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An Intertextual Approach to Reading Literary Texts in English in Teacher Education

Abstract

*This article discusses how an increased focus on intertextuality may contribute to the development of reading skills among ESL/EFL student teachers. When we read literary texts, there is often an element of recognition and intertextuality involved. By working with what the students already know, we may facilitate the development of their aptitude for reading. The rationale for approaching literature in this way is to suggest answers to the underlying question: How can we work with literature in the classroom to make it worthwhile and stimulating for more students to read literary texts? A group of teacher training students of English and their teacher studied excerpts from an example novel, *When Jays Fly to Bárþmo*, and its intertexts. The data were collected through a single-case study of a teacher/researcher's observation log and field notes of the teaching scheme and group discussions in class. The students saw how narrative formulas are repeated. For instance, the students identified the Bildungsroman – portraying a young character's identity quest – as an important genre of children and young adults' literature. The article argues that the identification of intertextual references will help them and serve as scaffolding in the reading process. An enhanced knowledge of such intertextual traits may facilitate the development of metacognitive strategies for reading. A raised awareness among the students about the phenomenon of intertextuality is important when developing strategies for reading narrative literary texts.*

Keywords: ESL/EFL in Teacher Training, reading novels, intertextuality, metacognition, When Jays Fly to Bárþmo

En intertekstuell tilnærming til lærerstudenters lesing av engelskspråklig skjønnlitteratur.

Sammendrag

Denne artikkelen diskuterer hvordan et større fokus på intertekstualitet kan bidra til utviklingen av leseferdigheter hos engelskstudentene i

*lærerutdanningen. Når vi leser litterære tekster, innebærer det ofte et element av gjenkjennelse og intertekstualitet. Ved å arbeide med det studentene allerede kjenner til, kan vi legge til rette for utvikling av deres leseferdigheter. Begrunnelsen for denne tilnærmingen til litteraturundervisningen er å søke svar på det underliggende spørsmålet: Hvordan arbeide med skjønnlitterære tekster i klasserommet slik at flere engelskstudenter oppfatter lesing som verdifullt og stimulerende. En engelskklasse i lærerutdanningen og læreren deres leste utdrag av en eksempelroman, *When Jays Fly to Bárþmo*, med vekt på intertekstuelle referanser. Datagrunnlaget for studien består av en enkel casestudie av lærerens/forskerens observasjonslogg, feltnotater fra selve undervisningsøkten og gruppediskusjonene som læreren/forskeren og studentene hadde. Studentene oppdaget hvordan narrative formler gjentas. De identifiserte *Bildungsromanen*, som omhandler en ung hovedpersons søken etter identitet, som en sentral sjanger i barne- og ungdomslitteraturen. Artikkelen argumenterer for at identifiseringen av intertekstuelle referanser vil hjelpe dem og tjene som stillas i leseprosessen. Mer kunnskap om intertekstuelle trekk ved tekster kan støtte utviklingen av metakognitive lesestrategier. En større bevissthet blant studenten om fenomenet intertekstualitet er viktig når man utvikler strategier for å lese narrative skjønnlitterære tekster.*

*Nøkkelord: Faget engelsk i lærerutdanning, lesing av romaner, intertekstualitet, metakognisjon, *When Jays Fly to Bárþmo**

Introduction

In English as a second language and English as a foreign language, henceforward referred to as ESL and EFL, respectively, reading literary texts is an integrated part of language and culture learning. When we encounter literature in school or as English students, professional teachers try to make the literary experience personal and genuine for everyone (Williams, 2013). This means creating an atmosphere for meaning-making on an individual level. Instead of received interpretations, with the teacher presenting the most common readings of the text in question, we try to ensure the students have a sense of ownership of the literary piece (Susegg, 2003). When exposed to fiction, we undergo a literary experience in which we are given opportunities to interpret the content (Mackey, 2011). Krashen (2013) regards literary reading in second language English as creative thinking and intellectual development. An intertextual approach to reading narrative texts in teacher education may enhance this process. Lodge (1992) claims, “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” (pp. 98–99). Hence, intertextual references can be both intended and unintended by the

author and are to some extent “culturally dependent” (Birketveit, 2013). The readers’ ability to recognize intertextual references therefore varies; thus, teachers can support their students’ learning by focusing on links between different texts. The research question in this article is the following: *How can the teacher utilize the phenomenon of intertextuality to contribute to facilitating the development of reading skills among student teachers of English?*

