family and they were all alone in the scary forest! Their task was to find the witch, because she knows were the parents of the trolls was, but the three trolls was not so nice as you think they are! They didn't like their parents because they were mean with the trolls, and they want

to kill them! But they have to find the witch first! She lived in the scary forest! They start their task, and till the end they have find the house, the house was big and little scary. They knock on the door, and there is no answer, they knock on the door for the second time and there is still no answer. They knock on the door for the third time and finally the witch open the door, and they ask were their parents are, and she answer: they live in a cottage, deep done in the forest! They say they have to begin the trip. And of they go. After four hours with Woking they finally see the house! They knock on the cottage, and some big trolls open the big door! And they ask, "who are you"? They answer "we are your children, when we were baby trolls, you was not so nice to us! And we are for revenge! And it was then the fights start! And a while after that their parents was dead!!! And they have got their revenge! They wanted to find the witch, and give her something, because she help the trolls to find their parents! They walked to her house, and they knock on the door, and she opens the door, and they go " thank you for helping us, and they gave her some magic boots! And they began the travel home! And finally they got their revenge..

And they live as trolls happy ever after!!!!!!!

FINISH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!..

The title, “The three trolls”, may connote Tolkien’s character Bilbo Baggins’ encounter with the three trolls in *The Hobbit*.<sup>341</sup>

Bilbo Baggins somewhat unwillingly accompanies Gandalf and the thirteen dwarfs to reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. On their way to the Lonely Mountains, they encounter various threatening creatures, and among them are the three trolls. Bilbo Baggins is taken prisoner by the three trolls and has to tell stories to be released.

“The three trolls” depicts the story of three siblings, who search for their parents. The three trolls are “[...] very big and ugly” (line 1). Nevertheless, the trinitarianism and its connotations of the Bible’s Trinity suggest that the trolls are perhaps not as bad as ordinary trolls often are. Actually the trolls have been left by their family and they are “[...] all alone in

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<sup>341</sup> See Tolkien, 2002.

the scary forest” (line 2). Thus they may attain sympathy even though they are trolls. They want to find the witch because she knows where their parents are. Connotations of various characters, for example, the Prodigal Son of the Bible, and Hansel and Gretel in the wood, create an impression of their underlying wish to become united with their parents in a happy ending. However, this is not the case; remember that these three creatures are not human beings; they are trolls, and therefore bad, according to the fairy tale formula.

The three trolls disapprove of their parents because they were mean to the trolls when they were little. The three trolls seek revenge, and they actually want to kill their parents. The novel element of dealing with the parent-child relationship in a troll universe makes it possible to elaborate on aggression and hatred in a safe frame. A psychoanalytical perspective may suggest that the three siblings struggle for independence from their parents. To accomplish this, they need the assistance of the witch. And this is why they have to trace the witch, who lives in the spooky forest. At last, they discover her huge house in the wood. Thrice the trolls have to knock on her door before she responds. The witch knows where their parents reside, but unlike the witch, who lives in a big house, the parents live in a cottage with a big door, deep down in the forest. “After four hours with Woking they finally see the house” (lines 11-12). The parents do not recognise their children. It is quite the opposite of what happens to the Prodigal Son when he comes home and is embraced by his forgiving father. And the parents ask: “[...] who are you” (line 13). The crisis implied by not being recognised by their parents forms a somewhat dramatic climax in the narrative. The questioning of identity that this climax indirectly involves is existential: Who are we when we are not even recognisable to our own parents? The three trolls are full of revenge: “[...] we are your children, when we were baby trolls, you was not so nice to us” (lines 13-14). The confrontation in the doorway ends with a fight between the parents and their children. The split between the Prodigal Son and his brother does not occur among the three trolls. The focus is on the joint revenge carried out by the children. To be vindictive is not necessarily an honourable sentiment; however, this is a troll’s universe with its own ethical codes. The trinomial principle is utilised once more in the celebration of the revenge. It is pronounced thrice: “And we are for revenge!” (line 14), “And they have got their revenge!” (lines 15-16), “And finally they got their revenge” (lines 19-20). Human ethics are adjusted to suit the troll world. One is led to feel that justice is done. This is possible since the three siblings are not children, but trolls. Here it is possible to play with identity, put on a tail and become trolls and deviate from common ethics.

In “The three trolls”, the parent-child relationship is explored. A parent’s murder motif is present; both mother and father are killed. Towards the end of the narrative the narrator warns again that this is a trolls’ universe: The trolls do not simply live happily ever after, “[...] they live as trolls happy ever after!!!!!!” (line 21), and not like people. The seven exclamation marks echo the victory of the three trolls. A phase of development is thus concluded. The revenge involved in the victory is somewhat disturbing though. Forgiveness is what the ethical code in the world of human beings would have expected, but the parents do not recognise their children. Therefore there is no platform created to redeem the injustice done. The only solution is to confront the guilty party; this is troll morality, which prescribes revenge instead of forgiveness. Within the troll society, it is possible to live happily ever after even if one has killed one’s parents, but the ever after life happens with the tail on, as trolls. Although the parents fail in their obligations to the children, it is possible to live a happy life. “The three trolls” challenges the distinction between trolls and human beings. In the traditional fairy tales, the two are kept safely separated, and the trolls are equipped with negative characteristics of human nature. In the pupil narrative, the trolls take on both positive and negative human traits. The three siblings have other options in the troll universe. The less sympathetic sides of human nature are explored in the shelter created by the troll identity.

The last three narratives may suggest that people are not entirely good, and that the ambiguous nature of human beings can make the good-evil distinction into something that has a bearing on the construction of identity in individual characters. Being good is not assigned to one particular character or one particular group, but is seen as something that co-exists together with negative traits. The dichotomy between good and bad is thus zero-grounded and a more rounded character portrayal outlined.

## **7.7 Summing up**

In this chapter, fifteen narratives have been subject to literary analysis. The pupil texts have been interpreted with a focus on the relationship between the individual text and its intertexts. The interpretations have attempted to identify novel elements in the pupil texts. These novel elements are seen as an important part of the pupil writers’ own content; the strictly linguistic

aspects of these texts have been almost overlooked deliberately in order to focus on the substantial meaning of the individual pupil texts. The pupil narratives take up various themes, and the portrayal of various main characters' struggling in quest of dénouement to various existential dilemmas is predominant. These portrayals explore the many aspects of identity, and the texts are seen to constitute a discourse of pupil narratives. In this narrative discourse, the pupils deal with themes related to friendship, to family, to personal issues, and also the social and global aspects of human existence. The possible range is thus quite extensive, but the relational matters seem to prevail.

Contemporary education rhetoric, as accounted for in chapter 3, may call for an analysis of what pupils communicate in their texts, of the pupil produced content as meaning, and not just as examples of language practice. The pupils' texts demonstrate the literary competence of their writers; intertextuality is an important literary device applied. In the forthcoming chapter, the discussion will turn explicitly to the research questions formulated at the outset of the thesis. The interpretations of the pupil fairy tales have suggested that pupils utilise the situation that EFL writing may facilitate. The pupils do not solely concentrate on the linguistic and performative stages of writing, but embrace the possibility that narrative writing in EFL provides, to explore various types of identity, and the existential problems involved in growing up. The discourse that their texts constitute is thus seen as expressions of various aspects of identity.



## **8 Content in pupil produced narratives in TALE**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings of the interpretation of narratives in the previous chapter are discussed in relation to the research questions put forward at the primary step in chapter 1 of the thesis where the objective was to determine what is dealt with in such narrative texts.

1. What characterises the discourse that is developed in the narratives?
2. What aspects of identity are expressed in this discourse?

To discuss how identity is expressed in such pupil produced content in school is the main issue and was further developed in chapter 2 into the following questions:

- Is identity expressed in terms of the relationships between the individual and the social, related to, for example, family and friends, and to local, global, and national identity?
- Is the individual identity communicated in the narratives? Are there expressions of identity related to, for example, gender and sexuality or other aspects of the individual identity?

When searching for pupil produced content in pupil narratives, the confinements of the different tasks that the pupils have responded to become relevant. The pupils seemingly feel free to write creative texts with a multitude of different intertextual references. The traditional fairy tales are often read psychologically and are assumed to deal with personal development. When pupils write within this particular genre, questions related to identity formation are thus indirectly affected. Although one should be careful about drawing generalising conclusions on the basis of the results here, the following discussion intends to systematise the most evident findings of the interpretation of the TALE narratives.

### **8.2 Identity in society**

The relationship between the individual and the group is frequently portrayed in the TALE narratives that have been interpreted. The narratives often place their main characters in fairy

tale settings where the other types generally have pre-designated roles to fit the fairy tale formula. The close circle of family and friends constitutes the social arena where identity is explored. In some of the narratives, the characters in the various plots struggle for peace at a global level, whereas a possible national scope is more difficult to trace. Likewise, there is little evidence of local commitment or local distinctiveness. Hence the expression of global identity, national and local identity is somewhat indistinct.

### **8.2.1 Global identity**

The global or international aspects of identity are not prevalent in the narratives. This is extraordinary since the narratives are written as part of an exchange programme where pupils write to people in other countries. Perhaps it is not fair to expect pupils in this particular age group to include an international dimension if the teachers' instruction did not specifically demand this. Perhaps the pupils are somewhat too young when they are twelve to fourteen years old. The fairy tale is a universal genre, and English is a global language. Nevertheless, global issues, for example, racism, climate change and terrorism are not dealt with. The two first issues mentioned were not on top of the public agenda when the TALE project was operative, whereas the latter was; the 11th of September 2001 was part of the collective short-term memory when the pupils wrote these narratives. The narratives were written in 2002-2004 when the fear of terrorism was media-exposed worldwide. Perhaps it is possible to trace this in some texts. A rare example of the expression of global identity is found in "The biggest battle"<sup>342</sup> where everyone has to join in to fight against a common threat represented by the evil creature. Otherwise, the international scope is de-emphasised in the narratives, despite the fact that both the language and the genre are connected to the global sphere.

### **8.2.2 Popular culture**

The global aspect is more perceivable in the references to popular culture. The popular culture, which the pupil writers share, seems to constitute a common frame of reference, and

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<sup>342</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.5.3.

the TALE pupil writers are clearly well acquainted with such content. This is evident in the multitude of intertextual reference to films and TV shows, for example, *The Karate Kid* and *Teletubbies*. Presumably screen and game versions of literary works, for example, *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* are also part of the intertextual framework included. Although biblical texts and literary heritage texts are referred to, what can somewhat summarily be called a global entertainment culture dominates this framework. The global identity that is formulated in such settings is disengaged from nationality. It also seems to be disengaged from a specific Nordic culture.

### 8.2.3 National identity

Identity is almost denationalised when it is expressed in these particular narratives in this particular context. The same phenomenon is suggested in the two small-scale inquiries carried out in Björklund (2005) and Larsen (2005). The scarcity of topics or motifs related to one particular nation is conspicuous. Yet there are some examples of almost accidental references to national characteristics. For example, in “A day in the school”,<sup>343</sup> the national reference is evident in the text. The slip into the mother tongue<sup>344</sup> influences the interpretation of the narrative and connotes the possible stringency present in the Finnish school system. A benevolent reader will also perceive a possible Danish flavour in the royal name of the main character<sup>345</sup> of “The boy and the magic word”.<sup>346</sup> Likewise, the use of the national brand name of a shop<sup>347</sup> in the narrative which has been entitled “Hero - monster”<sup>348</sup> makes the observant reader dimly perceive a national reference. There is little else in the text which connotes a particular national setting or theme.

As far as this researcher knows, there is so far no survey in TALE of code-switching. However, the overall impression after having read almost all narratives is that the number of texts containing terminology from the native language of the pupil writer is relatively low.

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<sup>343</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.1.

<sup>344</sup> “Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto”.

<sup>345</sup> Frederic.

<sup>346</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.2.

<sup>347</sup> “Rema 1000”.

<sup>348</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.2. The title has been provided by the researcher for practical reasons to make it convenient to refer to the text in the discussion.

The genre does not rule out the possibility of national reference; in fact, some of the Scandinavian fairy tale references may invite such connotations. But the expression of national identity is actually absent aside from the slips into the mother tongue already mentioned. When such transfer occurs, it seems to be more as the result of a lack of vocabulary than national reference. The pupils seemingly write the word that slips into their mind; when referring to a shop, it is Rema 1000 in the example studied here, but could have been Spar, which is a global brand name. The name Frederic is not particularly Danish and could have been any name; “Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto” is seemingly denoted to suggest a control function, which can cope with troublesome teachers, and not primarily to denote nationality although a certain ambiguity is involved in this last example. The reference to this organisation may actually connote nationality. But on the whole, such L1 transfer seems to constitute accidental expressions of something national more than a national identity. Whether this is due to the fact that the pupils write in English, and not their mother tongue, is a relevant question to put forward in this respect.<sup>349</sup> The international or global language does not promote the constitution of national identity, at least not in this selection of the material.

