The Newspaper—a Frequently Updated Teaching Material

A study about the potential of newspapers as a source of teaching-material for second language learners in the English Classroom

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the way in newspapers are used for the teaching and learning of English. In particular, the way teachers say they use newspapers in the English classroom and the way newspapers are perceived by their students. The information was obtained through semi-structured interviews with both students and teachers at an upper secondary school in a city in the south of Sweden. From the results of the interview and from the study of the related literature, two detailed lesson plans were constructed; one to suit a group following a vocational programme and one following a social science programme, (a university preparatory programme). One of the most interesting findings from the interviews was that students were more interested in working with older, print newspapers rather than online ones. This was taken into consideration when the lesson plans were constructed. The study concluded that newspapers can be an effective tool for the teaching/learning of English, particularly for those willing to take the time to collect and prepare the necessary material.
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1. Introduction

In most Hollywood movies, together with a cup of coffee, or carried under the arm of someone riding the subway or the bus on a longer journey, the newspaper has featured as a part of the ideal morning. Today, in 2017, most newspapers come in a variety of shapes and colours. They can be found and read online on the computer or on a smartphone, and they can also still be read in print form. What defines a newspaper might have changed over the years and will most likely keep on changing for a long time to come. However, a newspaper was and still tends to be defined, according to the 2016 Cambridge dictionary, as “a regularly printed document consisting of large sheets of paper that are folded together”. At the same time, it can also be referred to as “a website, containing news reports, articles, photographs, and advertisements” (ibid). A newspaper also distinguishes itself from other texts in its shape and layout. In most cases, it is divided into sections covering different topics, which are determined by which kind of newspaper it is. A quote that shows the width of content in a newspaper is the following; “The careful reader of a few good newspapers can learn more in a year than most scholars do in their great libraries” (FB-Sannborn, American journalist, 1831-1917).

Ordinari Posttijedender, the oldest newspaper in Sweden and the world which is still active, can be dated back to 1645. It is not determined how long newspapers have been used in language teaching. However, news and newspaper articles have had a long tradition of use at upper secondary level in Sweden, and will probably remain a useful resource for educational purposes for a long time to come.

The Swedish curriculum in English at upper secondary school states that “Students should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (Skolverket, 2011). To read newspaper articles from English-speaking countries such as The Guardian from England or The Washington Post from The United States, can through language and content, transport students to a world in which English is spoken. Newspapers are also an authentic source of material that can give students a realistic view of how English is used in English speaking countries as they contain such culturally specific elements as idioms, names of areas and cities and other references that a native speaker or reader is acquainted with. Therefore, the advantageous aspects of newspapers in terms of language and cultural
references ought to play an important part in English teaching in upper secondary school, especially in countries where English is the second language. In developing lessons and lesson plans it is crucial to acquire knowledge of how newspapers can be implemented in classrooms today. It is equally important to know how students and teachers would like to work with newspapers in order to construct lessons that will motivate and engage all concerned.

2. Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate if and how newspapers are utilised in the English classroom at upper secondary level in a town in the south of Sweden. To find this out, I intend to interview teachers and students from a range of different schools in the area. As well as determining whether newspapers are used in the English language classroom and how they are used, the study will include potential ways teachers and students envision the use of newspapers for different aspects of learning and teaching English. Based on the findings from the interviews and a review of previous research within the subject, the aim is to design two different lessons using newspapers as the main focus. Therefore, my research questions are:

- How do English language teachers say they use newspapers in their teaching?
- How do L2 learners of English perceive the use of newspapers as learning objects?
- What potential do language teachers and L2 learners see in using newspapers for the teaching and learning of English?

2.1 Lesson plans based on the results.

Having collected and analysed the data, my intention is to use the findings in order to design examples of English lessons with newspapers as a central resource, and to construct them to suit different groups of students. The lessons will be based on a combination of what the students want to do, what the teachers already do and what the research views as effective when using newspapers as a main source for the learning and teaching of English for second language learners.
3. Literature review

3.1 The newspaper in English, a world-wide phenomenon

In 2016 English was spoken by 400 million people as a first language while 1.1 billion spoke it as a second language (World economic forum, 2016). English is a language that has spread to different places all over the world, much due to the British colonization of areas in Africa and Asia, starting in the 1600s. India at the time was the most important colony, and included what is today Pakistan and Bangladesh as well. The colonization of Asia and Africa continued until the 1900s with South-Africa being colonialized by the empire as late as 1902. The US also spread English through colonization in the 1900s in places like Puerto Rico, Hawaii and The Philippines. In the mid-1900s, most of the colonies gained their independence. However, many of the colonies retained English as an official language to avoid an expensive and time-consuming procedure needed for a return to native language. (Gelderen 2014).

Today, English or American newspapers are sold in most countries where English is the first or a second language. Many other countries also have an English language newspaper. Examples of English language newspapers are: Scotland: The Scotsman, The Herald, Australia: The Australian and New Zealand, which has no true national newspapers. Instead they have one print paper for each city with national pages in them. As a result, it is relatively easy to gain access to English language newspapers, which can be valuable when teaching about the English-speaking world. Countries where English is an official language but not the most commonly spoken language also have their own English language newspapers such as in India: The Times of India, Hindustan Times, South-Africa: Daily Sun and The Philippines: The Malaya, The Manila Times. These also offer useful content in terms of different aspects of language, culture and politics.

As noted earlier, the Curriculum for English at upper secondary school in Sweden states that “Students should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (LGY 11). Therefore, using newspapers in English from all over the world can help learners of English understand cultural differences and social issues in a range of countries. Fiona M Douglas (2009) has studied how language and identity is manifested in national and local newspapers in Scotland. She claims that Scottish newspapers create special relationships with
their readers by implementing specific Scottish linguistic and anecdotal elements. Using corpus based research she searched for language connected to Scotland or for specific Scottish words to determine to what extent the newspaper made national or local references and to what extent it used specific vocabulary for Scotland (Douglas, 2009). It was Douglas’ findings that inspired and convinced me to consider using a variety of English language newspapers in the classroom. As Douglas’ example demonstrates, an effective way to create a deeper understanding of a specific culture and language through the use of newspapers could be applied to a variety of countries. Therefore, examples of English language newspapers from all over the world can be used and implemented in teaching depending on the purpose of the specific lesson or lessons.

3.2 Broadsheet vs tabloid newspapers in America and England.

The term “newspaper” is broad. There are national newspapers for the whole country and local newspapers for a specific town or city. There are daily and there are weekly newspapers. These newspapers can often be found both in a print and online version. Some newspapers, however, can only be read in print form and some only online.

Some daily newspapers are more factual than others. Until relatively recently, the more factual ones tended to be referred to as “broadsheet newspapers” and their main focus was on news and politics, while their less factual counterparts were called “tabloid newspapers”. The term broadsheet and tabloid referred to the physical size of the publication. Tabloids were usually smaller than broadsheet papers in size. A typical broadsheet newspaper comes in a format of around 600 x 700 mm, which is close to the size of an A1 sheet of paper. A typical tabloid newspaper comes in a format of around 280 x 430 mm, which is similar to an A3 sheet of paper. In general, tabloids tended to feature gossip about celebrities, slogans and popular articles that helped to sell more copies. The Sun is an example of a British tabloid or “Red Top” which is a British synonym for tabloid. The term “Red Top” referred to the mastheads of the tabloid newspapers, which in most cases, were printed in red. The use of the colour red has associations with their target market historically being the working class which is often connected to socialism and the colour red. This is a colour that has been used as a sign for liberty, sacrifice and revolution since the French revolution. An even older connection between the colour red and sacrifice is that some pirates during the 1400-1500s had a red flag indicating that the crew were willing to sacrifice their lives when plundering. Enquirer is an American equivalent of The Sun.
The layout of the newspaper also differed between a broadsheet and a tabloid. A tabloid newspaper tended to contain more pictures and large and catchy headlines, whilst the broadsheets were usually more concerned with the content of the actual articles. Examples of some broadsheets newspapers are The Guardian in the UK and The New York Times in USA. However, there were also some respectable papers printed in tabloid form that did serious journalism such as The New York Daily News. This is a newspaper that has won the Pulitzer prize (one of the finest prizes awarded to journalists) ten times.