The example novel chosen to illustrate the question of intertextual reference is *When Jays Fly to Bárþmo*, henceforward referred to as WJFTB (Balderson, 1968). WJFTB is set in a Second World War multicultural environment in northern Norway, populated by Norwegians, Sami and Kvens. The formation aspect is invoked by intertextual references to Bildungsromans like *Kristin Lavransdatter* (Undset, 1920 [1997]), set in 14th-century Norway, and Charlotte Brontë’s 19th-century novel *Jane Eyre*. Both the WJFTB protagonist, Ingeborg, and Jane Eyre are portrayed as “[...] frank and sincere” (Brontë, 1847 [1985]), and, as an intellectual female protagonist in an English novel of formation, Ingeborg can hardly evade the question of a possible resemblance to Jane Eyre; devastating fires change the lives of both protagonists, and they are both orphaned, independent young women.

When the aim is to stimulate more students to read literary texts, it might be helpful to work with literature in various ways. Presenting different modes of texts in various multimodal representations (Stein, 2007) provides a variety of approaches to literature. However, the focus in the present article implies working with literature in ways that make students reflect on intertextuality, i.e. the ways in which texts are interrelated and the “meanings that arise out of this” (Collins, 2014). If we, for instance, focus on protagonists’ development, we may give the students opportunities for identification and comparison to their own lives, to other literary works and to the content of popular culture. Thus, we can make literature relevant to their lives here and now and help them to discover and recognize the potential of reading in their development as human beings. Students may recognize generic traits and intertextual references. Maybe this recognition and reflection will help them identify the general questions about life that literature raises and function as scaffolding in their development as proficient readers.

Background and rationale

Extensive reading of literary texts has been established as effective pedagogy for ESL acquisition (Elley, 1991) and for studying EFL (Mason & Krashen, 1997). Even if ESL proficiency (Graddol, 1997) is not attainable for all, due to both migration and – in Norway – the presence of Sami and Kven minority languages (Larsen, 2009), reading fiction has traditionally played an important part in the teaching and learning of English (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000). Instrumental

approaches to literature teaching as, for instance, shown in Clanfield (2017), concern literature as a tool for learning about language and culture. More recently, literature has been seen as a tool for understanding transcultural practices (Reichl, 2013), developing intercultural communicative competence, and understanding one's own culture better through the comparison to other cultures (Lütge, 2013). To account for the reading of literary texts, the terms 'extensive reading', 'free reading' and 'free voluntary reading' seem to be used interchangeably in the research literature (Bland, 2013). As the different terms suggest, the degree of freedom on behalf of the students increases from extensive to free reading and from free reading to what Krashen (2004) calls free voluntary reading. In his review of current research, presented in the anthology, *Children's Literature in Second Language Education*, where leading scholars and teacher educators from across the world present the latest research on the uses of literature in second language teaching for children and young adults, Krashen (2013) reviews previous research in the field. He concludes that "More free reading results in better reading ability, better writing, larger vocabularies, better spelling and better control of complex grammatical constructions" (p. 15). Moreover, readers know more about literature and history, science and social studies and have more cultural literacy and practical knowledge (p. 16). Thus, there seems to be broad consensus about the importance of reading.

In Norwegian upper and lower-secondary education, extensive reading of literary texts is part of the requirements in the English syllabus (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013); experiencing "the joy of reading" (pp. 2-3) is emphasized. According to Williams (2013), one "has steadily moved away from recommending specific literary texts towards exciting and advantageous flexibility" (p. 68). Bakken (2017), who has explored – in a synchronic study covering the period from 1939 to 2013 – how the Norwegian English syllabi have dealt with reading in English, distinguishes between four notions of reading: reading (1) for exposure, (2) as a tool, (3) as an encounter and, finally, (4) as meta-awareness. The fourth notion is topical in the most recent syllabus (2013), which promotes reading as a meta-awareness activity "to critically think and talk about texts and their contexts" (Bakken, 2017, p. 13).