Perhaps the various national identities form a joint Nordic identity. Not really; the pupils seem to pick their references from a wider context and not a specific Nordic one. Bakhtin (1981) emphasises the contextual aspects of language. He uses the term ‘language’ also to refer to the language of a specific group of people. Each of these languages involves a world view containing its own inherent meanings, relations and intentions. Does this imply that pupil EFL usage expresses a certain world view which can be interpreted as an expression of a TALE identity or a TALE discourse? Perhaps the material constitutes a discourse, which gives voice to a certain world view. In “The three trolls”, for example, the connotations of the Nordic intertextual universe suggest both geographical and generational belonging. But the pupils are inspired by stories of a wider origin and seem to apply all kinds of intertexts in their narrative production.

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<sup>349</sup> A comparative study of self-produced content in pupil narratives would illuminate possible diversities between EFL and mother tongue.

### 8.2.4 Local identity

The exploration of local identity is likewise difficult to trace in the narratives. Possibly this is also related to the fact that the pupil writers communicate in English, and not in their mother tongue. They communicate with other TALE pupils in the Nordic countries and are inclined to take up topics that are relevant to receivers outside the local community, instead of presenting local characteristics.<sup>350</sup> The de-emphasis of local traits may also be connected to the fact that they use ICT, which is a worldwide medium, and perhaps, thus, inviting a more widespread topicality.<sup>351</sup> The pupil writers are also teenagers, something which partly explains their inclination to wish to be like all the others and therefore explore matters that other teenagers might recognise, instead of presenting local distinctiveness. The fairy tale genre, with its universal availability, may also encourage a downsizing of local issues, but also, at the same time, support such reference.<sup>352</sup> The first of the two alternatives seems to have manifested itself in these narratives.

It is somewhat extraordinary to find that global and international, national and local references are almost absent. Instead, the narratives portray the relationships that the individual forms to other people in their closest circle.

### 8.3 *Relating to others*

Most narratives deal with the relational sides of human existence. The relationships that the individual forms to others are part of identity construction, and the individual identity is negotiated in relation to others. The narratives describe the formation of friendships of various kinds, and this topic is frequently explored. Relating to other people starts in the family with the primal relationship to parents and siblings and gradually involves the world outside home ground. The narratives portray different family situations, but the nuclear family is almost

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<sup>350</sup> The pupils write about their hometowns in a separate text in the exchange programme. Still it would be possible to include such reference also in the fictional text. That they have written about it in another text means that they have practised describing the local in English. Thus a possible lack of relevant vocabulary does not serve to explain the lack of local references.

<sup>351</sup> However, local issues may have been included, but not perceived by the researcher as such. Perhaps the researcher lacks the relevant local know-how and therefore fails to notice such references.

<sup>352</sup> See chapter 6, section 6.5.1.

non-existent in this selection of the material. Siblings are often wandering about on their own with little parental support to guide them.

### 8.3.1 Parents

Identity is both constructed and negotiated in the family, and the personal development is based in the early relationships with parents and siblings. In the narratives, the modern family situation is sometimes explored; the single parent family is often favoured, but the conventional family, with two parents and two children, is not represented at all. The extended family is also absent as neither grandparents nor aunts, uncles and cousins are included. One would perhaps expect to see the modern extended family, the patchwork family - with half-siblings and step-parents - portrayed; however, such modern family constellations are also absent.

Some narratives deal with the absence of one or both parents. In “The witch as lifesaver”,<sup>353</sup> for example, there are no parents present. The grown-up influence is represented by the witch. In this particular narrative, the witch is good and provides the children with adequate adult support. In “The boy and the magic word”,<sup>354</sup> the witch is an adult they have to fight against; parents are not mentioned at all.

The ugly princess<sup>355</sup> does not feel that she can meet her father before she is pretty again. That she avoids her father makes one question the quality of the parent-child relationship in this narrative. What is this relationship like when she cannot return home before she has regained her good looks? Is she only welcomed when she is successful? The relationship that the main character in “The fairy tale about the big fat boy” has to his parents is portrayed as even worse. He is chased away from home. This total rejection speaks of a relationship where love and forgiveness are totally absent.

Parental support, which the fairy tale genre often prepares for, is present in some narratives but mostly in the shape of a single parent family as in “The ugly princess”. This text is also

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<sup>353</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.1.

<sup>354</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.2.

<sup>355</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.2.1.

discussed in Larsen (2005), and the comparison of the fictional text with the biographical text by the same pupil suggests that the pupil tries out the situation in her own family in the fiction narrative. Whether this is something that pupil writers in general do has not been examined in this thesis. If such research were to be done, the possibilities for making the pupils anonymous should have been better.<sup>356</sup> The ethical dilemma of drawing parallels to pupils' biographies does not render it impossible to question whether pupils tend to explore matters in life that they find difficult. Such speculation is perhaps neither scientific nor ethical; still it suggests that the pupils demonstrate an explorative practice with regard to fictional narrative writing.

The background of the individual writer presumably matters to how identity is expressed. The narratives do explore various possibilities for self-realisation and communicate identity in a multi-faceted manner. A variety of relationships to mothers and fathers are dealt with. In "The three trolls",<sup>357</sup> for example, the struggle against parents is portrayed as revengeful and violent. The troll children are supported by a powerful witch. The dramatic conflict between children and parents is merciless, and the narrative demonstrates how the omnipotent adult force can be conquered.

### 8.3.2 Siblings

The sibling relationships in the narratives are genuinely happy. Brothers and sisters are joined in their fight against possible threats that grown-ups in different disguises represent. The three trolls are together in their attack on their parents and seem to have equal roles in the drama. Nothing seems to threaten the solidarity between them. The support that the individual can get from their siblings is generally emphasised. "The boy and the magic word"<sup>358</sup> portrays a sibling relationship where the gender roles are stereotypically conventional: Passive girl awaits the rescue of active boy. The roles are reversed in "The witch as life saver" where the sister helps her brother. There is surprisingly little evidence of sibling rivalry as the genre traditionally portrays, for example, in Cinderella's and her Scandinavian male equivalent,

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<sup>356</sup> Although it is possible to make the writers anonymous in this thesis, the TALE project, as such, gives access to approximately 500 users who could easily identify the biographies and fairy tales of the individual writers.

<sup>357</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.3.

<sup>358</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.2.

Espen Ashlad's, family situations. The sibling relationships in Scandinavian fairy tales are often placed in a rustic setting where the allodial right could encourage envy and rivalry among brothers. Modern sibling relationships in these narratives are perhaps not exposed to the same intensity of rivalry. But would not modern siblings compete to get the attention of grown-ups? Or does the change of the nuclear family structure influence the relationship between siblings? Such sociological issues are not examined in this thesis. Still it is fair to state that sibling relationships are represented as less problematic than in real life and less problematic than in the fairy tale intertexts. There are no references to annoying stepfamily siblings either. Thus the representations of sibling relationships in the pupil narratives are surprisingly idyllic.

### 8.3.3 Friendship

The relationships among friends are more complex. The competition and struggle to become accepted among friends are illustrated, for example, in "The karate dog".<sup>359</sup> The narrative portrays a hero who first and foremost wants to impress his friends. At one level, this narrative is about a superficial friendship where the point is to show off, at a deeper level about the possibility to make a difference among friends. The chance of surprising and impressing one's friends is seemingly the major objective for all the hardships that the main character goes through. Thus an element of competition is implied. All his training is motivated by his wish to demonstrate his skills to the others. To be liked by others is of major importance to the Karate Dog. Likewise, in "Philip the fox",<sup>360</sup> the importance of acceptance is emphasised. That Philip is willing to part from his most advantageous feature, his tail/tale, in order to be liked by the others, is significant. His good looks are the reason for his lack of success among his friends. Philip has to learn that it is actually obstructive to his personal development to outshine his friends. He has to cut off his beautiful tail/tale. The principle of "just who do you think you are" is merciless in this narrative. Philip's identity is negotiated in relationship to the other animals in the forest. Although friends make demands, they provide support. Quite the opposite point is suggested in "The three bears".<sup>361</sup> The theme in this narrative suggests that to fight against the intrusion by others, even if they are seemingly

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<sup>359</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.2.3.

<sup>360</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.5.2.

<sup>361</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.3.3.

sympathetic and sweet, is essential in personal development to maintain the Self. In “The Superworm”,<sup>362</sup> the friendship between a worm and a bird portrays a more conventional pattern of the fairy tale formula where friends are helpers, who assist the heroic main character in his attempt at attaining individual goals. It is tempting to ask whether friendship takes over the support one would expect to see exercised in the conventional family. This thesis does not set out to discuss such sociological and psychological questions; nevertheless, it is evident that friendship is important in the narratives. Whether this is solely related to the fact that the writers are teenagers and conventionally taken to be preoccupied with relationships to people of their own age, or whether it suggests a lack of confidence in the traditional family structure, is not a question which this study will pursue. In this context, it is sufficient to claim that friendship is an important issue in the pupil narratives and that it is portrayed as demanding but generally worthwhile.

#### ***8.4 The individual identity***

Identity is explored mainly through the portrayal of a multitude of different main characters where the individual’s struggle to fit in is a frequent topic. The individual’s role in the group is often portrayed. On the surface, the demands from the group with regard to exterior success are merciless. Both male and female heroes struggle bravely to fulfil both significant and seemingly insignificant individual goals. Their heroic deeds are often portrayed with humour and intelligence and question conventional gender roles. But these roles are often deprived of sexual connotations. Thus sexual development is not a prevalent topic but is subtly included in some narratives. As to the portrayal of heroes, they can operate on an individual basis or be part of a group. The heroes and heroines struggle to obtain acceptance, peace, love, even revenge, but their heroic deeds are often ridiculed and parodied.

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<sup>362</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.2.2.

### 8.4.1 Gender

To some extent, traditional gender roles are reproduced in the narratives, but there are also several examples of unconventional gender roles. On the one hand, the conventionality of gender roles in “The boy and the magic word”<sup>363</sup> confirms stereotypical gender roles where the girl takes no part in the action to rescue the sibling couple from their assailant. On the other hand, the unconventionality of gender roles in “The witch as life saver” introduces a twist of the roles designated to girls and boys respectively. Lise saves her brother. Likewise, the ugly princess is active in her problem solving approach, and she sets out to find the prince who will liberate her from the hex that the witch has put on, instead of falling asleep, like Sleeping Beauty or Snow White. Looks are important to both male and female characters, and vanity is portrayed as something that affects both genders. Philip the fox is pretty. The ugly princess wants to become pretty. On the surface level, both characters’ unhappiness is symbolised through their looks. At a deeper level, the narratives may speak of both the struggles that they have to fight and the sacrifices they have to make in order to mature.

### 8.4.2 Sexuality

The various relationships between the sexes are quite unromantic compared to the intertexts’ fairy tale romances. In fact, there is no happily ever after involving boy + girl = true love. The narratives clearly deviate from such formulaic solutions. The absence of conventional romance also influences the portrayal of sexuality. An ironic distance to the topic is upheld. Humorous portrayals make subtle comments on sexuality, though. In “The hippo”<sup>364</sup>, for example, the sexuality of the main character is an underlying topic. The hippo is trying to find a partner, and his heroic act is motivated by this. His sexuality seeps through in his bodily sensuality. The playful side of sexuality is alluded to. Still the hippo is an animal and not a boy. That the hippo is fat may suggest a positive view of sexuality. It is portrayed as something that everyone has a right to; it belongs to everybody, seemingly regardless of one’s appearance. In “Pou’s comeback”,<sup>365</sup> prostitution is introduced as a topic. Sexuality is made

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<sup>363</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.2.

<sup>364</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.5.1.

<sup>365</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.3.1.

into a commodity and is one step further down in the main character's fall. As a means to achieving success, prostitution is personal development destroyed, according to the narrative. Thus the narrative explores sexuality's painful side; a certain gangster film connotation is hinted at. In "Hero - monster", homosexuality is subtly suggested as the outcome of the friendship that develops between the hero and the monster. In the literary universe of the narrative, the roles are unclear, friend or lover, homosexual or heterosexual, hero or monster, the ambiguity is pervasive. Otherwise, the narratives seemingly do not explore this topic at all. This may suggest that there is some reluctance or shyness involved with regard to this particular topic. When dealt with, sexuality is often dressed in humour. Such humorous distance is also applied in the portrayal of heroes.