During the 1990s and early 2000’s many broadsheet newspapers began to be published in tabloid format. This change was caused by the need to keep up with technological progress which, among other things, gave rise to the production of online newspapers. Therefore, broadsheet papers began to be re-sized, so the newspaper could also be read on the go. The change was also influenced by the economy of the time. The change took place during a recession and as tabloid format newspapers were cheaper to print, it was felt that smaller newspapers would help slow down the demise of the print newspaper (Andersson, 2013). Since newspapers with low quality content (also referred to as the “gutter press”) and broadsheet newspapers with high quality content are now produced in the same tabloid format most of the time, it is harder to distinguish low quality from high quality newspapers just by their physical appearance. In this study, however, I will use the term “tabloid newspapers” when referring to the low quality popular newspapers and the term “broadsheet newspapers” when referring to “high quality newspapers”.

The language used in tabloid newspapers and broadsheet newspapers also tends to be different. A tabloid newspaper tends to be more colloquial and irreverent in its writing style. As an example, in a crime story, a broadsheet newspaper may refer to “a police officer” while a tabloid would refer to “a cop”. Tabloid articles also tend to be shorter compared to the long columns of text found in broadsheets. Broadsheet newspapers do not necessarily have to be written in the same way throughout. In an article about culture or art, the text can be more creative and playful but still take an intellectual approach. Broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, therefore, attract different audiences.

In addition to broadsheet and tabloid newspapers there are countless more English language newspapers and magazines that focus on specific topics. For example, there are fishing magazines, magazines about cars or antiques, or a specific football team, children’s comics and more.
3.3 Newspapers in the English classroom

20 years ago, newspapers were something that was delivered to the door or something that we bought at the local store or newspaper stand. When they were used in the classroom, teachers often had problems with bringing the material to the classroom as they had to buy the newspapers and bring them to the classroom by themselves or order them to be delivered to the school. Using newspapers in teaching was something that required a lot of time and energy. Now students and teachers can get access to newspapers online within a few seconds through their computers or their phones. However, even though the fast accessibility of online newspapers is advantageous, online newspapers come with some negative aspects as well. One is that they lack the physical aspect of being able to touch and feel the material which is possible with a print version newspaper. Another negative aspect with online newspapers is the advertisements on the webpages can be annoying if the reader by mistake enters an ad, which can then disturb the reading of the newspaper on the screen.

Leopoldina Fortani, Sakari Taipale and Manuela Farinosi (2014) have written an article in which the purpose was to investigate the function of and peoples’ reception to print and online newspapers. The authors also set out to find out concrete uses for the two types of newspapers. To answer this, a multi-method approach was applied. They used a (1) qualitative content analysis of 19 student essays dealing with the physicality of printed and online newspapers, (2) ethnographic observation of the use practices of readers and (3) expert interview. The analysis is divided into categories which includes themes such as emotions, identity and reading with regards to the two types of newspapers; the variety of reading styles and uses of the two types of newspapers; some ritualization connected to print and online newspapers and how people act when reading the two types, in terms of postures and gestures. The authors of the study concluded that even though the number of newspapers published online is growing, print newspapers will probably survive due to their physical appearance and the fact that they are used to mark social relations and are included in daily activities. The results of the study clearly show that there is no equivalence between print and online newspapers. They are two different objects with which users have completely different experiences. The findings from this study will be used in the construction of my lesson plans to determine whether online or print newspapers should be included in certain activities. This study is interesting to compare with the answers from the teachers and the students in my interviews concerning what kind of newspapers they prefer.
Paul Sanderson (1999) discusses how newspapers can be used in the classroom. His book “Using Newspapers in the Classroom” contains more than 130 practical and creative newspaper-based activities. The purpose of the book is to provide teachers with ideas for how newspapers can be used as a tool to engage and challenge students. Sanderson also states that the book is “not meant to prepare students to become journalists, nor to teach them how to write in a newspaper style.” The goal of the book is instead meant to develop language skills, encourage reading, foster positive attitudes and meet teachers’ and student’s needs. The book is especially designed for young adult or adult learners of English at pre-intermediate or advanced levels. Each activity comes with an explanation and clear instructions of how to use it in teaching. The activities are always divided into steps, which makes it easy to understand the instructions and to find a suitable activity for specific lessons.

It is important to keep in mind that when Sanderson wrote his book online newspapers were in their infancy. Sanderson highlights some essential aspects in classroom situations in which newspapers can be used effectively. He states that newspapers can be used to keep us informed about what is happening in the world. “As language teachers, we are also educators” (Sanderson, 1999, p.2) This means that language teachers are not only obliged to teach language, but also to improve a student’s general education. The Swedish curriculum for English at upper secondary level states that “teaching of English should aim at helping students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes” (Skolverket, 2011) In other words, the curriculum states that learning a new language is a door opener for new ways to acquire knowledge. Newspapers are also a good way of presenting a modern version of English to the students since, “Newspapers are linguistically topical and up-to-date, and provide valuable linguistic data” (Sanderson, 1999, p.2).

“Using Newspapers in the Classroom” presents ideas for using all the different sections of the newspaper from the first page to the adverts. Sanderson has divided his book into chapters in which he deals with different parts of newspapers. In chapter one he discusses headlines. He presents exercises in which headlines are involved in different ways, such as how to categorize headlines, how to play charades using headlines, how to play “headline hangman” and he also presents ways of working with words and synonyms that can be found in the headlines and compares them to words written in the article. In chapter two the focus is shifted to articles. Some of the ideas for using articles are: how newspapers can be used to deal with the “WH-questions” what, who, where, when, how, why and their connection to
news articles; how to notice the difference between “hard news” and fillers; how to rank articles in different ways and how to summarize articles (writing a preamble). In chapter three **photographs** are examined. In this chapter, captions, placement of the photos, and predicking the content of an article from a photo are examples of the ideas presented. The fourth chapter shows ways in which **advertisements** can be used when teaching. Chapter five contains ideas of how to deal with **horoscopes**, while chapter six presents ideas of how to work with **problem page letters**. Chapter seven presents five ideas of how to work with **tv-guide**, and chapter eight explores ideas for working with **cartoons and comic strips**. In chapter nine, ideas of how to work with **weather forecasts** are given, while chapter ten presents ideas of how to work with the **whole newspaper**.

Newspapers are also authentic material that acts as a source of the way English is currently used in society and, thus, serves as a tangible medium for students to read and understand in order to be able to function in an English-speaking area. A researcher who writes about how authentic document-based material could be implemented in education is Reisman Avishag (2012). In her study, Avishag uses historical documents (which could be old newspapers) in her teaching. She argues that these documents give the students a real connection to events that are currently or were happening in places in the world that they would never experience otherwise. She writes that it is the authenticity of the material that makes the students engaged and interested. Avishag’s study mainly focuses on how to implement authentic material when teaching history. However, the authentic “feeling” of the material and the respect for authentic or “real” material is applicable when teaching language as well, since by working with newspapers from English-speaking countries, students will experience how English is used in countries where English is the first language.

Richard A. Hawkins (2011) has written about the benefits of using newspapers in teaching. He finds that using newspapers is a good way to engage students since they are easy to understand and often deliver a clear view of current or past events. Hawkins refers to Stephen Vella’s (2009) research when discussing issues that might occur when working with newspapers. He makes the point that the political angle of the newspapers might be an issue if the students are unaware of it. Certain newspapers could be written in a way that might be read as if the newspapers were in favour of certain things and against certain things. However, if the students and the teacher are aware of the political angle of a newspaper, it could be used as an asset in terms of comparing language and content. The work by Sanderson, Hawkins and Avishag is useful for my study, especially with regards to the construction of lesson
plans. Sanderson’s detailed attention to the preparation and execution of exercises will be something that can be useful when developing the ideas put forward by the teachers involved in this study.