Krashen (2013) emphasizes that extensive reading should include free voluntary reading, and, according to The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2013), Norwegian pupils are supposed to be able to individually choose some of the texts from year seven onwards (p. 8). Their teachers may provide a selection of novels from which individual pupils may choose (Williams, 2013). English teachers are "required to make informed choices of texts to use in the classroom throughout their entire teaching careers" (p. 68). Thus, the ability to find suitable literature and to design fruitful approaches to literary texts is an important qualification for teachers (Hoewisch, 2000). Student teachers of English are future teachers of literature, and the literature

they meet, and how, in their teacher education should have some transfer value for their future work in school (Wiland, 2016). The practices in school are not necessarily reflected in the teacher training programmes for English. A national study (Moi et al., 2014) of the English subject curricula for primary and lower secondary teacher education in five different representative institutions in Norway shows that the reading lists for literature are dominated by British and American canonical children's and young adults' literature and provide little space for students' self-selected texts (p. 15). When discussing how to bridge the gaps between literary reading in English in teacher education and in school, Wiland (2016) claims that "through personal experience students understand better how a similar activity" (p. 13) adapted for another maturity level may function for pupils.

In the present research context, the example novel is read in teacher education but is also suitable for lower- and upper-secondary learners. The Australian writer, Margaret Balderson (born 1935), stayed in Norway for two years in the early 1960s, "and this experience supplied the background" for her book (CanberraTimes, 1969). *WJFTB* won the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award for Older Readers in 1969. The title reflects the movement pattern of birds; in the Arctic, ordinary birds, such as sandpipers, redshanks and oystercatchers, fly to warmer continents for the winter, whereas the Siberian jay does not migrate southwards. According to the glossary appended to the novel, *Bárbmo* "[...] has two meanings: (1) the place where migratory birds live in winter, (2) a place of fictitious delights" (p. 201). Whereas the Sami people follow their reindeer herd to their winter pastures further south during the Arctic winter and return in the summer, as the migrating birds do, the ethnic Norwegian population stays put during winter. According to an interview published in *The Canberra Times* in 1969, the author's interest in Norway stems from childhood memories of her grandfather's talk of "a trip he once made there" (CanberraTimes, 1969). Balderson has since published four novels for older children, and her 1975 novel *A Dog Called George* received the Highly Commended Prize of the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award for Older Readers in 1976.

Approaching literature teaching with a focus on intertextuality has been little researched in recent studies. For example, the term is not indexed in the anthology, *Children's Literature in Second Language Education* (2013), in which leading researchers in the field present their recent findings. In a study of Canadian pupils' response to narratives, Yeoman (1999) discusses what she calls intertextual knowledge to refer to "[...] the use of previously known texts to make sense of new ones" (p. 427). Birketveit (2013) refers to what she calls intertextual competence as important in order to fully appreciate the modern text. Wiland (2016) addresses the disadvantages of non-native students when it comes to recognizing literary references that will be taken for granted in a native English-speaking audience. For example, she points to the disadvantage of not

knowing William Blake's poetry when reading modern poems and suggests ways to remedy this. However, apart from Yeoman's study, viewing intertextuality as a base for teaching literature is not at issue, and it might be one of the silent classroom practices we would want to know more about. The present article is an attempt to contribute to this knowledge.

Relevant theory

Within the broader philosophical field of social constructivism, the concept 'intertextuality' is used differently in different subjects, and, in this article, the original Kristevian understanding of intertextuality is applied (Kristeva, 1974). An individual text is seen as an intersection of texts, where at least one other text can be found. The meaning of words in any given text is oriented towards a preceding or synchronic literary corpus and the "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (Kristeva, pp. 59-60). Kristeva charts a three-dimensional textual space as intersecting planes, where any given text is seen in relationship to two axes: a horizontal axis and a vertical one. 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 meaning of the word is defined horizontally as well as vertically. The vertical axis relates the text to other texts. The word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee. Thus, the text belongs to the author, as well as the reader.