### 8.4.3 Heroes

Almost all narratives feature a heroic character. However, heroism is presented differently in the narratives; a slightly ironic distance is often sustained. In "The Superworm",<sup>366</sup> for example, the hero is presented in an untraditional frame. The heroic deed of the Superworm is not particularly heroic as he just finds himself a new home. Yet, becoming someone because of what you can achieve is seemingly the essence of this narrative. The bird helper signifies the importance of others in this process. The heroic deed can also be the product of a joint achievement, as in "The three bugs",<sup>367</sup> where cooperation leads to a satisfactory solution. The joint achievement of all good forces is needed to fight against the enemy. This is also the case in "The biggest battle", but here the topic of cooperation is drawn further. The various heroic characters have to put away their disagreement to join forces against the evil creature. In the narrative "Hero – monster", the role of the hero is poked fun at. A confusion of roles points to the complexity of characterisation and identity in literature as well as in life. The intertextual and playful approach that several narratives take to the characteristics of the hero demonstrates the pupils' consciousness and awareness with regard to literary characterisation. It may also demonstrate the abundance of potentials they envisage for the hero. A certain distance to the roles that heroes are confined to suggests a critical approach in some

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<sup>366</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.2.2.

<sup>367</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.3.2.

narratives. And it is this ironic distance that draws the attention to a possible critical view of society.

## **8.5 Critical voices**

Indirectly some of the narratives are critical towards society and especially the media-exposed entertainment culture that the writers share. But the narratives do not produce criticism related to specific issues in their own country or in their local community. The criticism is not directed against predominant international or global issues. The term ‘glocalisation’<sup>368</sup> is relevant in order to understand how their criticism is communicated: In the glocal community, local identities operate within the global connectivity. In their approach to the established entertainment culture, the TALE pupils seem to constitute a glocal community. The narratives suggest the presence of glocal connectivity among their writers. The content of media-exposed popular culture provides the primary frame of reference. The shared experience of ideals that are kept up by popular culture is frequently questioned. The superficiality of such ideals is the backbone of this onset. The fight against evil and the celebration of appearance are questioned.

### **8.5.1 The beauty and thinness ideal**

The persistent demand for beauty from popular culture is dealt with in several narratives. “The ugly princess”, for example, can be read as an example of revolt against the beauty ideal. The ugliness of the princess is presented as disgraceful; it is something the main character is ashamed of. The narrative portrays a society which does not accept girls who are not beautiful. Quite the opposite situation is portrayed in “Philip the fox”. Philip is excluded from the community because he is too beautiful, but then, he is male. His good looks are the reason for his lack of success among his friends. Thus male vanity is seemingly disowned. In “The fairy tale about the big fat boy”,<sup>369</sup> the main-character is excluded from society because

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<sup>368</sup> See chapter 3, section 3.8.2.

<sup>369</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.4.3.

he is too fat. There is no way that he can go back home before he has lost weight. In another narrative, “The hippo”,<sup>370</sup> fatness, if not exactly celebrated, is made into a natural condition. The main character in “The hippo” manages to find a partner in spite of his fatness. And he chooses the fattest hippo-girl. In this narrative, being corpulent is turned into a rewarding and good quality.

### 8.5.2 The good-bad motif

At a deeper level, certain values that dominate in popular culture are questioned. Generally in popular culture, being pretty and thin is good; being ugly and fat is bad. This good-bad distinction, to some extent, also applies to age. Being young is good, and being old is bad. In the TALE narratives, the traditional simplification of good-bad conflicts between princesses and witches, heroes and villains are confused. In “Hero - monster”,<sup>371</sup> the question of distinguishing between good and bad is challenged through irony. Thus the potential for the formation of an individual and sound personality is challenged. Although narratives, like “The biggest battle”,<sup>372</sup> confirm the belief in the heroic deed, several narratives’ playful approach to this motif implies an ironic distance which might affect this central moral distinction. This post-modern inclination is quite apparent in the conflicts between the generations. Children fight for their rights, and the distribution of power between generations is dealt with in several narratives. Thus a Foucaultian discourse,<sup>373</sup> where the fight for power is central, seems to be formed (Foucault, 1977; 1986; 1990). In general, the grown-up parental world is often made into an enemy, and at one level, “A day in the school”<sup>374</sup> might be read as a protest against the ageing and feminised teaching profession.<sup>375</sup> The younger generation has to stick together, and the narratives seem to form a discourse in which this solidarity is voiced. In this fight for power, the good-bad distinction is zero-grounded. Troll children can do terrible things to gain power; the end justifies the means. In order to become independent of parental power, anything goes.

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<sup>370</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.5.1.

<sup>371</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.2.

<sup>372</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.5.3.

<sup>373</sup> See chapter 2, section 2.8.4 and chapter 1, section 1.3.3 for a discussion of the discourse concept.

<sup>374</sup> See chapter 7, section 7.6.1.

<sup>375</sup> But perhaps this is to over-interpret the narrative.

## **8.6 *Summing up***

In this chapter, the interpretations of the fifteen narratives of the previous chapter are synthesised. The TALE pupils communicate identity in their narrative writing. Furthermore, the selection and interpretation of pupil narratives in TALE have suggested that the fairy tale genre possibly has inherent features, which invite explorations into the fields of identity formation. Further research on pupil narratives could study the different genres of pupil narratives in EFL and possibly identify such features. The exploration of the many-faceted nature of identity is most evident in their character portrayal where various heroic characters are involved in different plots where their dilemmas are exposed. It is symptomatic that the global, national, regional and local identities are de-emphasised. Primarily the relational aspects of human existence are dealt with, and the narratives speak of general problems that may engage young people in the Nordic countries. The TALE pupils may address topics which are significant to their age group; a generational pupil discourse seems to be formed.

But finally this discussion proceeds to address the questions put forward in chapters 1 and 2 to discuss what other consequences the findings of this study may have to EFL education.

## 9 Conclusive remarks

This final chapter sums up what implications for English in school the study of pupil narratives may have. In chapters 1 and 2, the following question was put forward:

- What bearing does this study of narratives have for the work with pupil narratives in EFL in school?

As the discussion in chapter 8 concluded, pupils do not write their texts in English for the sole purpose of practising their writing skills in the foreign language. In addition, they may be seen to communicate identity in their narratives.

In the Nordic countries, as well as in the rest of the world, the role of English as a second language and a lingua franca changes the methods of EFL education. As the discussion in chapter 3 showed, the principles for learning and teaching the first as opposed to the second foreign language part company on several matters. The term EFL itself is becoming outdated since English is no longer a foreign language, but a language which the population is constantly exposed to. Some of this language input can be called Global English, a concept which primarily suggests that English is in the process of losing its connection to a particular English country or a particular English culture, often at the expense of a shared popularised media-exposed culture. The language that pupils produce themselves is thus influenced by the variety of input they get from modern media. Consequently this may necessitate an increased focus on the content of the English input that the pupils are surrounded by and the language that they produce themselves.

This study has focused on studying the narrative content of pupil texts. The significance of the qualities of the framework surrounding such narrative production is indirectly shed light on. Some of the issues that have been discussed are the possible benefits of exchange programmes and the possible dichotomy between the aims of correctness and communicability. Also whether the exchange of texts makes the interaction of narratives more authentic has been considered. The role of response in exchange networks and the possible importance of canonical texts have also been referred to. Although one should be careful not to draw categorical conclusions on matters that have not been carefully examined in the thesis, the issues mentioned above will be addressed in this conclusive discussion.

International exchange programmes, like TALE, are often conducted as a combination of face to face and virtual communication. As implied in the discussion in chapters 4 and 5, it may be advisable to distinguish clearly between matters that are open to discussion among the participators and matters that are non-negotiable in the sense that they are settled by the project management. This may support both the educator and the pupil participants' motivation since less time and effort is spent on solving practical problems. The participants would need proper guidelines which are shared in the network. The study of pupils' narratives in this thesis supports the already existing research that is briefly mentioned in chapters 4 and 5, and, which states that taking part in international exchange programmes is motivating. Writing for the teacher or the peers in the classroom is not the same as writing to peers in another country. Writing not just for the teacher may give an edge to pupils' text production. That the receiver of the text is a pupil of their own age, with a different mother tongue, who is engaged in the same kind of activity, may strengthen pupils' motivation. Having said this, it is important to keep in mind that a comparative study, which juxtaposes the texts from pupils who write within international exchange programmes to texts written as ordinary classroom activity, can tell which factors may be decisive in this connection. To compare the writing activity in near identical classes would be adequate in order to discuss the parameters involved. Future studies in this field could address such questions in order to evaluate the importance of the fact that the texts are exchanged with peers from other countries and that they are written on computers.

The intertextual references play an important part in the construction of the pupil narratives in TALE. Thus the application of intertextual reference and the narrative structure itself may have ensured the presence of genuine content in all narratives. In fact, the study of narratives indicates that there are no narratives that are insubstantial in the sense that they do not convey meaning. But it is not evident that the emphasis on content happens at the expense of correctness. The demand for correctness may even be intensified because of the presence of pupil readers in other countries. Although the writer does not necessarily correct mistakes made in the first edition of the narrative in subsequent editions, the aim of correctness may have been important in the construction of the first edition. Presumably the pupil writer is aware of the fact that the pupil receivers are approximately at the same language level and therefore inclined to make mistakes themselves. The possible effect of the communicative approach, which has dominated foreign language learning and teaching since the 1980s, is

relevant to consider in this connection.<sup>376</sup> The communicative approach, which emphasises the significance of being understood, simultaneously may deem language mistakes more tolerable;<sup>377</sup> fluency is emphasised often at the expense of accuracy. The interpretation of narratives suggests that the pupils make English into their own language. Such a feeling of ownership may indirectly lead to a negligent attitude towards formal requirements related to linguistic correctness. A renewed focus on correctness may be needed if the aim were to ensure that what may be referred to as glocal variants, like “Norwenglish”,<sup>378</sup> become as close to Standard English as possible, and not just another pidgin variant. Thus the demand for correctness should be balanced against the aim of communicability, provided that grammatical correctness is still an aim in language learning, which it obviously is. As the discussion in chapter 3 suggested, the curriculum stresses both aims as they are seen as interdependent.

However, this thesis has focused on the substantial content side of the text. Although this study has not carried out a comparative analysis of the conventional classroom text and the computer-exchanged text, it refers, in chapter 5, to such comparison being carried out in the TALE project, and there is reason to claim that the exchange context supports the production of genuine content. In the search for suitable exchange partners, one needs to take into account both EFL proficiency and age. In the exchange network, where English is the only lingua franca, the communicative performance in EFL is authentic. The same effect is not achieved by exchanging texts with the neighbouring class. In TALE, the presence of Finnish and Icelandic pupils in Scandinavian triads ensures that EFL is the preferred language for extra-textual communication, as well as being the sole lingua franca.

Yet, to facilitate writing in exchange networks does not necessarily lead to consistent response activity. The few examples discussed in this thesis did not suggest that an unambiguously successful peer response was carried out. One way of meeting this want is to facilitate online response in chat format, which is time-synchronous and therefore more authentic than the response carried out in TALE. In addition, it is evident that teachers and researchers need to develop strategies to improve the response phase. The small-scale results that the study in chapter 5 produced suggest that further inquiry of the peer feedback is

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<sup>376</sup> See chapter 3, section 3.4.

<sup>377</sup> Perhaps this is an unintended consequence of the emphasis on communication possibly at the expense of correctness.

<sup>378</sup> See chapter 3, section 3.8.2.

required.<sup>379</sup> To develop and maintain successful peer response is evidently a challenge. As shown in chapter 5, the student teachers' responses were in some cases of insufficient quality in TALE. On the one hand, the students may need to develop their own assessment skills. On the other hand, they may need to develop their proficiency in conducting pupils' peer response. Having said this, it is necessary to point out that the lack of regard paid to the response of peers and teachers in some of the pupil narratives does not necessarily seem to undermine the quality of the content of the text. This legitimises a questioning of the emphasis put on peer response in pupil writing in school. How decisive is peer response compared to the weight put on making it work? Another relevant question in this context is how the peer response is organised. In the widespread European e-Twinning project, for example, the partnership primarily facilitates the response phase dyadically, not triadically, as in TALE.<sup>380</sup> In the TALE project, the number of participants in each triad, that there are three and not just two pupil participators, has quantitatively enhanced the cultural benefit since three different nationalities participate, and not only two.<sup>381</sup> The dynamically balanced communication between groups of three, and not just the bouncing of feedback between pairs, may support the communicative activity.<sup>382</sup> Although there is sparse effect of the response phase in some TALE pupils' texts, their awareness about the presence of fellow pupils reading their texts and writing texts in the same genre in return has probably been important. The authenticity of the situation in which the writing takes place is possibly supportive of their textual production.

To many pupils, writing on computers means that they can create texts that are aesthetically more successful than handwritten versions. Especially the weaker pupils' self-esteem with regard to writing is presumably stimulated and encouraged by this factor. Also the possibility of making the less proficient pupils able to overcome inhibitions and actually write complete sentences and paragraphs may be supported when they write narrative texts on computers. The fine wrapping of the text may subtly add value to their narrative. The professional look of the computerised text may enhance their command of their narrative ability since they can concentrate on the construction of a coherent narrative as the published text will be

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<sup>379</sup> But this was not at issue in the thesis.

<sup>380</sup> Regardless of this, the individual classes that participate in e-Twinning may contact two or more schools to set up triads or fours if required. Whether the number of members in peer groups is important to the success of peer work, is unclear and has not been at issue in this thesis.