In their research, Stephen Sargent, Mwarumba Mwativa and Melinda Smith (2009) also discuss the way newspapers are used in teaching language. The purpose of the study was to investigate how using newspapers on a regular basis in education could have an impact on students’ reading habits. The authors also set out to investigate if there were any differences based on gender. The study included 217 students from twelve different classes. At the beginning of the study all students were given a reading attitude survey. After that, six of the twelve classes implemented newspapers in their teaching while the others did not. After six months, the students were given the same survey again. The survey revealed that there was a significant increase in the interest in reading for those who participated in the classrooms where newspapers were implemented on a regular basis. However, there was no significant difference between males or females. The study concludes that newspapers are a great way of increasing interest in reading because newspapers tend to have something that appeals to most of the students in a class. Newspapers not only document history as it happens but can also function as a bridge between school and the real world (Sargent et al., 2009). This knowledge is useful in my study to determine in which way newspapers could be used to motivate students to read the segments of the newspaper included in the lesson plans.

3.4 Newspapers in English course books

A common way of teaching the English language is through course books. A course book is a collection of learning materials used by students when they take a specific course. When it comes to the teaching or learning of English there are different kind of course books. There are course books designed for an international market and there are those produced for second language learners in a specific country such as Sweden. There are also course books designed to prepare students for national or international programmes, such as the IB programme which is an international programme taught (in English) in schools all over the world or qualifications such as the Cambridge examinations in English. English texts from newspapers are regularly included in some course books but not at all in others. Working with texts from newspapers is not obligatory according the curriculum but as a teacher there is a lot to gain from them. However, texts should come from a wide variety of sources as the curriculum
states that students should be exposed to “texts of different kinds and for different purposes” (skolverket)

Newspaper articles from different newspapers such as The Times, The Sun, The Independent, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard and many more are included on several occasions in Express Proficiency. This course book is written by Peter Dainty and is designed for the international market, and as an advanced language course for students preparing for the University of Cambridge proficiency in English examination; an internationally recognized qualification of English. Material taken from both tabloids and broadsheet newspapers are used. However, material taken from broadsheets is prominent. When Express Proficiency includes materials taken from tabloids, the skills practised differ to some extent to when they include broadsheets. An article from 1994 found in the tabloid newspaper The Sun called “The issue facing parents today should smacking ban get backing?” (Dainty,1995, p.78) is included. The language in the article contains a lot of slang and colloquial words such as “smacking”. The article is used to discuss ethical issues and to practise vocabulary connected to the issue of smacking children. When the book includes an article written in 1992 from the broadsheet newspaper The Telegraph, other skills are being practised. The text “Powell takes leap into history” includes longer columns, smaller print, and a more objective and academic language. The focus is on understanding the message of the text and to explain certain words, feelings and unsaid things included in the text; “reading between the lines” (Dainty,1995, p.82) In general when the textbook includes articles from broadsheets, the exercises tend to require more developed answers. In those exercises, students are encouraged to support their ideas with their own experiences. The same applies to when Express Proficiency uses an article published in 1993 from The Guardian, which is also a broadsheet newspaper. Questions to the text are included to train “reading between the lines” as well as grammar and structure of the text with questions such as “comment on the structure in paragraph 5” (Dainty ,1995, p181). The main focus of the newspaper articles included in Express Proficiency is on the news articles themselves. However, just as Sanderson suggests in his book, the course book also works with other parts of the newspaper. One exercise in the course book that is frequently used is to do with explaining words or expressions. In the course book, these words and expressions can be read in context, which, according to Sanderson, makes it easier to figure out the meaning of a word or an expression. Another example of the application of Sanderson’s suggestions for the possible use of newspaper articles is when Express proficiency gives advice for practising summarizing skills. Although Sanderson only
describes how to summarize one article at the time and gives examples of how it could be accomplished through writing preambles and headlines to an article (Sanderson, 1999, p78), *Express proficiency*, in contrast, takes this a step further by focusing on the ability to summarize detailed information from several articles at the same time.

The course book *Solid Gold 2* by Eva Hedencrona, Karin Smed-Gerdin and Peter Watcyn-Jones was designed for Swedish “English six” upper secondary school learners. The goal of the course book is to help students achieve the goals required to pass “English six”. The course book is described by the authors as focusing on: “Living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different parts of the English-speaking world”. The course book is also designed to make the reader aware of how culture influences communication. While *Express Proficiency* was written in 1995, *Solid Gold 2* was written much more recently, in 2015. This means parts of the course book are also found online. All chapters online have listening exercises and exercises for students wishing to work more intensively with each chapter. It is interesting to note that neither material taken from newspapers nor exercises designed for working with newspapers are to be found in *Solid Gold 2*. Most of the texts are of a literary nature. However, when skills such as critical literacy are practised, the course book suggests that further reading and practise could be done by using newspapers. As the course book is often used as a key text, and, as such, should prepare students for the Swedish national tests in English, the lack of newspaper articles is rather alarming, especially as the texts used in the reading/writing/listening parts of the exam are often taken from newspapers. Even though no texts in the course book are taken from newspapers, it could still be useful resource for a teacher who wants to work with them, since a lot of the text based exercises would also work well with news articles. Of course, it would mean more work for the teacher who would have to find the articles him/herself and adapt the exercises slightly to suit them.

Of the course books read for this essay, *Express proficiency* was the one that included the most material taken from newspapers. It was also the course book that provided more exercises related to a single article than any of the other course books. In addition, the exercises found in the course book could all be matched in some way to those described in the Sanderson book. *Solid Gold*, however, does not include any articles from newspapers but suggests that they could be used for further studies and as the exercises in the course book are especially designed to help students reach the goals from the curriculum for English six, these could be adapted for texts taken from newspapers.
When working with language development in upper secondary school, it is important to be aware of the different types of texts the students might encounter. One way to work with different types of texts and language development from a holistic view is through critical literacy. The purpose of teaching critical literacy is to create an understanding of the content of texts using the language as a tool in order to be able to review and interpret different types of texts such as novels, poems, articles etcetera. Another important aspect of critical literacy is the ability to critically review the way in which issues such as class, ethnicity, and gender are treated in different text types. To practise critical literacy is an effective way to become a more effective reader who is aware of the different dimensions of a text, and of different texts. In language development, it is important to emphasize that learning a language is not only about decoding words and sounds but also about understanding how language, syntax and style affects the content, purpose and message of the text (Bergöö & Jönsson, 2012).

According to Allan Luke (1994) a text is always written with a purpose from the writer to the reader, and that critical literacy starts with the presumption by the reader that all texts are always written with a specific power-relationship between the reader and the writer in which the latter can influence and have power over the former. Therefore, he claims that language is politics. Language used in newspapers, for example, can be deliberately deceptive and even manipulative. If a certain newspaper is the only thing you read, and that newspaper twists the truth or deliberately leaves something out of the event or story, the reader is being manipulated, in some way Both Luke (1994) and Hedencrona (2015) agree that when working with newspapers in the classroom with focus on critical literacy, it is essential to consider questions such as:
In his article “Using News Articles to Build a Critical Literacy Classroom in an EFL (English as a foreign language) Setting”, Yujong Park (2011) investigated how students’ critical literacy skills can be improved by using news articles in an EFL classroom in South Korea. The goal of the study was to investigate what benefits and challenges there are with implementing a focus on critical literacy for English as a foreign language. Park used Action Research as a method to critically evaluate his observations in the classroom. The data collected in the study included transcribed audiotapes of classroom interactions and interviews with students. The author also included classroom materials and response papers to the news articles used in the lessons. Results showed that the participants managed to mix linguistic resources used in the articles and from their own experiences to be able to support their ideas and to give more developed answers to questions given about the articles. As a conclusion, Park stated that newspaper & magazine articles can be used as an effective pedagogical tool to develop important skills needed for developing critical literacy, such as
improved reading comprehension skills and the ability to interpret different messages within a text.