In narratology, Genette (1997) replaced the term 'intertextuality' with 'transtextuality' and listed five subtypes, of which intertextuality was one subcategory: 1) intertextuality: quotation, allusion, plagiarism; 2) paratextuality: the relation between a text and its paratext, e.g., 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. In this article, the term 'intertextuality' is used to denote the five subtypes listed above. This means not only that narrative formulas are repeated in many texts and, in this case, in many Bildungsromans, but also that the ideas and themes of texts influence each other and add meaning to new and old texts.

According to Hirsch (1979), the Bildungsroman is essentially a narrative about the process of a main character's development within a specific social setting. In the 1970s, several articles about the English Bildungsroman helped to establish "the Bildungsroman as a European rather than purely German genre" (p. 294). The generally assumed founding work of the genre, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Johann W. v. Goethe, published in 1795, is seen as having

been highly influential in the English Bildungsroman and involves an identity quest, at whose core lies the protagonist's search for meaning and a meaningful existence. Usually, some sort of dissatisfaction or bereavement will trouble the protagonist. These worries will lead him or her away from the familiar setting, and the protagonist's maturation involves several conflicts between personal needs, on the one hand, and the requirements and demands of society, on the other. The process of trying out beliefs and values against the prevalent norms of the surrounding community is time-consuming, and gradually some of the rules of the community are integrated into the protagonist's personality.

In the 19th century, Dicken's *Great Expectations* (1861 [1996]) and *David Copperfield* (1850 [1994]), and Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847 [1985]), reigned supreme and had a strong impact on the English Bildungsroman genre. The novels adhere to the archetypal quest plot with exposition, complication, climax and resolution, as accounted for by Frye (1957). In some Bildungsromans, there is a Dickensian surprise element of identity: for example, the orphan in *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1839 [2000]), who finds out that his kind benefactor is, in fact, his grandfather, or Arthur in *Little Dorrit* (Dickens, 1857 [1998]), who learns that Mrs Clenham is not his mother, after all. The protagonist is often an orphan, such as Jane Eyre, or lacks one parent or has been a victim of the parents' neglect. The protagonist is confronted with negative experiences; other characters function as helpers, supporting the hero's quest. This quest generally involves several dramatic events, from which the hero learns, and, in the end, s/he is left in a better position. For example, Jane Eyre inherits money and ends up married to the man she loves. What Boumelha (1990) calls "a female plot of romance" is closed when Jane finds her spouse; she lives happily ever after with Mr Rochester, whereas the first Mrs Rochester, the madwoman in the attic, dies trapped in a fire. Boumelha calls attention to three plots which structure *Jane Eyre*: firstly, the previously mentioned plot of romance; secondly, the plot of personal ambition and vocation; and, thirdly, the plot of desire, which Boumelha defines as "a longing for something (quite probably unformulated) which is different, other, more, than is available" (p. 19).

To utilize students' intertextual and genre-specific knowledge and raise their awareness on an individual level, we need to study more thoroughly the metacognitive processes involved in reading. The term 'metacognition' refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them (Flavell, 1979). Flavell classified metacognitive knowledge in three categories: 1) person knowledge about oneself and others as thinking individuals; 2) task knowledge about what it takes to solve an assignment; 3) strategic knowledge about which strategies are best suited to achieve a goal (Flavell, 1979, p. 907). Cognitive processes involve activity at object level and meta level (Nelson & Narens, 1990). The object level denotes the concrete cognitive mechanisms involved in a given activity, for instance, the

thinking processes involved in reading a text, when attention and short-term memory are activated. Simultaneously, something is happening at the meta level: a mental representation occurs of the ongoing activity (reading) and the cognitive processes involved in the reading activity. In the interplay between these two levels, the object level and the meta level, the metacognitive control takes place. Here the activity at the object level is modified to suit the assessment of the outcome at the meta level. At the meta level, the reader might find out that s/he cannot grasp the thematic content of the text, and, at object level, slow down the reading speed and use previously acquired knowledge about the genre and the topic of the text and consider intertextual references to achieve a better outcome from the reading activity. A modification of the activity at object level is implemented to suit the assessment of the outcome of the reading activity.