<sup>381</sup> However, the quality of the exchange may differ, depending on the number of pupils involved in each group. Dyads are qualitatively, and not only quantitatively, different from triads.

<sup>382</sup> This issue requires substantial research if consistent advice with regard to size is to be given.

aesthetically successful notwithstanding. In some cases, the performative stage of writing (Bereiter, 1980) seems to be quite demanding and may give little room for the development and integration of the other stages in writing. Indeed, one can question whether pupils attain the aim of writing coherently since some of them often misspell even the easiest words and make numerous grammatical errors. But there is another aim that is of equal value, and this is to communicate substantial content. Although the pupils in TALE often make language mistakes, they construct meaningful narratives. Although they do not always utilise an extended vocabulary, they utilise their literary competence (Vestli, 2008) and communicate substantial meaning. And the intertextual practice seems to make this meaning conceivable. Nevertheless, the pupils need to practise the writing skill and to develop correctness in their text production if meaning is to be conceived by peer readers of their texts. After all, it is important to be understood by people of their own age, and not only by the teacher.

With regard to the content of texts that pupils read in school, the teachers' search for high quality literature suitable for pupils will possibly continue. The canonical texts from the cultural heritage have seemingly paved the way for pupils' literary production, but the input from popular culture is overpowering. Thus, the study suggests that to learn and teach critical analysis of popular cultural content may be worthwhile. Forthcoming studies in this field would perhaps need to address questions related to the quality of the input. Does the intertextual nature of pupil writing require high quality model texts if one aims at supporting a high level of language proficiency? Do pupils benefit from knowing more about the origin of the literary formulas they are surrounded by? To include more popular mass culture in the school subject's reading list is perhaps not required since such input is overwhelming in society, regardless of what happens in the classroom. The present study demonstrates how pupils may master this input overflow. Contrary to what was suggested in chapter 6, section 6.3.5, pupils are not entirely mesmerised by popular culture. The literary interpretation in chapter 7 demonstrated that they do manage to produce resistance against popular culture content. For instance, they may construct a narrative discourse in which criticism of such content may appear.

This study has affirmed that narrative writing fulfils the aspirational target in current education rhetoric: Substantial content is produced in narratives in EFL. The quality of the content that is communicated also depends on the choice of genre, as the comparison of text tasks in chapters 5 and 6 shows. Narrative writing seems to be supportive of pupils' writing

ability. The fictional genres, and especially the fairy tale genre, seem to invite creativity and encourage the production of substantial content through intertextual practice. The narratives form a discourse where certain aspects of identity are explored. For example, the TALE pupils have idealised the relationship between siblings and stressed the importance of friends. Moreover, they have taken the opportunity to explore the power aspects of the parent-child relationship in their narratives. The oedipal conflicts (Freud, [1917] 1992: 275; 1958) often appear in the narratives' dwelling on children's revolt against parental power. This suggests that pupils do not necessarily turn to the mother tongue to write about topics from the personal sphere. The identity communicative potential of EFL text production is relatively high. That this type of communication does not include traits of local or national identity expressions is an important find made in this study. This find requires independent evidence or support in future studies if it is to be regarded as the current truest assumption about content in Nordic pupil narratives in Instructed EFL. Perhaps the reason for the de-emphasis of the national and the local has several explanations, and the choice of language is one out of many factors in this respect. Pupils' frame of reference constitutes content that is readily expressible in English in such a way that the non-local and non-national interlocutor or reader can understand. When TALE pupils write narratives in English, the expressions of identity seemingly move away from the national and the local, and in the direction of popular culture and the personal sphere. To approach the narratives as literary texts has produced knowledge about the pupil produced content and also demonstrated that such content may be interpreted. The study of text and intertext(s) has substantiated that the narratives form a discourse, a Nordic TALE pupil discourse. The identification of the novel in the pupil narrative has provided information about which aspects of identity that are expressed in the pupil narrative, at least when it is written in the fairy tale genre. This study suggests that the fairy tale genre presumably has inherent features which invite the explorations of identity. Future research on pupil narratives could study different genres of pupil narratives in EFL and possibly identify such features.

Thus, conclusively it is legitimate to state that this study has substantiated that Nordic pupils manage to write substantial content into their language practice text. In the TALE context, the national and local identities are de-emphasised at the expense of what may be called a common glocal identity. The pupils seemingly reflect on matters of genuine interest to themselves and fellow pupil readers in their narrative discourse. Thus the networked text exchange may be beneficial, not only to develop proficiency in English, but also to develop as

human beings. Pupils' textual contributions are strongly influenced by intertexts, rendering it important to pay attention to which selection of texts is at their disposal in the school setting. In EFL, the Nordic pupils in TALE write their own narratives - as demonstrated in this study - within the genre of fairy tales, thus, writing themselves into the greater tissue of texts which explore what it means to be a human being.



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# Appendix

45 narratives in TALE

The 45 pupil narratives are randomly selected as a quarter part of the total of 178 manually coded pupil fairy tales in TALE.

1-3

(To ensure equal representation of texts by female and male writers, three texts by female writers have been omitted. The three texts have been randomly selected, see chapter 6, section 6.4.2. They are mentioned in footnote 228)

4-12

(The nine pupil fairy tales that are used as illustrations to the discussion in chapter 5)

13-15

(The three pupil fairy tales that are used as illustrations to the discussion in chapter 6)

16-30

(The fifteen pupil fairy tales that are interpreted in chapter 7)

31-45

(The remaining pupil narratives that are not referred to in the thesis)

1. "The three sisters"
2. "The accident"
3. "Teddy"
  
4. "The Ring of Light"
5. "The Vampire" (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions)
6. "The big batman"
7. "The red princess"
8. "Battle of humanity"
9. "The Micetower"
10. "Jack the jerk"
11. "The Spaceman"
12. "Nobody"
  
13. Untitled (see chapter 6, section 6.4.3)
14. "The mirrors"
15. "The princess and the 9 silver-coins"
  
16. "The ugly princess"
17. "The superworm"
18. "The karate dog"
19. "Pou's comeback"
20. "The three bugs"
21. "The three bears"
22. "The witch as lifesaver"
23. "The boy and the magic word"
24. "The fairytale about the big fat boy"
25. "The hippo"
26. "Philip the fox"
27. "The biggest battle"
28. "A day in the school"
29. "Hero – monster"
30. "The three trolls"

## Texts 1-3

### 1.

#### The 3 Sisters.

Once upon a time there were 3 sisters named Alyssa, Holly and Rose. They lived together. They cared a lot about each other. The 3 sisters had a magic gift. Alyssa could orb from one place to another, Holly could protect herself if somebody evil touched her and Rose could heal people if somebody was hurt. There were many people who wanted their gifts. One day a man came to their house and tried to kill them because he wanted their gifts. They would of cause not let him get their powers. The man throw a knife after Alyssa and the knife hit her in her stomach, she felled to the ground.

Holly kicked the mans bud, and he disappeared. Rose healed Alyssa because she was hurt. "I Think it was a man from the other world," said Alyssa. The other world was a place were evil people lived and they would like to take control over the good world. "We have to find out how he is working for," said Rose. Patty! Jelled Holly. Patty was their angel who helped them if something or somebody tried to hurt them. Patty came, and they told her what was happened she said: "We have to make a poison and a spell so we can vanquish them." "But how can we find them?" Said Holly. "I will orb to the other world," said Alyssa. "I'll take with you," said Holly. "Then we will make the poison and the spell," said Rose. Alyssa and Holly orbed to the other world. When they got there it was like hell and they had to take other clothes on, Or else they would be discovered. The evil mans name was Devon, so Alyssa and Holly asked a lot of people where they could find Devon. Somebody was so afraid of him that they could not even talk about him. At the end of a long road they fund a big castle. Alyssa and Holly went home again because now they new where they could find him, and they did not have anything to vanquish him with. At home Rose and Patty already had made the poison and the spell to vanquish the evil ones from the other world. Alyssa and Holly came home to get the poison, spell and of course Rose. They orbed again to the other world to vanquish Devon. When they got there they fund the castle and tried to get in there but there was some guards. The sisters just kicked them and got in to the castle. When they got in there they met Devon, he had a magic power to he could blow fire with he's hand. He tried to hit Holly, but her power to protect herself protected her. Then he tried to throw a fireball at Rose, but she just orbed away and she orbed back again behind him a throw the poison at him. The 3 sisters hold each other's hands and said this spell: Prudence, Penelope, Patricia, Melinda, Astrid, Helena, Laura and Grace. Warren witches stand strong beside us. Vanquish this evil from time and space! He blow of to hell. The sisters went home and lived happily ever after.

End of story.

## THE ACCIDENT

*It was a nice summers day, 24 June. Me and my mum, dad and my two brothers decided to go to our camping place this morning. We had drove in one hour, when suddenly a car hit us!!! I woke up and it's doctors all over ME! "I can't breathe" I had tubes all over me. I didn't understand watt's going on! I asked where my mum and dad and my two brothers were, they didn't answer. I don't remember anything. The doctors told me what happened. They said I had to rest, and they tell me all when I woke up again. I slept for hours. And the doctors come running in to my room. They said: " We have a terrible news for you, you're mum and dad and you're two brothers didn't survive the accident" My eyes was full of tears, I was shocked!! They said" Is there any family I can call for you, when I heard that, I just cried more. I didn't have more relatives. I just had mum, dad and my two brothers. They said they had to call the children's home. I was so afraid. They said they have to get foster-parents for me. They come and get me tomorrow. I was still depressed over the car accident!! And tomorrow am gonna have a foster-parents. This goes to fast ☹. I just have to rest... Next day the foster-parents had arrived. They came in to my room, and greet me. They seemed very nice. I got dressed and went to there home. They got a BIG home, they*

showed me my room. And I start to pack out! The days went, and I had it ok. They were very nice to me. But my heart was crying, every night I think about my family, I missed them SO much. I didn't want to call my new "mum" for mother. I had to get use to think that my mother and father and my two brothers are gone forever!!! This is not easy for me! Why is this happening?! I guess I never know...

3.

## *Teddy*

Once upon a time there was a bear called Teddy. He was all alone in the big dark forest. Every day he went to the lake to fish. It was a lovely day. Suddenly he got a fish, a big fish. After a while he got another fish, that was a really big fish. Suddenly the fish started to speak. "If you let me go, you'll have 3 wishes". The bear looked at the fish a minute and put it back in the lake. "Thank you so much", the fish said. "Now you can wish something". The bear thought that he could wish a hundred fishes, or something else... after a while he said to the fish, "I wish that I would have a friend, because it's not fun to be alone here in the wood". On the other side of the lake there stood a bear, "Her name is Violet", the fish said. Teddy wished that he would have a nice and warm place to stay at. "When you come home there will be a nice and warm house there", said the fish. "No you have just one wish left". The bear wished that he would have so much fish that he would never fish again. "When you will come home to your house there will be a pile of fishes". The bear thanked the fish and walked home with Violet. And they lived happily ever after.

### ~The Ring of Light~

It was a clear and shiny summer day and Link was on his way to the market but suddenly he saw smoke rising from the town. He ran as fast as he could. When he reached the town he got a shock; houses were on fire and there were corpses strewn out on the market. But right in front of him he saw an old lady among the ruins. Link walked to the old lady and she told him that it was Andariel's work. She also told Link to look in the monastery for a secret ring called the Ring of Light which was the only thing that could destroy the evil witch Andariel. Link ran to the monastery which lay a bit outside the town. The monastery was a dark and scary place when all the monks were gone. Finally after a few hours searching he reached a great room with a table-like thing in the middle and with the sun shining upon it through a hole in the ceiling. Link walked towards the so-called "table" and on it there lay a ring which was the Ring of Light. He reached out for it and when he took it he was blinded by a big light. Then he quickly ran out of the monastery and he walked to the old lady and she told him to look for Andariel in Lots Woods. Link went home to his house in the forest to pack his backpack. When it was done he left. When he came out of the forest he came to a BIG swamp. The water was so deep that he couldn't pass over. But then he saw a Phoenix in a nearby tree. He ran towards the Phoenix who told him that it could

transport him over the swamp, but only if Link gave the Phoenix some of Link's food. Link gave the Phoenix some food and it flew him over. After the swamp he came to a great mountain but the Phoenix told him that it could transport him over but only if Link gave the Phoenix some of his food. Link gave the Phoenix some food and it transported him over the high mountain. Finally he reached the Lost Woods and with the help from the Ring of Light and the Phoenix he came to the cave which was Anmdariel's cave. Link stepped slowly inside the cave. After a hour searching he reached a great hall but there was nothing.....but then he lighted the entire hall up with the ring and THERE right in front of him was the evil witch Andariel. But Link pointed the ring towards Andariel and a massive light-beam fired towards Andariel and when it was gone Andariel was also gone. Link ran quickly out of the cave and he got a shock because the entire land's people had come to thank him for defeating Andariel and as a reward he was allowed to keep the Ring of Light and Link, the People and Link's new friend the Phoenix lived happily ever after.