Caitrin Blake (2016) claims that students that possesses critical literacy skills are not only more likely to achieve good results in school, they also have a developed ability to understand the purpose of a text in depth. Students who understand critical literacy are well equipped to recognize and reject racism, sexism and all kinds of injustice and oppression within a text. In other words, critical literacy is a tool which helps deconstruct power dynamics and all kinds of injustice portrayed in literature, media, movies etc. Blake gives an example of how such a deconstruction of or detection of injustice in a text could be worked on in the classroom. She gives the example of an exercise in which the students might judge a song to be racist. The teacher would ask the students to analyse the lyrics and to find quotations from the lyrics which would support their arguments for why that specific part could be considered to be racist. When a student becomes critically literate, they understand the power of language. (Blake, 2016)

4. Methodology

I have chosen to use semi-structured interviews as a method for collecting the material for this study. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of topics and a few related questions that they would like to find answers to. An important aspect of semi-structured interviews is that when the interview takes place, the interviewee should be given the opportunity to develop his or her thoughts and to speak freely around the questions.

Therefore, the researcher should be prepared to change the order of the topics and questions according to how the interviewee answers each question. With that in mind, the interview will be constructed to include a small number of open questions which can be elaborated on through discussion (Denscombe, 2014, pp. 266).

4.1 Selection

I chose to interview and record four teachers and six of their students. The number of teachers and students was chosen based on the rather limited size of the essay and the short time frame given. However, to determine that the responses represented a wide range of schools, programs and courses, I interviewed teachers that work with all three levels of English taught in upper secondary school in Sweden; these are English five, six and seven. I also made sure
that the teachers taught within different programs in the chosen schools to make sure that students following a university preparatory programme as well as those following a vocational programme were included in the study. I also tried to ensure half of the interviews were conducted with males and half with females to gain a wider perspective.

4.2 Procedure and Ethical principles

First, I contacted a few teachers through email. I told them about the purpose of my study and asked them if they were willing to participate in interviews concerning their use of newspapers in the classroom. When conducting research, it is important that you follow some of the ethical principles required. One of them is that, as a researcher, you are obliged to inform the participants of the purpose of the study. It is also crucial to inform the participants that the interview is entirely voluntary, and the participant can, whenever he or she wants, interrupt the interview and leave. The participants also have the right to be informed that they can say no if they do not want to participate. Furthermore, it is important to have parental consent when interviewing someone under the age of 18 (Bryman, 2011).

In the email, I also informed the teachers that I wanted to interview two of their students, preferably one boy and one girl. I also reminded them about the importance of informing the students who were willing to participate in the study to bring parental consent if they were under 18 years old. I suggested that the interviews should be conducted in the school in which they work and attend to make those being interviewed feel more comfortable, as it is an environment in which they spend a lot of their time.

The interviews were conducted in Swedish, which is the first language of those interviewed. By conducting the interviews in their first language I felt that the participants would have a greater opportunity to express themselves in a more refined way. Before the interviews started, I informed the teachers and the students of the purpose of recording the interviews and how I was going to approach and handle the material afterwards. I confirmed that they were participating voluntarily and informed them that if they felt uncomfortable, they could cancel the interview and leave.

All interviews were conducted individually and without any kind of interference such as comments from classmates or colleagues or insecurity of commenting on the teachers´ teaching-methods with the teacher present in the room. The teachers answered six questions
and the students answered four. A student interview took approximately 4-6 minutes while those with the teacher took approximately 15-25 minutes.

Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, they were also transcribed into Swedish. However, the parts of the interview that were relevant for the study were translated into English. It should be noted that the translation could affect the message of what was said in the interviews. However, I believe that any changes that might occur in the translation will have no more than a limited effect on the message.

Bryman (2011) also notes that it is necessary to save the interview material when the study has been published if anyone might feel that they want to build on the research I have started. However, some editing to the recordings might be necessary to make sure that the interviewees’ anonymous participation is kept anonymous. The researcher is only allowed to use the material which the participants have received information about.

### 4.4 Shortcomings and Advantages

Using interviews only as a data collection method comes with both advantages and disadvantages. Denscombe (2014) discusses some of the most prominent advantages and disadvantages and claims that issues of validity can be one of the disadvantages. Since there is no secure way of making sure that the interviewee is being honest. When conducting interviews, the researcher must be aware that the person who is being interviewed is more likely to say how that person wants to present him/herself rather than what that person does. During semi-structured interviews, there is also a greater risk of the interviewee digressing into subjects outside the subject of the study being conducted. Another disadvantage with semi-structured interviews is that they tend to be time consuming since they are constructed with a relative open format which provides data that is not necessarily easy to encode. As semi-structured studies tend to become more focused on the analysis, this makes the analysis time consuming. The person conducting the interview must also be aware of his or her influence on the interview process and interviewee. The attitude and appearance of the person conducting the interview might also influence the answers given in the interview (Denscombe, 2014). In this study, the small amount of assembled interview material became a disadvantage. If more teachers and students would have been participating, more ideas and thoughts could have been reflected on. This could have given a wider result with more depth.
There are, however, advantages with using interviews. One of the advantages of using face to face interviews as a method is that giving false information about gender and age is less likely. Another positive aspect of a face to face interview is that it makes it easier for the interviewer to capture emotions and paralinguistic behaviour of the interviewee. This is important for an interviewer since the way an interviewee says something could influence the way in which the answer should be interpreted, and that information could be just as valuable as the content of the response (Ibid, 2014).

4.5 Construction of lesson plans.

Having conducted and analysed the interview and by taking these finding together with the literature, my aim is to construct two separate lessons plans based on the use of newspapers for the teaching of English at upper secondary level. They will differ from one another in terms of number and length of exercises and in terms of difficulty. The lessons will also differ in terms of which newspaper articles are included in the lesson to suit the target group. The first lesson plan will be constructed to suit an English five class studying a child recreational programme, while the second lesson will be suitable for an English six class studying a social science programme.

I have chosen to construct my lessons in this way since these are the specific programmes and levels which my interviewees are involved in. The essay will be uploaded on to DIVA which is a centralized archive of a joint group of Scandinavian universities. The webpage includes full-text theses, dissertations and other academic publications. Therefore, the teachers participating in the study will be able to gain access to the lesson plans constructed for them and their group of students.

The lessons will be structured according to an ESA (Engage-Study-Activate) framework. ESA consists of three main components or stages. ESA stands for engage and is usually used at the beginning of the lesson. This stage is meant to emotionally engage the students. An emotionally involved student will be alert and aware of what is going on during the lesson and the learning will be more effective. ESA stands for study. During this stage, the focus is on how language is constructed. This is also known as “focus on form” (Harmer, 2007, p66), ESA stands for activate. At this stage, the students are encouraged to use all the language that they know. A quick example of how an ESA lesson would work could be that at the beginning of the lesson a picture that emotionally engages the students is presented. In the
study phase, the actual meaning of the picture, the setting, the colours etcetera is explored. In this stage, the teacher as a guide helps the students with language to describe the picture and to find solutions to the meaning of the picture. During the activation stage, the students could perhaps write a short passage about the picture and present their interpretation of the meaning to the rest of the class. However, the order of the study and activation stage could in some cases be changed. On these occasions students are asked to perhaps do a written task, a role play or some other kind of creative assignment and then later after the activate phase, go back and analyse what was lacking in terms of language or content and also discuss what went well. The class then analyse the task or do it again with improvements.

I have decided to use broadsheet newspapers as the dominant material used in the construction of lesson plans in this essay. The reason doing so originates from Alice Sullivan’s study “The Life-Long Benefits of Reading for Pleasure” in which she discovered how children’s reading habits in their youth affects their vocabulary in their adult life. According to the study there was a strong difference in educational attainment between those who read broadsheets and those who read tabloids. In fact, those who read tabloids in their youth proved to have a smaller and less developed vocabulary than those who did not read newspapers at all (Sullivan, 2015).