Metacognitive skills allow us to switch between different strategies, depending on what the situation and the process call for. In one situation, the reader might think that the best reading strategy for this particular text is to read it word by word and remember what it says. If the text involved is a novel, the reader will perhaps think at the metacognitive level that it is not possible to understand every single word or remember everything. The reader might change the strategy, for example, by connecting what s/he is currently reading to knowledge already acquired, hence elaborating instead of memorizing. Metacognitive monitoring means that the activity at object level will influence representations at meta level. For instance, the reader may have a different experience at the metacognitive level of the reading of the text in question, when s/he has learned something more about the discourse in which the given text belongs and the intertextual links. In this case, s/he may experience that s/he understands better what the text is about when s/he knows the Bildungsroman genre better.

To enhance the literary experience of students, a systematic approach to reading is required. In a metacognitive perspective, Langer's envisionment theory provides instructions for the reading process. It comprises of four stages: 1) what you expect before you start reading, 2) the formation of envisionments and reflection during the actual reading, 3) stepping out of the actual reading activity and thinking about what you know, and 4) seeing the text in light of the authorship, oeuvre, literary history or other texts that one has read (Langer, 2010). The teacher may facilitate the students' use of these strategies. A literary reader makes hypotheses about the action, reflects on what the characters did and compares to real life and other texts. Literature instruction becomes a meaning-building process, focussing on the development of reading comprehension. In this study, the focus is on utilizing the potential of working with "the other texts that one has read" when encountering a new text. An intertextual approach is applied.

Methods

The single-case study (Cresswell, 2013) presented here is taken from teacher education and involves the teacher/researcher and her students in their preparation for, and reading (of excerpts) and discussions of a novel. The teacher/researcher carried out a teaching sequence in an English class with 12 students in teacher education for lower- and upper-secondary school. Because the researcher wanted to analyse the practice of discussion between teacher and students from the teacher/researcher's perspective, selection of this class was based on purposeful sampling (Cresswell, 2013). The teacher/researcher wanted to study the teaching sequence by complete participatory observation (Cresswell, 2013) to find answers to the research question by looking at the discussion in class as it unfolded. The teacher's log and field notes reflecting on the discussions in class were written immediately after the teaching sequence. Purposeful sampling was the basis for the selection of the example novel and the selection of the excerpt from the novel. Since the reading list included *Bildungsromans*, an example novel within this genre and with intertextual links to at least one of the novels on the students' reading list would be suited. Additionally, this particular excerpt was chosen for its potential for inspiring discussion and reflection in class about topics relevant in modern language teaching such as notions of transcultural practice and multilingualism.

The teaching sequence consisted of three lessons. The students had read *Jane Eyre* in their previous semester. Before her introductory lecture, as one of the pre-reading activities, which are seen as "efficient ways into the readers' schematized world of previous knowledge" (Wiland, 2016, p. 38), the teacher/researcher asked the students to debate what they expected WJFTB to be about, based on the title. An excerpt of three pages (pp. 113-116) starting with "I was glad..." (p. 113) and ending with "there it is over there" (p. 116), was given as a handout to the students. In this excerpt, we encounter a first-person narrator, Ingeborg, who meets her maternal grandfather and his family for the first time. There is some reference to the narrator's background and the setting. We learn that she lives on a farm and that her father has died recently. We read about her maternal family, who are Sami nomads, live in tents, and look after their reindeer herd. We also learn that the Norwegian, Swedish and Sami languages are all used in the communication between the characters.