5.

1<sup>st</sup> edition

**The vampi@€™**

**Once upon a time there was a boy he was called Zidane.  
He lived in a cave with a dragon called Domovio, he was the size  
of a truck.  
Zidane was a Genenom, a Genenom is a acrobats with great  
fight skill, Zidan's weapons were two daggers called Ocil's.  
But in a far away country is there a great vampire called Kuja.**

**He was once a Genenom but in a fight he got bite of a vampire and slowly transform into a vampire and now he is boss of the vampires.**

**He control a Country called Gaia, it was the country of the vampires.**

**One day Zidane was down whit the river and taking a nap, suddenly he herd a sound, it sound like a greet explosion, little bit later he saw smoke raise from the woods.**

**Zidane hurry in the woods and find the place the stand a little man whit a funny looking hat it was a wizard hat, the most funny thing was that he was totally black, he told that his name was Vivi and he was a wizard whit greet power in magic, he asked if he could follow me and.**

**On the way back Vivi and Zidane got friends, and Vivi told that he has see the vampire boss Kuja, and that he would attack this world whit his army of vampires and that Zidane hat to kill him.**

**Zidane run fast home and told Domovio what he now and that he hat to kill Kuja before he kill them.**

**After that Zidane and Vivi toke of to Gaia to kill Kuja but it was not easy to do there was monsters and a lot vampires in the country but Zidane and Vivi make it to Kujas palace in the top of a tower was Kuja looking what was going on and he was ready to fight.**

**Some minutes later come Zidane and Vivi up and the fight began, it was a hard fight but an hour or two was the fight over and Zidane and Vivi was the winders.**

**When Zidane and Vivi come back they got one ton Gold for sawing the world.**

**And they lived happily ever after.....**

**The end**

2nd edition

**The vamp®€™**

**Once upon a time there was a boy he was called Zidane. He lived in a cave with a dragon called Domovio, he was the size of a truck.**

**Zidane was a Genenom, a Genenom is a acrobats with greet fight skill, Zidanes weapon was two daggers called Ocil's. But in a fare away country is deer a greet vampire called Kuja. He was once a Genenom but in a fight he got bite of a vampire and slowly transform into a vampire and now he is boss of the vampires.**

**He control a Country called Gaia, it was the country of the vampires.**

**One day Zidane was down whit the river and taking a nap, suddenly he herd a sound, it sound like a greet explosion, little bit later he saw smoke raise from the woods.**

**Zidane hurry in the woods and find the place the stand a little man whit a funny looking hat it was a wizard hat, the most funny thing was that he was totally black, he told that his name was Vivi and he was a wizard whit great power in magic, he asked if he could follow me and help me whit beat kuja, whit his magic powers in fire, wind, water and earth.**

**On the way back Vivi and Zidane got friends, and Vivi told that he has see the vampire boss Kuja, and that he would attack this world whit his army of vampires and that Zidane hat to kill him.**

**Zidane run fast home and told Domovio what he now and that he hat to kill Kuja before he kill them.**

**After that Zidane and Vivi toke of to Gaia to kill Kuja but it was not easy to do there was monsters and a lot vampires in the country but Zidane and Vivi make it to Kujas palace in the top of a tower was Kuja looking what was going on and he was ready to fight.**

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**When Zidane and Vivi come back they got one ton Gold for sawing the world.**

**And they lived happily ever after...**

**The end**

6.

## ***The big batman***

*Once upon a time Batman was thin and beautiful. One day he became fat , because of his worst enemy Puuha-Pete. Puuha-Pete send batman every day food that he could not resist. Batman ate and ate... He became so fat that he couldnt walk or save the world from Puuha-Pete! Meanwhile Puuha-Pete was taking over the world, Nukkumatti feel that he have to do something... So he gaved Batman some diet drink. It didn't help so mutch. So Nukkumatti decided to lock him in to a closett and leaved him in there in 3 months. But nukkumatti forget him there for 3 years!!! When nukkumatti get Batman out from the closett he saw something strange... Batman was himself again! Beautifull and thin! Batman jumpped out from the closett and saved the world from Puuha-Pete. Then the whole world lived happy in ever after...*

7.

The red princess

Once upon a time there was a princess. She lived in a big,big city. She lived with her two friends in a castle. She had almost no money left because she was addicted to slot machines. She could play and

play all day long. she was called the Red Princess because her face turned red and her fingers started to shiver if she didn't play on the machine for ten minutes. one day her friends decided to help her. At first they tried to hide her money. The red Princess got very angry and robbed a bank. The second day they tried to handcuff her. But it did not stop the Red Princess. She started to use her nose on the machine instead. The two friends did not know what to do. Suddenly one of them got an idea. They called information 1890 and asked for a prince. He agreed to a meeting the very same night. When the red princess saw the prince she turned all red again, but not because of the slot machines. They fell in love. She stopped playing the slot machines, and they lived happily ever after....

8.

## Battle of humanity

---

Once upon a time there were three mighty kings who ruled the three biggest human countries the world. Korisican, Willan and Kenobis.

But unknown to the kings there was an evil force who builds a great army in the deep land of Isendoor. A army of orks, trolls, and monsters.

In the alfland of Wisholf the alfs sensed a disturbance in the ground.

The alfs are with one with the trees, earth and all of nature so it didn't take them long to understand something was wrong.

Day after day went and the forest was very quiet.

And one day the army stormed Wisholf

The army had already destroyed three villages.

Land of the dwarfs (small but powerful warriors, and keepers of the mines), land of the guardians (half men half horse who uses their hole lives to guard their city, families, or anything else) and the land of the swamp- creatures (disgusting but peaceful creatures)

The alfs put up a good fight with their skills with bow and magic sense.

But the evil army was too many and too strong.

The leader of the alfs told a young alf soldier to ride into Korisican and warn the humans of this great threat and to make them build a last alliance between alf and men to destroy this force of evil forever.

When the alf had reached Korisican he was met by great concern of the king Barsamir.

After the king had heard about it he said

Send a letter to Willan and Kenobis...

No... The alf said. It is gonna take too long before the messenger reach Willan and Kenobis...

The army is already moving in top speed into Korisican.

We got to evacuate the Hole City as soon as possible.

No .said the king I have an army.

So did we. Said the alf.

The king understand.

Send order to evacuate the city.

I want every woman, child and man out this city and the men must take their weapons with them.

About three hours later everybody was on the way to Willan.

It was hard and many people died of hunger.

When they reached Willan Barsamir requested to see the king Ragador.

After Barsamir had specked with Ragador they got a message that the army had destroyed Korisican and was on the way to Willan.

Luckily the king was on a visit to Willan and all of Korisican and Willan was on the way to Kenobis.

The three king ride side by side into Kenobis.

They made a plan to defend and strike.

We got the promise to use the mind of the Dwarfs.

The night came and they prepared the army to defend themselves

The other rides through the mines to see what allies they could gather .

Ill be back before sunrise.

We will be here waiting for you.

After a while they heard a rumbling sound.

Then they see them hordes of them.  
At least ten thousand of them.  
Load bauss! Launch !!!!  
The first wave of darts flew true the sky and hit the orks.  
And the war began.  
The orks launched waves of darts at the fortress.  
And they had latter's to.  
They tried to run up the wall.  
Ragador killed many orks, but then the cavestrolles came.  
They hammered on the walls trying to beat it down.  
Fire!!!! Said Wirsiman kill them all.  
The humans launched a wave of fire through the air and they all hit the troll.  
It screamed in pain and it felled on the ground.  
Then came the monsters.  
Wen they came everybody took a steep back.  
Orks, humans and even the trolls took a steep back.  
Attack said Ragador and everybody runed out on the flatground and then all hope was out came Barsamir with his allies and they were many.  
They came riding down from the hills and wen it looked like they were going to make it came Exitor the leader of the evil army and he walked right against the three kings they took there swords and they began to fight.  
And right then when it looked worst Barsamir stabled Exitor and all of evil army disappeared. The three kings went home to there countries to build them up and they all lived happily ever after.

9.

~The Micetower~™

Once upon a time there was a Bishop in Germany, he was a BAD and EVIL mouse. On the time he was Bishop there was a BIG famine. The Bishop had enough food and things to drink because he was a RICH mouse, all the POOR mice didn't had any food or any thing. One day some poor mice came to the Bishop and begged him of food, but the Bishop didn't give them any food, when he didn't want to hear them any more he put them into a barn and set fire to it and he laughed and said " Listen to the shrieking from the mice in the barn isn't it NICE to hear." In the evening when the Bishop set in his living room and ate, came a BIG troop of POOR mice and stormed the Castle and ate almost all his food and drink all his vine. The next day the Bishop got 40

cats to guard his Castle but that didn't stop the BIG troop of POOR mice.

And it didn't help that he moved out to another big Castle the troop of mice just followed him. He got some of his troops to build a wary tall and big tower in the middle of a lake he didn't believed that the troop of mice would try to get him here, but he was wrong, in a few hours the troop came and swim to the tower and crawled into the windows and the bishop ran to the roof of the tower, but the mice followed him and they eat him up.

10.

#### Jack the jerk

Once upon a time there was a jerk called jack and he lived in the city of fool and he was not interesting at all. He did no interesting thing. His only work was to be a jerk and everyone who knew him called him a jerk except an old fool who told him that he had courage because he did not know Fear. Ones he went to a dark castle he wanted to learn fear and the old man had told that the right Place was there. Inside he met goblins and orks and trolls but Jack was a jerk so hi did not fear. The monsters could not understand. They thought he had a reason to not fear them so they thought he was a wizard or something and ran away. After passing tons of orks and goblins he finally came to the throne room where the dark lord himself was sitting. He saw jack took him and tied him to the castle gate. Now jack thought that he had met fear and the only thing he could think of was that he was lucky that the dark lord didn't turn him into a rubber duck. And of this story you can learn that you should not write stories that doesn't make sense and that only stupid people forces students to make bad stories like this.

11.

### The Spaceman

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Otto. His best friend was a spaceman. Always when Otto was in trouble, the space man camed and saved him. One day when Otto was playing with his friends, Lucas and Vicky, they saw a light on the sky. It was an alien!

Lucas, Vicky and Otto screamed. The alien came down to them.

- O no! said Otto. I must call my friend, the spaceman. Now the alien picked up a gun. Otto picked up his mobile phone and called the spaceman. The spaceman came and saved the children from the alien. When the children were saved he hit the alien and the alien flew away and never came back.

-

12.

## Nobody

Once upon a time there was a girl, without a name. Everybody called her nobody because she didn't talk, so after a time they didn't care about her.

The girl was really sad because when she was a little girl she loved to sing, where ever she was, what ever she did she sang. Everybody said that she was a really good singer, so every body knew her. But one day she couldn't sing, when she tried there came no sound. The little girl became so sad that she stopped talking.

One day Nobody was walking around the town where she lived thinking why she moved to this awful town.

She had moved to this town because in the town where she lived when she was a little girl everybody wanted her to sing but she couldn't so she moved away to hide. Now ten years later she thought that no one would remember her if she would move back there.

One week later she walked in to the town from where she left ten years ago. When she walked through the town she saw a boy who looked familiar. When she was packing up her things somebody knocked on the door. She wondered who it could be when she opened the door. Behind the door stood all her friends (who now are grown up) and they shouted: welcome back Kim!

They remember her! Kim where so glad that she started to cry. What is wrong? Asked her friends?

can't sing, she said.

That doesn't matter, we still like you! They said, and we bet that you can sing if you want.

The rest of the evening was just like magic to Kim cause she and her friends find her singing voice and satt and sang all night to the morning light

13.

Untitled (see chapter 6, section 6.4.3)

Once upon a time a little prince he played in the garden and met a goblin. The goblin accede hem to du hem a favour he shout klid a dragon for hem der vhas 10,000 guldpiece behent the dragon. The goblin gave the prince a magic sword and a magic shield. The sword gave the prince double powers. The magic powers he use to fight a dragon and a giant. The prince vin the fight and he get the 10,000 guld piece and he lived happily to his days end.

14.

#### The Mirrors

Once upon a time there lived a queen in a beautiful castle. She had heard that a little poor had talked about a treasury in a cave guarded by a monster and a evil spell. The queen wanted the treasury so badly that she sent many soldiers to get the treasury, but they didn't came back. Then she those to go of herself. When she came many monsters were waiting for her. One of her soldiers ran over to one of the monsters, and then she became a monster. The queen became scared and mad. Suddenly they heard drums and trumpets play a march. The monsters went into the cave except one of the monsters. She asked the soldiers to attack the monster, but they wouldn't then she went of her own. She didn't walked into the cave or over to the monster, but she walked around the giant mountain. She saw that the cave was a tunnel. She was very suprised. She saw a huge castle in front of her. Bigger than her own. She went up to the castle and knocked on the gate. Another kind of monster opened the door. It was a very little one. She was just asking then the little monster pointed on a bigger door, than that door she just went trough. She went to the door and opened it. First when she had opened it she saw some words on the door. There said:

You'll know what to find in here  
Your worst enemy or your best friend.  
Use yourself.