However, it should be noted that it is important not to dismiss tabloid newspapers completely as students studying a foreign language need to be exposed to a wide and authentic range of language and its use. There are several ways teachers can take advantage of the differences between broadsheets and tabloids. One of the teachers participating in this study said that comparing different kinds of newspapers in terms of word choice, length, headlines, idioms, and contractions is a good and fun way to work with newspapers and an exercise which students tend to enjoy. To explore the influence of the Germanic and Latinate language roots on English vocabulary and grammar and how it is manifested within broadsheet newspapers and tabloid newspapers could also be an interesting focus in a lesson.

5. Results and discussion

The teachers that took part in the study and the courses and programmes they teach are listed below. It should be noted that some of the teachers have been teaching for several decades and, therefore, tend to give examples from courses and programmes that they are not teaching currently. The students who participated in the study will not be named and will only be
referred to as “The student”, “students” or “one of Anna’s students,” for example. The teachers are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Courses taught</th>
<th>Programmes taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>English 5,6 and 7</td>
<td>Social science x2 (English 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural science x2 (English 6,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfgang</td>
<td>English 5 and 6</td>
<td>Natural science (English 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child recreational programme (English 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health and social care-programme (English 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>English 5 and 6</td>
<td>Economy programme (English 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electricity programme (English 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harald</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>Natural science programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 How and why EFL teachers say they use newspapers in classroom situations

In the interviews, all the teachers said that they have used or that they are using newspapers to some extent in the classroom or in their planning. All the teachers reported that they use newspapers as a way of teaching both content and language. Mixing content and language is something that most of the teachers said felt natural. Language development, in most cases, requires some sort of text or recorded speech as a base for listening, reading and writing exercises which makes the mixture of content and language unavoidable (Lundahl, 2012). The teachers claimed that working with the content of an article and not having the primary focus on the language could still help develop language skills such as grammar and vocabulary even though practising any specific skill is not the main purpose of the lesson. My interpretation is that the teachers find this a satisfactory approach since they think that the students will still acquire items grammar, vocabulary, expressions etc. just by reading and discussing different articles.

5.1.1 Using newspapers to start their lessons and as a tool to engage the students

Most of the teachers used newspapers as an update of important and current world events, preferably this taking place in the English-speaking world. For example, Wolfgang tends to exclusively use newspapers at the start of a lesson or when engaging his students. One
exercise that he implemented in his lessons, which took place during the presidential election in the United States, was called “Trump of the day”. The students were given a few minutes at the beginning of the lesson to reveal something about Donald Trump that they had read in a newspaper to the rest of the class. This was done both individually and in pairs. When everyone had presented what they had found, a general discussion about Donald Trump and other current events took place. Wolfgang stated that with a simple exercise such as “Trump of the day” students are able to fulfil a crucial goal in the curriculum which is to discuss ideas and societies within the English-speaking world. Through this exercise, the students must read and talk about newspaper articles. In doing so, they become familiar with a different text type. Wolfgang also mentions that the exercise could be used to talk about any important person or event. This exercise alludes to something called “grej (thing) of the day” which is a popular activity in which the teacher introduces a new thing, event or person every day using three power point slides with some fun facts, stories and a picture. This is preferably used as an engaging exercise for a lesson or the whole school day. As a regular homework task, students are asked to tell their parents about the thing of the day and ask if they have any connection or thoughts to it. The students then repeat their findings it to their classmates the next day in school. The creator of the method, Michel Hermansson, suggests that the activity is suitable for children from first to sixth grade. However, with some adaptation it could be implemented with any group (Skolvärlden.se 2015).

5.1.2 Newspapers when teaching general knowledge about the world.

Anna also tends to use newspapers in the same way as Wolfgang; to raise awareness of important contemporary events and to inform students of what is happening in the English-speaking world. Anna said that-

“We use newspapers for different reasons, just like I said before. It can be used to give the students’ knowledge about the world. General knowledge is a good word to describe it in that context. To know what is happening in English-speaking countries around the world basically. That is also a part of the course.”

The Swedish term (allmänbildning), best translated as “general knowledge about the world,” is a common term that occurred in the interviews with almost all teachers and most of the students participating in the study.

The students said that they read newspapers to achieve general knowledge about the world around them and the English-speaking parts of the world. The teachers said that they use
newspapers in the classroom to improve the students’ general knowledge about the English-speaking world rather than to develop any specific language system or micro-skill.

5.1.3 Preparation and time consumption

According to the teachers, lack of time and the amount of preparation required to work on specific areas of language through newspapers is one of the main reasons for why they tend to only use newspapers articles as an introductory or engaging exercise. Lisa, a teacher since the 1980’s also said that the time-factor is the main obstacle to using newspapers more in her planning and lessons. In her teaching, cross curricular projects take up a lot of her lessons. However, in some cases she does make use of newspapers articles to some extent:

“In one of the projects about private economy, we proceed from an article which we have used two years in a row about teenage economy. The article is kind of hard, chatty text from The New York Times. The text is too hard for English 5. /…/ This is how I usually implement Newspapers in my teaching in connection to the larger projects.” (Lisa)

Even though initially stating that she only uses newspapers in connection to her larger projects, Lisa then remembered that she does use newspapers in a few individual lessons every school year. She said that two lessons in particular worked well. She went through the way in which the lessons were conducted in detail.

“One thing I used rather recently, was about getting the students aware of that I want them to express themselves in a way that they usually do not, I want them to look for new ways. To achieve this, I used an article about Zlatan. I read the article and withdrew ten expressions from it. I wrote the expressions in Swedish on the board and asked the students to translate them into English. What I got was the usual translation that they tend to use. 10 years older for (tio år äldre) then I gave them the article and told them to find the expressions in the article and compare the way the article wrote the expressions to how themselves wrote them. For instance, instead of 10 years older the article used 10 years his senior. It is a good way to update your language and to see how English is used in English-speaking countries.” (Lisa)

When working in this way, more advanced articles could be used, since the main purpose of the exercise is to open the student’s eyes to more sophisticated ways of expressing themselves. Lisa stated that it is important to work in a way in which the students take a critical stance when reading and writing. She said that it is important to reflect on what they are going to write, go back and read the text again and perhaps change what they intended to write originally. This way of working is also advocated by Park who claims that working with a text in a pre-reading stage and a post-reading stage is important for developing critical literacy successfully. In the same way as Lisa did, Park argues that key terms from the text that are crucial for the lesson should be presented to the students in the pre-reading stage before encountering the text. Lisa
follows up her introduction of the terms by asking students to read the text and when the students have finished reading, they are told to go back to their own translations of the key terms and then to compare them with the expressions used in the article. This way of working with the expressions is supported by Park who also states that students should return to engage critically with the text after having been introduced to the key-terms and when they have finished reading the text (Park, 2011, p.33).

5.1.4 Print vs online newspapers

When asked whether they used online or print newspapers, all the teachers participating in the study said they used online newspapers rather than printed ones. The reason for doing so was related to the fact that most of the online newspapers are free and, therefore, more economical for the school. Harald thought that it was because of their easy accessibility which made preparation less time-consuming and the fact that he could access a variety of newspapers within minutes.

Apart from being less time-consuming and cheaper, Harald said that online papers are different to print ones. He claims that online and print newspapers are two completely different things; that reading an online newspaper differs from how you read a print newspaper. In addition to that he said that print newspapers are easy to navigate through and add something to the feeling of reading.

Anna said that print newspapers make the material authentic to the students as they can see and touch the material. Students can also see how newspapers are used in the English-speaking world, and how English is used in society. Leopoldina et al (2015) describe print and online newspapers as two different objects and written with two different purposes. A print paper is a finished product, a newspaper which can be seen from its physical appearance. The reader can see how big the pages are and how many pages there are etc. An online newspaper is more fragmented. The front page and links to the articles are all you can see at first glance. “The physicality and materiality of the print newspaper convey ‘a sense of authenticity and verifiability that the online newspaper cannot provide’ argues the expert Lia Lucato. In conclusion, a print newspaper has a stronger sensory appeal than the online newspaper.” (Leopoldina et, al. 2015, pp. 835). This is something that the students participating in the study agree with. One student said that it would be pleasant to work with print papers since he could
manage the paper in a better way and is able to navigate through the different sections, and find something useful for what he is doing.