Inspired by Langer's envisionment theory, shorter paragraphs were shown in a power-point presentation as the discussion in class proceeded. The quotations from the novel were:

"Something within herself would not allow her to join her Sami family" (p. 147);

"But, though as a Lapp I longed to behold the sea for the first time that spring – as Ingeborg Nygaard, the girl from the island farm, I dreaded seeing it all again with my new, old eyes" (p. 195),

“I knew she was still there, even though I had ignored her and sometimes succeeded in forgetting all about her during those long winter months on the *vidda* [plateau]” (p. 195),

“I live in the attic” (p. 12),

“I began thrashing at the door like a mad thing” (p. 119),

“I had put aside the things of my childhood for ever” (p. 120),

“She was utterly irresponsible” (p. 105).

The teaching session took the form of dialogue. In the introduction to the intertextual approach, the teacher held a short lecture of about 20 minutes about intertextual reference, in which she focused on the English Bildungsroman genre. During the lecture, there were two short breaks, during which the students talked briefly in pairs. In the first break, the students discussed whether they knew any novels that fitted into this category of texts and whether they had read any Bildungsromans in English or in their mother tongue. After the first pair discussions, the teacher went on to talk about plot structure in *Jane Eyre*. After the mini-lecture about plot structure, the teacher introduced the excerpt from WJFTB by giving the students a pre-reading activity. They discussed in pairs what they were expecting from the reading sequence. They were told to discuss questions like whether they thought they would understand everything or if it would be difficult, whether it would be useful to have a bottom-up or a top-down approach (Cambourne, 1979). They were told that there would be enough time for checking vocabulary in the dictionary, since they were given 15 minutes to read the three-page excerpt. They were then asked to reflect individually on how they were planning to read in order to get through the excerpt in the allotted time. They were asked whether they expected to understand possible topics, themes and plots in the novel, based on their knowledge of intertextual links between different Bildungsromans. When the students' metacognitive reflections prior to reading had been shared in plenary, they were ready for the actual reading. Then the teaching session proceeded to content-based discussions related to the excerpt and the aforementioned selected quotations.

Findings and discussion

The students discussed various texts and, as expected, concluded that *Jane Eyre* was a typical Bildungsroman. They expected to be able to identify some characters and themes since they anticipated they were going to read excerpts from a Bildungsroman. When the students were asked how they were planning

to read the excerpt, they gave different answers, some of them were planning to read bottom-up, i.e. make sure that they understood every single word, whereas others said they would use a top-down approach, focusing on the overall theme. The students said they had to compare themselves to the others; they used their metacognitive skills to decide with which strategy to approach the text. One of the students said she was planning to avoid using the dictionary to look up words she did not understand; she considered herself “a slow reader” compared to the other students in class. She said she expected to understand the overall content of the text since she “could connect the text to the Bildungsroman genre”. Another student claimed he estimated his own reading speed to be quite good, compared to the others, but he was worried about his own content comprehension – despite knowing its generic affiliation – and decided to monitor his own comprehension and keep the dictionary close and look up words if he could find the time within the allotted period.

When the students’ metacognitive reflections prior to reading had been shared in plenary, they were ready for the actual reading. Afterwards, they all gathered and reported that they had managed to read the whole text; they had monitored their own reading strategy successfully. When the students had read the three-page excerpt individually and silently in class, they had a short round, making brief comments on the text together with the teacher. The majority were positive and said things like “It was exciting, “I want to read the whole novel”, and “It made me curious”. On the negative side, there were a couple of comments like “I’m definitely not going to read more of this text, and “I’m glad we’re only doing the excerpt”. One of the students said, “When I understood the novel took place in Norway, I began to reflect on my own background and how it influenced my perception of the text.”