Then she went inside. She didn't saw anything. There was dark in this room. Suddenly the light was lighted. She was in a mirror-hall. The mirrors covered the wall. The first mirror you'll see yourself as a monster in the next a very very thin me. She went from mirror to mirror, and she guessed who was her friend and who was her enemy. At last she came to the last mirror. She fell over a stone and into the mirror. The mirror fell with the queen and now

she was in a tunnel. In the end of the tunnel there was a very fine room. It looked like one of the rooms in her castle. A wizard sat on the throne. He saw her and then he attacked her. Then she thought at the door she went through: use yourself. Then she took one of the queens sticks and she killed the wizard. The monsters beside her became humans. She realized that the treasury was herself and she went down the tunnel, and down the mirror-hall. Then she came to the little monster outside. Now it was a little boy. Then she went back through the tunnel over to her soldiers. She fell over something on her way and it was a very big treasury. She went over to her soldiers and they got her back to her kingdom. She gave the treasury to the little poor boy, and that is the story about the queen who learned herself to know, The magic mirror-hall and the littel poor boy as now wasent poor but rich now.

The end

15.

### THE PRINCESS AND THE 9 SILVER-COINS.

*Once upon a time there was a princess. She lived at a palace with her mother and father. The princess had a dwarf as friend. One day the princess went to pick blackberries in the forest, she went further and further in to the forest. She lost her way and she called her mother and father. Then there came a wicked witch and conjured the princess to a stone. After some time the princess's mother and father got afraid and sent the dwarf in the forest to find her. The dwarf came to the place where the princess was conjured to a stone . He found a fine little stone with a crown on. He picked up the stone, and went home. When the princess's mother and father saw the little stone they cried. The dwarf fetched a magic book. He read and read and at last he found something " you have to find 9 silver-coins, place them round the stone and then she should return princess again." The princess's mother and father sent their servants out for searching as they arrived back home they placed the silver-coins round the little stone and the dwarf said some magic words and the stone became a princess again...*

**THE END**

## The ugly princess

Once upon a time there was a beautiful little princess who lived in a beautiful castle with her father.

One day the beautiful princess was playing in the wood and an ugly witch came and made a cursed spell on the beautiful princess. Suddenly the princess came out really ugly: She was so ugly that all the animals the princess played with before ran away...

The witch had before this spell been so jealous at the princess because of her beauty.

Now the witch was so happy, because she wasn't the most ugly person in the world anymore.

Before the witch ran away, she was just able to shout that if the princess ever should be beautiful again a handsome prince should come and kiss her....

Now the poor princess looked in the mirror she had in her pocket. And cried, because she faced the most ugly princess she had ever seen in her whole life....

That day and the rest of the year the princess never came home, because her father should not see her like this.

The poor ugly princess went out searching for a handsome prince, who had so much compassion with her and dared to kiss her.

The poor princess went to many castles but there was no one who would kiss her because she was so ugly.

But one day the princess came to a castle, where there lived a handsome prince.

She knocked on the door and waited a while and a very handsome prince came out. The prince asked what a poor girl like her was doing at his castle and the princess said that she just wanted a kiss from the prince so she could get beautiful again. The prince didn't understand why but he was so confused that he kissed the princess. There was a big bang and suddenly a beautiful princess stood in front of the prince.

The prince looked astonished at this beautiful princess and asked for an explanation. She told all about the witch and the cursed spell.

The prince invited the princess to stay for dinner at the castle – and they talked and talked and talked the whole night.

A year later everybody in the whole country were invited to a royal wedding at the castle.

And the royal couple lived happily after.

17.

## THE SUPERWORM

Once upon a time there was a worm that lived in an apple. The worm lived the whole summer in the apple until it ruten. This worm was not a normal worm, he was a SUPERWORM! The worm had a name, Jörgen Mask. Nobody knew that he was a SUPERWORM. Jörgen had a problem, he must find a new home. He flied up in the sky looking for a new home. Suddenly Jörgen saw a bird that was flying right in to him. Jörgen flied around and the bird flied after him. They flied very long the cloud got a new form. In the clouds was written SUPERWORM IS THE BEST! When the bird was gone he looked for a home. He found a perfect place! He moved in and lived happy ever after

18.



Once upon a time there was a dog. He lived in a house in the city. He worked as a pilot in the British Airways. He was on a trip to Tokyo in Japan and one of the hostesses had an uncle there that trained karate. He had the eight black belt. The dog got curious and visited the uncle in his house.

They said hello and the dog asked him to train him so he could learn to defend himself.

Then the uncle said. Wash the floor for me and then you can paint the house for me. And so he did. After he did that the uncle said. Now, now I can learn you the secret of karate. The uncle walked in to the house with the dog after him. They went in a secret passage in the hall. There it was a very big training platform with weapons hanging all around it. This is a big place you have here. Said the dog. They trained for many days. And he stayed there a couple of days and then he went home to England. He did not tell anyone about his trip to Tokyo so his friends did not know that he had studied karate. After some days he flew to Tokyo again to visit the uncle. This time he learned even more of him. He was with the uncle just one day then he went back to England. His friends arranged a party at a clubhouse in the city. On their way home they met a gangster gang. The leader of the gang said: give us your money and we will not hurt you. The dog answered: that we will not do for such pathetic creatures as you. Then the whole gang ran towards them. The dog did nothing before they were just an arm length away. Then he exploded with energy and threw all of the gang back. He picked up a stick of wood almost one and a half meter long the leader ran against him again. The dog punched him in his stomach with the stick he had and the leader of the gang fell down on the ground then the dog said: do you want some more, come and get it! The gang helped the leader up and they ran away. Are you all alright. The dog asked his friends. Yes. They all answered. What about you, are you alright. Thanks for saving us but, what was that? Yes I am alright. And it was karate you just saw, learned it in Japan. He answered. And then they all went home and lived happily ever after.

# Pou's comeback

Once upon a time it was a show called the teletubbies on TV. It was 4 of the teletubbies, but one of them got kicked out of the show because she had ugly clothes. The show was in Las Vegas but Pou was in Mexico. So she had to walk... so she walked and walked. She walked for years. After 100.000.000.000.000.000.000.000.000 years she had come to Las Vegas. Now she had to get a job. She hadn't eat at all on the time she walked so she was pretty hungry. Tingky Vinky was another of the teletubbies so he gave Pou a job on burger king with he owned. But the evil Lala had her plan to take over da world. So she didn't thought that if Pou would get the job her plan would be destroyed! So she gave Tingky Vinky 16,12\$ if he would not give Pou the job. So now Pou was whiteout a job... she thought that she can sell her self on the street. Many men come to her for a little bit of the thing she sold. She took only 2\$ for one night. After 100.000.000.000.000 ears she had enough money to new clothes. So now she can go to the show. She got in to the show and they started play in new programs. Butt... one minute after they started play in the show a very, very big

bomb exploded. Every living thing on the planet earth died and the planet went to very, Very small pieces.

## THE END

20.

The three bugs

Once upon a time. Three bugs lived under a tree on a field. They were distant related.

The oldest were called Carl Bille, the next Peter Spider and the youngest was Myg. They were three happy bugs living under a tree on a field.

Not far away, lived a family. The mother Jenn, the father Tim and their son, Simon. Simon hated bugs. He wasn't scared of them, he just thought they were ugly.

One day, Simon walked in to an anti – bug shop and bought a big bottle of very poisoned bug spray.

He was obsessed with killing the little devils. Then he went to the field where the three bugs lived.

Carl was outside enjoying the sun, and suddenly a very big cloud of very poisoned poison killed him. Simon went home, his hunger for kill was satisfied for now.

When Peter saw what had happened, he told Myg and they agreed to revenge their "brother".

Suddenly it knocked on the door. Myg went to open it, and outside in the dark was a mole.

- Hello friends.
- H-hello. Said the Myg surprised
- I have come to help you. Your "brother" is dead, right?
- Yes, who are you? The Myg asked
- I'm the good fairy.
- I think you look more like a mole
- Well, I am a fairy, now let me help you revenge your "brother"
- All right, come in.

And they sad a little while and they agreed to do horrible things to Simon.

The next day they were going to revenge Carl, and they began the long walk to Simons house. Thirty meters.

Meanwhile, Simon was at home, he had killed three ants, one spider and a butterfly. He was getting hungry again. He was getting mad, crazy, insane.

After an hours walk, the two bugs and the mole had come to Simons home. Suddenly Simon came out of the door, luckily he hadn't got his spray. He

screamed and ran inside to get it. When he came back, mole was prepared, he through a spell on Simon and he began to float up in the air, suddenly he flew like a rocket far away. Now Peter and Myg could go home and live happily ever after, and they did.

You want to now what happened to Simon? He ended up in the most bug full place in Afrika. There he will live to the end of his days in fear of the smallest fly.

The end

21.

The three bears

Once upon time was three bears live in forest. The three bears was hero. The bad person was the dragon. The Good person was the birds. The dragon lived in a little house in the forest. The birds live in tall tree. The bars is very good friends white the birds. The birds and the bears is very good friends white the birds. The birds and the bears are waking in the forest then the dragon is running after them. Birds and bears are running to the tall tree some the birds are showing them. They lived happily ever after.

The End

22.

The witch as lifesaver.

Once upon a time there was a witch. She lived in a cottage in a cave. The witch was not a very normal witch. Most witches are evil, have warts and a long pointed nose. But this witch was sweet, helpful, no warts and no pointed nose. No, this witch was actually good. She had saved many animals and actually also people. Well this story is strange to say about the witch saving a person. And the story is called:`` The witch as lifesaver.

It was a lovely Saturday morning, the sun was shining and the birds was singing. Lise and Jonas were out for a walk. Lise and Jonas were brother and sister and went often out for a walk together. They went down to the beach, nearly day they walked this trip. Today it was very special day, it was Friday the 13 of February. Jonas was going close to the waters edge. Suddenly something popped up from the water. Jonas could not see watt it was, but he could see it as it came closer. Suddenly it was next to Jonas and it took Jonas down in the water. Lise shouted for help. And suddenly the witch showed up. Lise told the witch that the animal, wit showed to be a 7 armed cuttlefish, had taken Jonas down to the water. The witch flew out in the water on her flying broom and said a magic jingle:`` Cuttlefish, cuttlefish, come up from the water, anyway you will catch it for me. And the cuttlefish came up from the water. The witch hid the cuttlefish 3 times in the head with the broom and the cuttlefish died. Lise

and Jonas thanked the witch and went home. From this day Lise and Jonas became great friends with the witch. And Jonas learned that that you never shall go down to the waters edge. And then the story is over.

23.

The boy and the magic word

Once upon a time there was a boy, he's name was Frederic.  
He lived in a forest with he's sister Jessica.  
The boy was a poor boy.  
There was an evil witch who hate kids.  
The evil witch was causing trouble by killing little children.  
The boy needed help to be fighting the witch, so he and Jessica not should be afraid for the witch the rest of there lives.  
Suddenly there appeared a bear who told I'm the talking bear that can help you  
To be fighting the witch.  
The boy and the talking bear ask in 30 minutes.  
The talking bear gave the boy something to help him.  
It was a magic word that could give the boy magic power.  
Next day took the boy the first task.  
The first task was to come into the witch castle.  
This was difficult because here was a moat, but with help of the magic power  
He jumped over the moat and he succeeded.  
The second task was to find her on the big castle.  
This was even more difficult because the castle was built as a labyrinth,  
But with the help of the magic power he cut look throw the walls and he succeeded.  
The third and final task was to pacify the witch.  
This was the most difficult because she was a very clever witch,  
But with help of he's magic power he made her to a good witch and he succeeded.  
So the boy wan the happiness and he and he's sister should not be afraid of the witch anymore, and he and Jessica lived happily ever after.

The end

24.

### *The fairytale about the big fat boy*

Once upon a time there was a happy farmer family in a country far away. They lived like a "fairytale" family, they where poor but still happy, and they lived a good life. They hade three sons and one day something terrible happened. The youngest boy hade been working in a mill and when the work was finished he got he's reward. It was money and little boy was so happy because now he could by something. He went home and told he's parents. The next morning he went to

the town. In the town he did buy a cookie. The cookie was so sweet so he wanted more of them. He started working in the mill everyday and once every week he went to the town to buy cookies. He became bigger and bigger for every cookie he ate, and one day he became so fat that he didn't fit in the house. The parents told him to go out in the forest and that he won't come back before he was normal again, the boy did as his parents told him to do and no one has ever seen him since that day.

### *The end*

25.