Another positive aspect of newspapers, according to the teachers, is that it is a material that is easy to individualize for the students. The teachers said that they often use newspapers to motivate students through connecting the articles included in the lesson to something that the teacher knows will interest a specific student. Also, one teacher said that the students do not necessarily need to read the same article. In that way, different sections of the newspapers could be included in one lesson.

5.1.2 Summary

It can be concluded that all teachers in the study used newspapers in their teaching in some way. How they used them and for what purpose differed. Newspapers were mainly used by teachers as a “last minute escape” when there was no other lesson planned, such as looking up the top news of the day. Some teachers said that they sometimes used newspapers in larger projects and had some thorough planning behind the usage. Most teachers used online newspapers due to the inconvenience of collecting and keeping print newspapers.

5.2 How students perceive newspapers being used in the classroom

As an introduction-question, the students were asked whether they read newspapers in any form during their spare-time. Most of the students acknowledged that they read newspapers in the mornings, although it was mostly done at the weekend. A few students said that they read newspapers to educate themselves about what is going on in the world. One student said, “I read newspapers in the morning with my coffee, because I like the feeling of having a newspaper with the coffee.” A few more students also gave the impression that it is “the feeling” of the newspaper especially in print form for being one of the main reasons for reading them. However, not all the students said they read newspapers in their spare-time. One student did not. Instead of reading newspapers, she reads blogs and watches “YouTube” which she said contributed to her knowledge of what is going on in the world.

The perception of how newspaper articles are being used in classroom varied for the students. In most cases the students’ relation to newspapers in the classroom is that newspapers are not used on a regular basis. However, in some cases the source of the material used in a lesson or an exercise can be hard to detect for the students especially if the teacher has implemented
something from an article without showing the students the actual article or articles. This might give them the impression that newspapers are not used in the classroom even though they are.

During the interview, the students briefly gave a few examples of some exercises related to newspapers that have been implemented in their education. However, these examples were not very detailed. Below a few bullet points with examples of how students perceive newspapers are used in the classroom are presented.

- “We rarely use newspaper articles, when we use newspaper articles within English we use it as a tool for reading comprehension”.

- “We read newspapers in class as a tool to enhance our English language and we use them as a source for bigger projects”.

- “We use newspapers mainly as source for other projects, we almost never use newspapers as the main source, only as a complement to larger sources or projects”.

- “We use newspapers to learn new text types both in Swedish and in English. We never work with the actual content of the newspapers in class”

5.2.1 Summary

As a conclusion, it can be determined that the students interviewed do not perceive newspapers being used to the same degree or in the same way that the teachers claim to use them. Why the perception of the usage of newspapers differs is difficult to determine, however. As previously specified, it can be the fact that some of the material used by the teachers is not visible for the students. Also, the lack of time for preparation given to the students might have resulted in students having difficulties recalling exercises or materials used in their English education. The reason to why students might have problems recalling the implementation of newspapers can have to do with the way the teachers use them. The teachers participating in this study only use them as a small exercise to start a lesson or as a tool to introduce the students to a new subject. In some cases, teachers might not even tell the students that what they are hearing or reading comes from a newspaper.
5.3 Further possibilities EFL teachers and students see in the use of newspapers in the classroom

When the teachers had explained what they did in the classroom, and the students had explained how they perceived the way in which newspapers were used in the classroom, both parts presented ideas for further possibilities they see in the future when it comes to using newspapers in the English language classroom.

One thing almost all teachers agreed on was that if using newspapers as much as possible was the ambition, they could be utilised in every single lesson in some way. “It all depends on how much time you, as a teacher, are willing to put into your planning” Anna said. She continued by saying that it would never work for her, however, since the time that it takes to plan such a term would be overwhelming. On the other hand, she says that newspapers would definitely work as a tool for revision exercises.

5.3.1 Language practise

Lisa said that she wants to use newspapers to practise language. However, she is worried about the stress students experience with the constant grading. The problem is that she does not want to grade the students when they read and work with newspapers in a more content based way. Despite this, the students have issues with “practice-exercises” and keep asking her how they are doing and what grade she would have given them even though the exercise is not graded.

An example of an exercise where the students work with the content of the articles and do not focus on specific skills: could be the “top five news of the day from different newspapers and to tell each other about them. I prefer that the students work a lot by themselves when working with newspapers, it saves time” Lisa said.

5.3.2 Summarizing

Harald had some interesting ideas for how the students could use newspapers to develop different skills, especially summarization skills.
“There are a lot of small good exercises the students could do, the students could read an article and become the expert within that area, and then teach his or her classmates. The teacher could remove the headline and have the students to write their own headline or have the students writing an ingress, both to practise summarization skills. Students could use an article as inspiration to take the role as a journalist. Or as a base for source criticism”

Sanderson (1999) also gives an example of how summarization skills could be practised with newspaper articles. However, in most cases Sanderson expects more time to be spent on preparation for his exercises compared to the teachers in this study. For example, Sanderson suggests that the teacher should choose a relatively long article, add a glossary or an explanation of the article. The teacher should suggest that the article must be shortened in length to suit a different kind of newspaper. The students’ task is, therefore, to reduce the text to 50 words and then the students can switch texts and determine whether they think their partner’s summary is accurate.

Concerning the question of whether the teacher or students should choose which material to work with, Lisa does not share Sanderson’s view. Lisa said that “Finding and choosing your own material is a part of the curriculum, which makes newspapers a good material to work with since it is so easy for the students to find them online.” Even though Sanderson does not always control every detail of every exercise, he tends to have a more controlling approach to the whole design of his exercises.

5.3.3 National test preparation

The students also came up with some examples of how newspapers could be implemented in their lessons. One student said that he would enjoy working more with such material as a way of preparing for national tests or even for preparing for the national university entry test. He said that the language used in newspaper articles tends to be used in reading comprehension tests for different kinds of national tests.

Skolverket gives examples of old national tests on their webpage with the purpose of helping students to prepare for the national tests in English five and English six. Newspapers are in some way used in samples made for both courses. In English five, the samples that contain news are from the reading comprehension test. The test is called “bits of news” and it comes in two parts. Each part consists of five short articles. Each small article is followed by one to three questions that require the reader to be able
to understand the complete article and to be able to read between the lines. News items are also included in the sample tests for English six, but for this course they occur in the listening part instead of the reading comprehension test. In this part we get to hear 12 news items followed by a question that tests different micro skills, such as listening for gist or detail. (Skolverket 2015).

Another aspect that the students felt important was that if they were to work more with newspapers they would like it to be with print ones. I interpreted this to mean that they wanted print newspapers as they are easy to navigate, and it is easier and quicker for the students to choose which part they want to read, and in which order they want to read, in contrast to online newspapers which are hard to gain an overview of all at once due to the necessity of scrolling and clicking to look at different sections.

5.3.1 Summary

All the teachers interviewed said that there were no limits to how newspapers could be implemented and exploited for language teaching purposes. The only thing that the teachers required was the time and the will to find and prepare suitable material. The students interviewed mainly focused on how newspapers could be used as practise for the national tests.