Reflecting on the inclusion in the novel of non-English words, such as the Norwegian *velkommen* (welcome) and the Sami *buorre baeivi* (good day), the students saw them as defining this literary work as transcultural. Based on the excerpt, the students used the metacognitive strategy of elaboration and claimed they were expecting the novel to portray stereotypes and racial discrimination, but also linguistic diversity with mono-, multi- and transcultural groups living side by side, and cultures meeting in contact zones and friendly relationships. Another student said, “When I compared the main character in WJFTB to Jane Eyre, my impression of her changed. I thought of the WJFTB protagonist as an intellectual person even if she was among reindeer herders.” Based on the excerpt and quotations, the students used the metacognitive strategy of deduction and claimed her identity quest was a question of whether she was a nomadic Sami herder or a Norwegian farmer. Her mother is described as wild and “[...] utterly irresponsible” (p. 105), and when Ingeborg finds out that her mother was a Sami, she decides to visit her Sami family; she puts on her late mother’s Sami costume and sets off towards the Sami camp. Their first encounter is portrayed in the excerpt; she faces minor obstacles: she merely

stumbles before arriving at the camp. The next time the weather is much worse; her grandfather finds her frostbitten outside their camp. Consistent with the Bildungsroman plot, the obstacles become more severe; on the last occasion, she almost dies in the storm. The students and teacher/researcher discussed in plenary what we already knew about novels with young girl protagonists: that she most likely – as Jane Eyre, for instance, – would be involved in a romantic plot of some kind and perhaps in other plots, too. Ingeborg lives “in the attic” (Balderson 1968, p. 12), just like the madwoman in *Jane Eyre*. Contrary to the first Mrs Rochester, who is locked up in the attic with Grace Poole at Thornfield Hall, Ingeborg is not locked up to conceal madness but to prevent her elopement with the Sami herders. When she discovers that her bedroom door is bolted, she starts “thrashing at the door like a mad thing” (p. 119). She feels that she has irrevocably “[...] put aside the things” (Balderson 1968, p. 120) of her carefree childhood. A typical Bildungsroman solution to her troubles, suggested by one of the students, would be to make a blissful narrative dénouement, in which Ingeborg is reunited with the Sami family. However, Ingeborg is longing for life at the farm, and for Veikko, her childhood sweetheart. When the war ends, they start rebuilding her father’s farm. Leaving the Sami camp also means leaving her Sami cousin and suitor, Nils, behind. In *Jane Eyre* (Brontë, 1847 [1985]), the protagonist leaves her suitor, too. “As to Mr. St. John, the intimacy which had risen so naturally and rapidly between me and his sisters, did not extend to him” (355). Likewise, Ingeborg’s relationship with the female family members is stronger.

When being inspired by Langer’s envisionment theory in class and simultaneously focusing on the intertextual references, the teacher had to make the students recognize the genre. In this case, the students had read *Jane Eyre* during the previous semester. Making them draw parallels was therefore possible. They recognized the discursive affiliation and intertextual references; they understood from the excerpt that the narrator was an educated young girl. Nevertheless, they saw her as different from the other Norwegian girls and different from Jane Eyre. On the one hand, Ingeborg writes in her diary, as any Western Bildungsroman heroine would do; on the other hand, she enjoys woodcarving, as any young Sami boy would do. A metacognitive reflection like this may take place on an individual basis or, as in this case, in group discussions through collaborative problem-solving (Vygotsky, 1978). For the readers, it forms a scaffolding so that they can concentrate on the difficulties involved in reading a new text (Bruner, 1978). It is important to increase the awareness about these reflections and to facilitate the work in class in order to make room for this type of reflection. Metacognitive learning strategies can be used to describe what is happening cognitively in an activity. Monitoring the activity of reading is one such metacognitive strategy, in which the awareness of how one as an individual reads the text is raised. Metacognitive elaboration strategies involved in the reading activity occur when new information is