#### **The hippo**

Once upon a time there was a hippo that wanted to marry a hippo girl so he went to a girl and said "möööööööööööh" and the girl said "im so not interested" so he said the same thing to every girl in the river but nobody wanted to marry him. Then when he sadly swam in his private pond he heard some bullets and ran to the river. He saw hippos running in every direction and behind them were some hunters so the hippo stood in their way and burped. He burped so hard the hunters flew to China. Now the hippo is surrounded by girl hippos that want to marry him so he married the fattest hippo and they lived happily ever after.

26.

#### *Philip the fox*

Once upon a time there was a fox. The fox lived in the forest with many other animals. They were always happy and played with each other. It was a nice life for the fox. But one day everything was different. Nobody wanted to talk or play with the fox whose name was "Philip the fox". Philip asked everyone if they would like to play with him. He asked the wolf, the mouse, the squirrel, the bear and the elk, but they didn't even talk to him and Philip got very sad. Philip the fox didn't know what he had done wrong. It was like this for many days. The other animals almost hated him. One day when Philip was at home, a blue letter fell down in the postbox. He got curious and read the letter. It said "*CUT OFF YOUR TAIL*". The fox didn't understand, why would he do that? But he had no other choice if he wanted his friends back. So Philip fetched the scissors and

cut of the tale. Now I have to get my friend back, he thought. He walked out in the forest with his tale in his paw. The fox walked slowly to the others and asked why they sad that he had to cut of the tale? The bear answered that it was to nice and everyone else also wanted a tale like that. Suddenly it hurt so much in his back that he shouted as hard as he could. Everyone stared at him. What? A new tale grew out on him. Everyone run to him and looked at his new tale. They were impressed. "Wow", the mouse said. You are really a magicfox! Now everyone wanted to play with him. And Philip the fox and all the other animals in the forest lived happy the rest of their lifes!

27.

### 1. The biggest battle

Once upon a time there was three mighty kings who ruled the three biggest human countries in the world.

Korisican, Villan and Keobis. But unknown to the kings there was an fourth big country witch, was ruled by an evil creature, who all kinds of living life was afraid.

The evil creature has build an big army with orks, goblins and monsters.

The army was at least 10 000.

In this country noting good could ever live, it's was only swamps, rocks and pure evil.

One day the alfs came running into the Kings country. The Alfs was good friends with humans, so they got well received by the kings.

The alfs king sad to the three kings: they come from everywhere, we properly killed 500 in an army on 3000 but we send an scout to aisendoor.

"what!!! Sad the three kings at the same time, in the deep land of noting " yes it's looked like something's going on up there so we send him up to look, the evil creature is planing to do something's big.

He has build an army on at least 10 000 sad the scout and the gonna attack hard, I think they gonna strike here first.

O shit we Goth to gather all our allies.

Suddenly one man come in the door and sad my lords the dwarfs are here, the dwarfs king come in to speak with they other kings and he sad: they took us of guard if we not have ran away I think they killed us all.

Ok we got have a secret meeting sad one of the kings but first we got to call on the three big wizards I think they would help up in this battle.

After two hours at the meeting they agree, Barsamir and Ragador from humanity, grumpy and Gloin from dwarfs and Loganas and Arawaks from alfs is gonna get out to look fore the big army, hey sad grumpy can't we call us the six an that was all agree in so there names are the six. Mean vile the kings gather all the people in villan,kenobis and Korisican in a fortress in Korisican because the kings thought that the army would strike in Kenobis first.

Just before the six is going to get out to look for the army the three big wizards came in the door, two of them are going to help the people to get to the fortress and the last one is going with the six.

After riding like 50 miles they saw an big black spot on the flatground a couple of miles ahead them it's was the big army to the evil creature an it came fast agent Kenobis.

The six riding back to warn the kings.  
When they have arrived in the castle but now they were only five and that the kings reacting on so they ask: where is Ragadon,  
He's going to ride to droids (an big village under ground who people has an small army on 500) to ask for help.  
We have seen the army, it's was so big and it's marching against the fortress in Koriscan there the people are.  
But our allies are here says the kings, now Gloin stands up and says: that just help  
A small bit, because they have an army on 10 000 and we have an army 4 000.  
Right now that doesn't matter.  
We have to prepare to battle, the big battle.  
Our little army have to go to the fortress there we have gather all the people in our countries, and defend them.  
When they came from to the fortress, they got an message from one of the soldiers who all ready have came from: my lords, the army has stormed Kenobis and coming this way.  
Ok, all soldiers go in fight position!! Properly some of you will die and many of you will get injure in this battle. But one thing I now, we will win and that's for shore.  
My lord we can see the army, ok don't loose your courage!  
So it's begin. (an couple of hours out in the battle) I think they soon storm the fortress.  
Hey look there, there is Ragadon and the help is with him. Finely only the evil creature was left and he and Ragadon is facing.  
The evil creature stabs Ragadon so he fall down.  
The evil creature runs against Ragadon,  
and the swords pointing at his head.  
Ragadon get down and stabs the evil creature in his chest. Two seconds after the evil creature disappear and the same does the bodices to his army.  
A couple of months later all evil ware gone from the fourth big country.  
Now there grow grass, trees, bushes and flowers there.  
Sense the alfs and the dwarfs country was destroyed by the army, build the dwarf and the dwarf an country together.  
So all live happily ever after.

28.

## **A day in the school!**

Once upon a time there was a boy in the school. Then a horrible old lady. The boy had a lesson and then the old lady come and disturbed him so he called "Mannerheiminlapsensuojeluliitto". The next day they come and take the horrible old lady and then they shot her up in the sky and blow up her. But then it come a magic man and save her and then she go to the school and she says sorry. Lady was

29.

Hero - monster

Once upon a time there was a hero... His called "Monster"

And his worst enemy the monster is called "hero" "!!!!!!

The hero "monster" lived in the east end of the forest and

The monster "hero" lived en the west end of the forest...

It was Monday morning and "monster" was in Rema 1000 for to buy Cornflakes met he

"hero" with the cash Counter then "monster" find his MP5 and start to shout after "hero" then find "hero" his magic pencil and painted hole Rema 1000....

After they fought they be come god friends and they burn down Rema 1000.

On the way home they find out of they shut be gay... and they lived happy ever after.....

30.

The three trolls

Once upon a time there were three, very big and ugly trolls! The trolls were left from there

family and they were all alone in the scary forest! Their task was to find the witch, because

she knows were the parents of the trolls was, but the three trolls was not so nice as you think

they are! They didn't like their parents because they were mean with the trolls, and they want

to kill them! But they have to find the witch first! She lived in the scary forest! They start

their task, and till the end they have find the house, the house was big and little scary. They

knock on the door, and there is no answer, they knock on the door for the second time and

there is still no answer. They knock on the door for the third time and finally the witch open

the door, and they ask were their parents are, and she answer: they live in a cottage, deep done

in the forest! They say they have to begin the trip. And of they go. After four hours with

Woking they finally see the house! They knock on the cottage, and some big trolls open the

big door! And they ask, "who are you"? They answer "we are your children, when we were

baby trolls, you was not so nice to us! And we are for revenge! And it was then the fights

start! And a while after that their parents was dead!!! And they have got their revenge! They

wanted to find the witch, and give her something, because she help the trolls to find their

parents! They walked to her house, and they knock on the door, and she opens the door, and

they go " thank you for helping us, and they gave her some magic boots! And they began the

travel home! And finally they got their revenge..

And they live as trolls happy ever after!!!!!!!

FINISH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!..

Texts 31-45

31.

No title

Once upon a time there was a poor little girl. She lived in a big cartbox on the street. She had a mom, a dad and a little brother. They lived in the same cartbox so there was not much space left. They only had two carpets so they had a halfpart each of them.

One day when the little girl went out for a walk she heard something from a little spooky street. Three men planned to throw a big bomb from a plane while it was flying over the city. The little girl wanted to start screaming but if she did that they would take her as a hostage, and that would not be the best that could happen. They were still talking and she figured out that one of them was the pilot who were going to drop the bomb. He had a ugly pilot helmet and some round glasses so she were pretty sure that it was him. They said goodbye and they walked away.

The little girl went home and told her dad what happened. He did not belive in her. Then she said it to her mom. She just said "you kids have a nice fantasy" and then she was gone. Then she tryed to tell it to her little brother but he did not belive in her to. No matter what she said they would not belive in her so she just forgot all about it.

Three days later she went for a walk. She looked down the little spooky street and the three men were there. What a surprice. She found a container where she could hide. They said that Friday was the best day to bomb the city because there were many peoples on the streets that day. They said bye and walked away again. The little girl noticed that a little piece of papir "jumped" out from one of the guys bag. She waited until all of them were completely gone and then she took the little piece of papir. "Friday. 10:30 am at Sulli´s privat air field". She had to go there.

She could not destroy the terrorists plan without backup or a weapon. She knew that no one would believe in her so she started begging gor money so she could buy a weapon.

Friday 07:38 am she went into "Al´s Guns" to buy a nice weapon. The cheapest gun was a Desert Eagle so she buyed it. She knew where Sulli´s air field were but how could she get out there? She looked at the moneys there were left from the Desert Eagle. Maybe she had enough to take a bus. She jumped up on a bus and asked for a 3 zone ticket. She got enough money. She walked down in the back of the bus. She saw three little elves. She told them the story and finaly

someone believed in the little girl. They had magical powers and they promised her to help with the terrorists. The bus stopped and they jumped out of it.

Finally they were standing outside Sulli's air field. The elves made themselves and the little girl invisible and then they could go into the air field. They saw the three terrorists and the little girl told them that they were the spooky guys.

The clock were 10:23 when they went into the plane. They hid under the seats. They were still invisible but if one of the terrorists touched them they were finished. After a few minutes the plane took off and went up in the blue sky. The elves decided to start the mission and they made one of the terrorists stone when he was alone in another part of the plane than the other terrorists. Now they only got two enemies left. They jumped into the cockpit and made the pilot go down to the ground again by threatening him. They came down and some people looked at the plane. They saw that the plane turned before it even came up to the sky so they just had to check if everything was all right. The little girl told the story to the people and they called the journalists.

The little poor girl and the three elves got on every frontpage all over the world. And from this day the little girl and her poor family did not have to sleep on the street. And they lived happily ever after

32.

### The Charmed Ones

Once upon a time there were three young sisters, named Prudence (Prue), Phoebe and Piper. The sisters were good witches. Very good, actually. They killed evil demons, ghosts and warlocks. The witches were called "The Charmed Ones". Every demon from "The Underworld" wanted to steal the witches powers, because it were great powers. Prue had the power to move things with her mind. At first she used her eyes, but as her power grew she could use her hands to channel the power. As her power grew, she received a new power – she could astral project herself. With this power she was able to move her astral body to another place. Piper had the power to freeze the time. As her power grew, she could specifically freeze one person, even a part of it, or freeze a single object instead of the whole room. As her power grew, she could blow things up. At the beginning she was afraid of her new power and could not control it, and she blew everything up instead of freezing it. Phoebe had the power to see the past, present and future. As her premonition power grew she received a new power – Levitation. With this active power she could now levitate for a couple of seconds. Combined with her kick-boxing experience she was a very powerful threat to all evils being. At first she could only get up in the air, but as she got control over her power she was even able to fly some short distances. Together they had "The Power Of Three". "The Power Of Three" gave them the power to vanquish all evils being.

One day a demon, with great powers, came to their house, "The Manor". His name was Barbos. He was the demon of fear. He had the power to see the fear of all witches, just looking at them. Then he exposed his victims for their worst fear. Barbos walked into "The

Manor". Prue was home alone. Prue's worst fear was to drown, because her mom drowned when she was a little girl. Barbas looked at Prue and saw her fear. He told Prue to go out to the pool. In the same minute Phoebe came home from work, because she got a premonition in which she saw Prue was drowning. Phoebe's worst fear was to lose a sister. Barbas saw Phoebe's worst fear and said: "Great, then I can kill you at the same time!" Barbas pushed Prue into the pool. Prue was so scared that she couldn't move/swim. So was Phoebe, because when a witch lives through her worst fear, she gets so choked that she can't move. When Prue reached the bottom of the pool, she thought that all hope was gone. But no, it wasn't. An angel came to Prue. It was her mom! She told Prue: "You must not die! You must swim up and vanquish Barbas! Save your sister!" When Prue got new hope, she suddenly could move/swim. She swam to the edge of the pool. "No, you are supposed to die!" Barbas yelled. "No, I am not" Prue said, with a smile on her face. Phoebe ran over to Prue and gave her a hug. "We must vanquish him!" Prue whispered to Phoebe. "Yes, but how?" Phoebe asked.

In the meanwhile Piper came home, because Phoebe had called her premonition. Piper had looked in the "Book Of Shadows". It's a book in which there is a spell to vanquish the most of the demons from "The Underworld". Piper froze Barbas and ran to her sisters. "I didn't find a spell to vanquish Barbas, but I found a spell to save our lives." Piper unfroze Barbas and the girls said the spell: "The power of three will set us free, the power of three will set us free, the power of three will set us free." And suddenly Barbas started burning. "Piper, it was luck that you came," Prue said. "It was Phoebe who called me. She had a premonition in which she saw you was drowning!" Piper answered. "Thank you, Phoebe," Prue said. "You are welcome," Phoebe said. Then the girls gave one another a hug and lived happily ever after.