6. Lesson plans

In this section, I present two lesson plans designed to suit two different groups of students studying English at upper secondary level. The first lesson is designed for a group taking “English 6” within a Social science programme. The lesson aims to give the students practise in working with critical literacy by reading and discussing an article about modern slavery. The students are also encouraged to practise their language skills in segments embedded in the lesson. The second lesson aims to suit a group taking “English 5” within a child recreational programme, which is a vocational programme. This lesson focuses more on language use and requires the students to reflect on how they express themselves and encourages them to try to find new ways of expressing themselves.
The social science programme is a university preparatory programme which aims to provide students with knowledge about social conditions in Sweden and in the world. The programme also aims to educate students about different kinds of societies through history and how a society is constructed. The content of the programme is expected to also provide knowledge about the relationship between individuals and society and how individuals work as a part of the society. Topics such as democracy, climate, ethics, gender and communication should also be worked with. Another essential part of the programme is that students should be given the opportunity to become familiar with today’s information-society and given the chance to work with modern technique and media. (Skolverket, 2011)

This lesson plan is designed, for a 90-minute lesson. During the lesson, students are encouraged to practise critical literacy skills. This is done by engaging critically with a newspaper article about “Africa’s new slave trade” taken from The Guardian. The article discusses the slave trade from many different perspectives and contains stories from people involved on both sides of the current slave trade. Critical literacy is an important skill to acquire in order to achieve a high level of proficiency in a language. Ulla Ekvall writes in her article “Towards critical literacy-A national test and prescribed classroom preparations” (2013) that the national tests in Sweden aim to promote critical literacy through the way the national tests are constructed. However, Ekvall claims that “aspirations to critical literacy are lacking in both the reading and writing assignments and in the prescribed classroom preparation” (Ekvall 2013). Similarly, the students interviewed in my study said that they wanted to work more with newspapers since newspaper articles are a common source of material in the national tests and that it gives them opportunities for practice.

As research shows that students are lacking in skills important for critical literacy, such as reading between the lines and understanding the underlying message, and as the students I interviewed were interested in working more with reading as a preparation for the national tests, I constructed the lesson to meet these needs. The article “Africa’s new slave trade” was chosen due to its inclusion of multiple perspectives from those involved in the slave trade and the underlying messages. These aspects and the interesting topic make it relevant and similar to a typical reading comprehension exercise included in a national test.
Engage (5 min.)

At this stage of the lesson, the goal is to engage the students emotionally. Since the target group for the lesson is a group studying a social science programme, the lesson will start with a question which will be discussed together in class. The question “Slavery—does it still exist?” will be written on the board and, together with the teacher, a mind map will be constructed through brainstorming. The teacher should try to lead the discussion towards *inhumane living conditions* and different forms of slavery such as *trafficking, forced labour, refugees who pay the smugglers with their freedom* etcetera. By doing this, the students can display their prior knowledge in the subject. This also gives the students the opportunity to learn from each other in the discussion. In this stage, the teacher could try to explain or ask the students to explain expressions or terms that might be important for understanding when reading the article in the next stage. When answering this question, students must answer several questions by themselves or together before answering the question on the board. They must figure out what it means to be enslaved; they must decide if slavery should be defined in the same way today as for 200 or 2000 years ago. In terms of thinking about underlying messages, the question is a well-chosen one.

Study (55 min)

During this stage, the focus is on the language of the article. However, before reading the article at this stage, the students will have to go through a pre-reading stage. In the interviews both Harald and Lisa said that it is important to introduce new vocabulary and other problems that the students might encounter in a text before reading it. The reason for doing it in that way is so the teacher increases the students’ opportunity to understand the text. When practising critical reading, research also agrees with the teachers that the pre-reading stage is important since “the success of a critical reading curriculum builds on students’ successful understanding of the text. Therefore, it is crucial to have a pre-reading period during which a linguistic overview of the material is provided.”(Park, 2011, pp. 31).

“Africa’s new slave trade: how migrants flee poverty to get sucked into a world of violent crime. Thousands who dream of a better life in Europe face horrors of modern slavery on way across the Sahara to Libya” (*The Guardian* Rebecka Radcliff  May 14th, 2017) is the article which the students are going to work with. In this article, a few difficult words and expressions are included. Some of these words and expressions are given to the students in a
handout and discussed in groups of two or three in terms of meaning and usage. This is all done before the students are given the actual article. The handout constructed for this article includes seven words such as *lucrative* (see appendix 1). Many more words could be included in this handout. It all depends on how much time the teacher wants to spend doing this. In this example, the students only have one lesson to work with this article. Therefore, seven words is a reasonable number of expressions to handle in one lesson. However, a whole lesson could be spent working with different aspects of language of the article before engaging in the actual reading. Exercises concerning gender (why are all the participants in the interviews men?), the political angle of the newspaper, or how specific words create empathy or aversion for certain people within the article could also be constructed.

The students will have approximately 15 minutes to discuss the words. After the discussion, the class should engage in a full class discussion for approximately 10 minutes in which the teacher will help clarify if there are any misunderstandings or if any of the words have been unsuccessfully dealt with.

The following 30-35 minutes is given over to the students’ time to read the article individually. The article is quite long, around 2000 words which equals to somewhere around four A4 pages. One crucial part of the reading-stage is that the article is to be given students in print form. The students I interviewed said that they wanted to read more articles in print form. In addition to the students’ request, research supports the use of print newspapers. Leopoldina et al. (2014) states that online and print newspapers are two completely different objects and that it is easier to remember a print newspaper article and that print articles have a capacity to catalyse multiple senses. This alludes to what the interviewed students said, “Print newspapers do something to the feeling of reading”. Avishag (2012) explains in a way what that “feeling” adds to the reading. She writes that working with authentic material such as newspapers might make students feel more motivated to read it since they are “real”. Real in this context means that it is not written with the intention to teach about the past or the present, it means that it is written to inform and tell the story about the event. Sanderson (1999) writes when discussing the preparation of a lesson that the “presentation and appearance of teaching material can play a significant role in motivating students to read” (Sanderson, 1999, pp. 11). These different aspects might motivate students to read this rather long article since they are able to see everything that they are supposed to read right away; they could be interested in the authenticity of the material or interested in how the event was presented within the time-frame in which it happened.
Activate (30 min)

During this phase, which is the post-reading stage, the students should critically engage with the text. The students will be given four larger questions. They should choose two of the questions to discuss and answer in groups of two or three. If the lesson were divided into two lessons, all questions could be discussed at this stage. At this stage, students will, as in the engage-stage, answer several questions within a question.

**Question 1: What is the purpose of this article? What is the author’s message?** With this question, the students should discuss the deeper meaning and reasons for why this article was written. Topics such as a third world crisis, a Eurocentric perspective, first world consumption, globalisation and a refugee crisis could be brought up in such a discussion. When answering this question, students will have to connect the events happening in Africa with the living standard in the western parts of the world. A deeper understanding of the world’s demographics will be worked with and required for a well-developed answer.

**Question 2: Do you consider slavery as something that exists only in the third world? Does slavery exist or could come to exist in our society here in Sweden in the future? If so, how and when? If not, why?** When answering this question, students must again take on a global perspective and apply their own situational context to the issue. Students must consider differences between Africa and Sweden. Examples of such differences that could be relevant in a question like this could be: how the conditions for employees differ between the countries; how corrupt the police force are etc.

**Questions 3: In the article, you get to hear the slaves, the traffickers and the buyers’ perspective. Is there any difference in their opinions or view on the ongoing slavery? How would the story change if it was written only from Muhammed Yusuf’s perspective?** Here the students must consider the position of the participants in the interview when reading what they are saying. The students should also discuss how a story changes depending on who is telling the story. This question could be worked with in more depth if the teacher chooses to; the students could be asked to rewrite the story from the perspective from one side’s perspective only. Students could be asked to analyse what the article would look like if perhaps one of the slave traders or buyers would write an informative text about the ongoing slavery compared to how the text would look if written by one of the slaves.
Question 4: Fasan Olaside was caught and held prisoner for ransom by slave-traders in Libya twice. Olaside was horrified by the slave markets he saw. Seeing the slave markets, he asked himself “how could this be possible?” How can it be possible? Why has it not been stopped? Here students should discuss the situation in troublesome countries and discuss terms such as corruption, failing law enforcement. The students could be asked to do research on what the “UN” or other military or humanitarian organisations could do without starting a potential war or conflict.

These four questions will hopefully make the students think about not only what the text says but also how the text portrays the subject. With these questions, the goal is that the students should know the author’s purpose; to recognize different perspectives within the story and to be able to discuss reasons for why this is happening.

Summary

The goal of the lesson is to practise critical reading with a newspaper article connected to the orientation of the programmes. The lesson lasts for 90 minutes and as a lot is to be done during those 90 minutes, the lesson plan could be divided into two 90-minute lessons.