connected to existing knowledge. Deciding to do this happens at the metacognitive level. According to Langer (1997), “Students learn best by integrating new knowledge into what they already know” (p. 607), and, when we read literary texts, there is often an element of recognition and intertextuality involved. Bland (2013) says, “Reading a story is unique yet repetitive” (p. 2), especially when reading novels, and, in an education setting, often novels within the genre of Bildungsroman. When the students learn how to recognize or identify the generic traits and intertextual references, the reading process is aided because they partly understand what is going to happen next in the narrative text they are currently reading, and they reinterpret the content of the intertexts. For instance, one student said that his understanding of the setting in *Jane Eyre* improved after the discussions about WJFTB. Studying WJFTB with its familiar, north Norwegian setting, made the 19th-century English setting more accessible. One of the students, who had been browsing the Internet, had come across Jean Rhys’ 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which a character modelled on the first Mrs. Rochester is made into a main-character and not just someone hidden away because of mental illness (Rhys, 1966). Another student said she felt she understood the first Mrs. Rochester of *Jane Eyre* better after having discussed characterization in WJFTB; she became aware of what values and beliefs the different characters represented. When the teacher/researcher and students together deconstructed what might happen when they read a new text, they discovered that new content might influence their understanding of the old intertext.

A possible weakness regarding the chosen method in this qualitative study lies in the fact that the researcher takes the double role of teacher and researcher. A positive bias towards the teaching sequence is therefore difficult to rule out. Another possible weakness is that the data consist of the teacher/researcher’s observations and field notes from the teaching sequence and that direct data from students are not included. Their voices are perceived through their teacher. However, when the teacher’s perspective is the topic of research, it is necessary to illuminate the teacher’s subjective stance. In future studies, the perspective of students may be in focus and the perspectives of both teacher and students included. In this study, however, the focus is on how the teacher experienced the discussions with her students, in order to illuminate and document silent practices in teacher education from the teacher’s point of view.

The students were not obliged to read the whole novel but were encouraged to do so. Although it was not a part of the study, the students were asked informally, and in plenary, three weeks after the teaching session, whether they had read some chapters or the whole book after the teaching session. An anonymized questionnaire would have given a more valid result. However, in the informal discussion, seven students maintained they had read the whole book, whereas three students said that they had read five to ten chapters. Nevertheless, the fact that many students chose to read the whole novel does not

automatically imply that they did so because of the qualities of the teaching sequence, involving an intertextual approach to excerpts of the novel. It might have to do with the quality of the text, that they found it intriguing. This experience may have transfer value for student teachers' future work with pupils (Wiland 2016). As one student said, "The strategy is to build on that what they already know and then broaden the scope." This can be done by reading literary texts with intertextual references to familiar texts. Another student pointed to the importance of focusing on narrative formulas that everyone could recognize, for example, within the Bildungsroman genre. Other novels taking up ethnicity and minority cultures, such as *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007) or *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Pilkington, 1996), could have been studied to cover, for instance, themes related to indigenous peoples in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

In this study, a teaching and discussion session involved the teacher/researcher and a group of English students in teacher education and their study of a novel and its intertexts. An intertextual approach to literature presupposes that any given literary text is seen as the absorption and transformation of other texts. In this research context, excerpts from Margaret Balderson's 1968 novel, *When Jays Fly to Bárþmo*, was studied as a Bildungsroman or an English novel of formation with intertextual links to *Jane Eyre*. The data were collected through the teacher/researcher's observation log and reflective field notes of a teaching session and group discussions, involving both the teacher/researcher and the students. The example novel is transcultural in the sense that it tells a story from the Second World War, is written by an Australian author and portrays a Norwegian multicultural setting in the fictitious village, Draugoy, in Troms county. A study of the work in class with the example novel and its intertext(s) shows us that, when narrative structures and formulas are identified, an intertextual awareness supports the reading process. When encountering new content, the human brain systematizes, categorizes and interprets information based on previous experience, innate or learned. The students can take part, as readers, in a textual universe, even if one does not manage to comprehend every tiny detail. This study suggests that working systematically with the link between the literary formulas of canonical literature and modern texts enhances their literary experience. In future studies, it would be of interest to investigate more thoroughly whether an intertextual approach may increase the students' motivation to read longer texts, and whether an intertextual approach is even more relevant if the reading lists were more open to the inclusion of students' self-selected texts. Raising students' ability to reflect on the reading process, by

focusing on literary and genre-specific narrative formulas and structures that are repeated universally, was seen as important.

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