33.

### ***The Cruel Princess***

***Once upon of time in a faraway kingdom, a princess and a his father lived on a castle surrounded of a great wood. His father, who was the king over the world, had a great army that he never thought about if he want to go to war. The princess want very much a beautiful prince to marry. But their was that with the story that the princess was a very ugly princess. A day in august in the neighbor kingdom, their moved a king and his son (who was a very beautiful prince), in the neighbor castle. The king (who name was Lucas)***

*didn't like neighbors so he sent his army over to the neighbor king to kill him! But the knights who was some good humans don't kill Adrian and his father, but ruined them so they had to live off rats and roots. The princess (whose name was Heltrud) saw her chance and walk over to the beautiful prince to ask him to marry her. But the prince doesn't want to marry a princess who was that ugly. But the princess got very angry! She was a virgin even though she was 30 years old, so she wanted some \*BIIIIIP\*. But then the princess got a brilliant idea! She went up to the prince again and said: HA! In 31 days you and your father will die! The prince started crying and said: OH NO! HAHA! The princess laughed! There is only one way you can stop the magic with. And that is if you marry me... The prince looked up with his crying eyes. Can I think a little over it for a while? HAHA! Yes you can. You have 30 days. And so your father will die! And so the princess walks away to his father's castle.*

*The prince laid on the floor in 27 days. He could not desire that he should ruin his own life or get his father dead. But in the 28th day, he desired to get his father dead. And so he will walk over to the princess and his father to tell them. It took two days to walk over to the princess and his father. And when he went to the great castle. He walked into the great hall and saw the princess sitting in a great chair. It took 35 minutes just to go up to the princess. He got and stood right in front of the princess, and said: I will rather kill my dad than I*

*want to marry you! And so he turned around and walk out of the castle. But in the wood their was one of the kings archer who had got that job to kill the prince. And so he did that. But the prince had a rabbit called Slim Shady. And when the prince talked with the princess the rabbit had hided back the princess's chair. And when the prince had leaved Slim had taken up The Golden Sun, and cutting of the head on the cruel princess and the king. And after that he killed all the knights and soldiers of the castle, and Slim went to be the new king of bought kingdoms. Because the king was dead the day after. In the wood Slim found some hot rabbit chicks and marry all of them. And so they lived happily ever after.*

### *The End*

34.

The Gnom

Once upon a time there was an old woman. She lived in a little tree-house in the dark forest. Here she lived with the Alf's and Gnomes. She lived very well until that day the Alf's and the Gnomes was started to fight. The old woman did not know what to do and she was very unhappy. Then one day a wizard came to the forest. He asked the old woman 'can I sleep and have some food with you, I can't find other places.' The old woman said 'yes, its fine with me but the Alf's are fighting against the Gnomes, so I warn you!', 'It's fine with me and I can maybe help you...' then its' me there should thank you' said the old woman happy and went to find some food and started to made a bed for the wizard. 'Why are they fighting?' said the wizard 'I don't really know...' The old woman admitted. 'But you need to find out before you can make them stop.' 'I suppose your right.' said the old woman and went to the Alf's and the Gnomes. 'Why are your all fighting?' she asked them. 'Because they attacked us!' said an Alf.

'They started it!' said the Gnomes. 'No, I did!' 'Who said that?' asked the old woman. 'I did' said the wizard. 'Why?' 'Fun...' 'Fun...!' said the old woman. 'Yes, fun' 'Okay... Suppose' she said because she didn't dare to start fight him, he was too dangerous. 'I'm sorry... I thought you where just like they others so I Jinx you.' 'Others...? What do you mean?'' They didn't help me when I needed a bed and food, but you did, and that's why I'm feeling terrible.' It's okay... You can stay with me till you are ready to leave', 'Thanks' 'Your welcome, but now I think we should eat', and then they eat a lovely dinner and fall asleep.

The end

35.

The bank robbery

Once upon a time two friends and I were going to town. We were going to shop food for my mother. On the way home we passed a bank. The bank was robbed by enormous, fat man with a mask and we calling to the police who came fast to the bank. The police started ask people about what happened. Suddenly a smiling, little, thin man comes running. Bravo , this will film be very god! Thank you!

36.

No title

One stormy night there was born a baby in a little village. The same night a witch came to the house and knocked on the door... The baby's mother opened the door and saw the witch and screamed! The witch went in to the door and took the baby and flew away with the baby on her broomstick...10 years later the baby had grown and lived now with the witch. The witch had named the boy William. When William was 15 years old he was cleaning her cupboard, in the cupboard he found some papers where it stood something about a witch that owned this house. William asked her: hey, are you my real mother??? The witch answered: No, I'm not. But why haven't you told me!? William shouted. Because, you haven't asked me! Well, where is my real mom then? Well, somewhere behind the big forest...I think...

William was so angry that he just run out from the door and jumped on his horse the witch didn't see him any more after that...He just rode and rode for a long time but the horse didn't get tired...

It was getting dark. He find a small house and knocked on the door, and say "is anybody here"? "yes"the man said "don't enter the door. Go away". When he walk away from the house he met a woman. He told the woman his story. And the woman said "I am your mother". William's mother find William. They the happy rest of his life.

## The frog-prince

Once upon a time there was a princess, her name was Pricilla and she was 17 years old. She lives on a big and beautiful palace, together with her evil dad and all his servants. One day she was down the well. She was playing with a little gold doll. Suddenly the doll was falling down on the well. She start crying and someone of the servants come and comforting her. When the servant was going, there comes a little frog up with the gold doll. He say I will give you your doll, if you will kiss my. The princess don't wan to kiss the frog and she thinks when she just cut get a new doll of her father.

The next day was she down with the well again. The frog com op again and then ask her when she will kiss her but she say no again.

2 days later the frog com to the princess and then he jump to the princess head and kiss her. Suddenly the frog change to a beautiful prince. The princess scream but when she watch the prince, was she pass out.

The day after the prince took the princess away from her evil father at his white horse.

## The evil dragon

Once upon a time there was a pixy his name was Selan. He lived in a little ugly house outside the village with a big dog called Carlo. He lived outside the village because nobody liked him.

One day a dragon came to the village. It was an evil dragon that wanted to attack the village. The pixy, Selan did not know anything about the dragon.

Suddenly the dog Carlo came through the door, and told Selan about the dragon. "Ohh..." said Selan "we have to do something!" "Yes, but you have to get in to the dragon and find the magical formula that can make the dragon disappear." Said Carlo. "Okay, we are going now", said Selan. And then they went.

When they came to the village they could see flames from the houses. They went through the gate and then they saw the dragon. The dragon was big and green and smoke came out from the nostrils.

When the dragon opened the mouth, Selan jumped into it and looked for the magic formula. It was very dark inside the dragon so Selan lighted a candle. But that was a bad idée, because suddenly the dragon began to sneeze and shake. Suddenly a piece of paper flew up in Selan's hand. That was the magical formula. Selan read the text with shaking voice. "Votum speritousum haballasium" . A big crash was heard and a lot of flash of lightning was seen. And then the dragon disappeared.

All the people in the village were happy. Selan and his dog, Carlo were permitted to live in the village. They lived with happiness to the end of time.

39.



Once upon a time there was a princess.  
She lived in a acstle with her brothers.  
The Spiderman was the hero in the town.

There was an evil witch in the forest. The princess liked Spiderman very much. But one day the witch took spiderman into the forest and tried to kill him.

The princess began to cry. She got angry. She wanted to kill the witch. The princess wanted to save the Spiderman. She went to the forest in order to find the witch. She found the witch killed. The Spiderman had already killed her. And so the princess and the Spiderman married and lived happily ever after.

40.

### The poisonous lemon

**Once upon a time it was a girl. The girls name was Mary. Mary was fifteen years old. She had a puppy, its name was Snubbie. Mary had blue eyes and brown hair.**

**Mary sat on the seesaw when the king came.**

**-Mary, you must help me! sad the king. A witch gived the princess a poisonous lemon and the princess has been eating the lemon.**

**-Take me to the princess and show me the lemon, sad Mary.**

**The king showd her the lemon and Mary sad:**

**-I must look after the fairy and she can help the princess. Mary find the fairy.**

**-Can you help me, please? The princess has eat a poisonous lemon.**

**-I shall help the princess, so you can show me the princess now, sad the firy.**

**The fairy helpd the princess and all in the kingdom was happy again.**

# fairy tale

Once upon a time there was a boy and a girl. They live in a castle with the king and the queen. They were a royal family.

The royal family was very happy. The villain was the young ugly Carl. Carl did many bad things. He threw eggs on the windows, and he made fun of the children in the little town. The king was very fed up with Carl. He decided to speak to him. He went to Carl and he spoke to him. He said You must stop pestering the children in this town. The children were very sorry. Carl said :sorry i will never ever do it again. The royal family and the other people in the little town lived a happy happy life .

over

No title

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Pikseline, she lived in a big forest, with her mother.

One fine day they should out in the big forest to find mushrooms they were looking under the trees and they found a lot of mushrooms.

It was almost dark in the old big forest, and they heart a sound who called for some one, they got curries and they got closer to the sound they heart, they found out that the sound came from a big old three, and the tree said help me there is a evil witch in the forest and she said to me that she will cut me down and use me in her fire! They said to the tree that they of cause would help him, and they found a little house deep in the forest, they were looking at the house, it was a house made of candy.

Pikseline were a little scared, but she was strong, so she went in there, and there came an old woman and asked if she want some candy or food, Pikseline answered "yes but I want to ask you about something", the witch said yes but later... Pikseline said okay but don't forget it! And the witch went to get some candy and some soda. The witch came in there again and said would you like to come in my living room? And She goes in there, then she found out that her mom maid be worried and she said "I shall home now, my mother am worried about me" but then the witch said no you are not going anywhere! Hahahaha! And Little Pikseline were so scared now but she were a hero and she had some magical powers and she said Yes I shall home now and opening the door BUT then the witch said NO! You are staying here so long that I say it and locked her in the bedroom.

Pikseline found a little window and she crawled out but there were to far down and then she remembers the Tree and she called on the tree it was a magical tree so it were there already and she crawled down at the tree and ran home, but before she ran home she put a lock on the door.

And She lived happy to her last days.

43.

### The witch and the wizard!!

Once upon a time there was a witch, she lived in an ugly cottage, the cottage is in a dark forest.  
The witch's name is Will, but she hates the name.  
One day she met a wizard, and they fell in love with each other.  
They live together and they do magic together.  
They don't like Will's name and they loved to tease Will.  
Will is weary loved in the school she is the master.  
Will has a boy friend but the other witches don't like it.  
Everybody loved her boy friend.  
The witch hates to play football, but one day took the teacher the ball and the world is not good.  
And then the teacher lived happily ever after.  
And the witch and the wizard lived happily ever after.

44.

Once upon a time

Once upon a time there was a farmer who had three sons.

One day there was a message from the king:

"A troll has taken the princess. The person who can set the princess free, will be offered to marry the princess." The three brothers decided to try. It wasn't so easy, because they didn't know where the troll lived. They asked the king if they could try.

The king said yes, and they got an amulet from the king. The amulet was made of gold and diamonds. What can it do? The king said: I don't know, but I think it's going to bring luck.

The first brother goes and goes in three days, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day begins the amulet to shine red.

What do you think it means?

Maybe we must change our direction?

They go in three new days and the amulet begins to shine green.

Oh, we must change the direction.

And they go in three new days. It must be here the princess is taken to. SE! A big hole. Hi!

Over here! It was the princess's hole.

She was in a big bird cage. This is terrible! I am fed with bird food, and the troll thinks it is a bird. Can you tell him that it isn't? The troll was on a trip in the forest. And only the troll came.

TRAMP! TRAMP! – It is the troll!

"Hi Troll! That little bird is sitting in the bird cage over there, it isn't a bird. It is the princess of the faraway kingdom."

What will you take my little bird?

Oh, no!

It isn't a bird it is the princess!

IT IS MY BIRD!!

And YOU have to take the heads away from it!

He is a human like us.

Oh is your bird too? I take you to... And remember: SING!

So what mess you have got me into. Sad the princess.  
And we are here and are bound to sing, and eating bird food.  
And nobody will save us

*The end*

45.

### The little dog

Once upon a time there was a dog, his name is Rex.  
He lived in a big house, Rex trive very god.  
he had his own room, next to his bed its a fire-place,in the winter he was very warm. The hole family go to bed, Rex heard a frightening sound, he ran down the hall...And saw a theif!  
Rex fan up the stairs and yelp at the family, they fan down the stairs and the theif steal all the silver. The family caling the police, and then the police come. And they catced the theif. And the family go to sleep.....  
The End...