6.2 Vocational lesson plan English 5-child recreational programme

The child recreational programme is a vocational programme which aims to give the participants of the programme the ability to work with children, young adults or adults. According to skolverket, the programme should provide students with knowledge in the relevant science of education depending on which alignment they choose within the programme be it assisting and supporting children or adults in their development. The programme should focus on problem-solving both on an individual level and in groups. The programme should also aim to develop the students’ creativeness and their ability to take initiative (Skolverket 2011).

This lesson will aim for students to give each other new ways of using English to express themselves. The lesson will last for 90 minutes and will be constructed as a lesson which a teacher could implement between projects as a tool to enhance students’ language skills and general knowledge about the world. This lesson will focus on the “top five news items of the day”. This is a way of exploiting newspapers in the classroom which many of the interviewed teachers talked about. However, the lesson will take a more organized and detailed approach.
The students will be divided into five groups and all groups will be given a few full copies of *The New York Daily News*.

**Engage (5min)**

To engage the students in this subject a “YouTube video” (see appendix 2) about the history of print newspapers will be shown. The video is only two minutes long, but it is informative. After watching the video, all students will be handed their copy of *The New York Daily News* to touch and feel before they can study the content. The teacher will hold up a newspaper and ask, “Will these exist in 20 years?” Thus, at this stage, students are to get acquainted with the newspapers as a phenomenon. Students are informed of the history of the newspapers, from print to online newspaper. After that, the students receive a copy of a print newspaper to look through. At this stage the teacher could spend more time going through the newspaper with the students; a whole lesson could be spent discussing different parts of the newspaper, how they differ and what defines them. Topics such as political angle, best-selling headlines and much more could be dealt with during such a lesson.

**Study (55 min)**

Each group will be given a section of the newspaper in which they are to find a “top news article”. In this exercise, the teacher gives each group a specific section and an article within that section instead of just telling the students to find the “top five news of the day” in a newspaper as Wolfgang and Harald suggested. The reason for giving each group a section and being able to show them in the newspapers where it is and what it means is because “one of the clearest ways of explaining the meaning of something is to show it” this could be applied in any situation with language. If you want someone to understand let us say the word jump for example, you show your students a jump and they will instantly make the connection between the jump and the word (Harmer, 2007, pp. 204). Also, within a specific section in the newspapers the content and language differ. The way a sports journalist expresses him/herself may not be in the same way as a journalist who writes about culture. Therefore, students will experience different examples of language depending on what section they work with, so teachers could preferably do this exercise several times in order to introduce students to different parts of the newspaper.

After being given a specific section and article in the pre-reading stage, the group should, be given a list of ten expressions in Swedish. All the expressions are found within the article.
The group should write their own translation of the expression. An example of such an expression could be “tio år äldre än honom” which the students might translate into “ten years older than him.” After translating the expression, the group are to read the article, and find the expressions and compare them with their own translations; it might say “ten years his senior” instead of “ten years older than him”. Lisa did something like this and said that “It is important to choose articles that have a rather complex language for the students to be able to experience a new way of expressing themselves”. The choice of article is important in many aspects according to Sanderson (1999). The teacher should try to choose articles that will interest the students. This makes the choice of groups and choice of article crucial for the success of the lesson. Also, Sanderson claims that teachers should not be too afraid of choosing advanced articles to work with since “students are able to understand language at a level far higher than they are able to produce” (Sanderson, 1999, p.13).

**Activate**

To make sure that the students learn from each other, the groups could change their handouts containing the expressions with each other. They could exchange the handouts with their own translations only and ask the other group to retranslate the expression in another way than they did. After that, they could inform the groups of what was said in the article. The groups could show the other group how they translated the sentence and how the article used the sentence originally. When teaching the lesson in this way, the groups could also write a summary of the article for each other. This could be done by writing an extensive preamble to the other group or just orally explaining what the article was about to that group.

All expressions could be discussed in the full class and written on the board for students to write them down and learn from each other. How this part of the lesson is going to be done is up to each teacher. In this part, the teacher should help break down the sentences and explain different ways to write them and perhaps how they are special for the section in the newspaper. This could later be followed up with constructing something in which the expressions must be included, such as a play or a written text. To practise vocabulary and grammar with context and to read it yourself and to hear it from someone else as well is something that helps retention (Harmer 2007).
Summary

This lesson will widen how the students express themselves in writing or at least make them consider how they already express themselves and see what options there are. One of the disadvantages with this lesson is that the teacher must obtain 20 copies of the newspaper which can be expensive and troublesome. This was one of the main reasons almost all teachers said that did not include newspapers in print form more in the classroom. However, a whole newspaper could be reused for other lessons in the future. It is, therefore, important to inform the students not to discard the newspaper but to handle them with care.

7. Conclusion

The present study had three questions from which the answers led to the creation of two detailed lesson plans. The first question was “How do EFL teachers say they use newspapers in their teaching?” Here I found out that teachers do in fact use newspapers a lot. They said that they use newspapers for both small exercises and larger projects. Most of the teachers agreed that online newspapers are the easiest to use. Although print newspapers are something that the teachers would like to use more, the price and the time needed for collecting them and designing exercises from them was not worth it.

The second question of the study was “How do L2 learners perceive the use of newspapers as learning objects?” Here the answers from the students and the teachers differed. Students did not have the same view of the way newspapers were used in the classroom. The students said that newspapers were mostly used to practise reading comprehension. However, they also said that newspapers had the potential to be included more in the teaching and that they wanted to work more with newspaper articles to be prepared for the national tests.

The third question brought up the further possibilities of newspapers in the English teaching classroom. Both teachers and students saw a lot of potential in the use of newspapers, although not many clear and well explained exercises or “lesson plans” were described. However, some smaller exercises and areas where newspapers could be an advantageous tool were discussed.

Based on the answers from the teachers, and the students and from a review of the literature, I constructed two lesson plans. One was designed to be more suitable for a university
preparation programme, and the other for a vocational programme. One of the lessons focused on critical literacy and the other on the use of expressions.

Having created these lesson plans, my next step is to try them out in the classroom. In fact, conducting this study has influenced me to already try some of the ideas learned from the teachers and the research with my 9th graders at the school where I teach currently. One of Sanderson’s ideas that I have tried is an exercise in which the students learn to unpack sentences within a text they find difficult. The students are divided into pairs with each pair receiving a long and complicated sentence approximately 25-35 words from a news article. After each group has received their article, the teacher writes down an example on the board. I wrote this one:

**Tv presenter blames tablets for tumble**- Children’s television presenter Simon Kirk blamed an accidental overdose of the painkillers he is taking for a shoulder injury for being found lying in the road yesterday by police officers while attending a television awards ceremony in Blackpool (Sanderson, 1999, pp. 50).

The next step is to unravel the text and rewrite the text in some short concise sentences such as “The ceremony was in Blackpool: Simon Kirk is a child’s television presenter. He was found lying in the road”. There are many more of these which could be included (Sanderson 1999, pp. 50). After the teacher has done an example on the board, all the students are to do the same on their handouts. Sanderson also suggests that the pairs change articles when they are done and correct each other, which is something that we did not have time for when I tried it out.

I did this exercise since my students had problems with understanding long sentences and that it is affecting their performance in reading comprehension exercises. This only takes one lesson or even a half if it is a long one. This is just one example of how easy and effective it is to work with news articles to solve specific problems the students might have.

Finally, I would say that newspapers are an interesting resource that works very well when incorporated both in language teaching/learning and also in many other subjects such as history and religion etcetera. It is important that research which involves the use of newspapers for educational purposes is continued.
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Appendix 1

**Vocabulary in** “Africa’s new slave trade: how migrants flee poverty to get sucked into a world of violent crime”

Write the Swedish equivalent to the following words that can be found in the article, also, discuss with your partner the usage and meaning of the follow words.

Parched-

Ordeal-

Unrepentant-

Touting-

Lucrative-

Impunity-

Commonplace-
Appendix 2

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vr5aMmvnO2s)
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