We really like your stories, but we think we
ought to be doing the topics for the final exam.

CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCES WITH

NARRATIVES IN NATURAL AND INSTRUCTED SETTINGS

TEACHERS AND LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Lugossy Réka

Consultant: Dr. Nikolov Marianne

Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics

University of Pécs

2007

T<small>ABLE OF CONTENTS</small>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

2

EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
IRF	Initiation-Response-Feedback
L1	First language/mother tongue
L2	Second language/ foreign language
S	Student
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
T	Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Setting the framework

Considering the vast epistemological literature accumulated in the world, it seems that a perennial attempt of philosophers, psychologists and educationists has been to capture the origins and nature of knowledge and learning. The paradigms for conceptualizing human learning have also inspired attempts to understand second or foreign language development processes, and as such, they have shaped ideas about what counts as good teaching, and influenced teacher education and research about teacher learning (Richardson, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997; Wood, 1988). One of the shifts in conceptualizing learning in general, and teacher learning in particular has been brought about by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), which understands cognition as indissociable from the social and cultural context. In this situated paradigm, where knowledge is seen as constructed in community in a dialogic process (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Kramsch, 2002), classrooms become spaces for student and teacher learning alike.

In this line of thought foreign language developmental processes need to be regarded against the background of complex relationships between students, teachers and their environment. As such, foreign language learning appears inseparable from the process of growing into literacy in both the first and in target language, and from the cultural artefacts which mediate literacy development. Such mediating means are, for example, the books learners read (which encode shared social assumptions about ideologies expressed in pictures and language), but also the beliefs that prevail in the communities about the role of literacy and the ways of acquiring it, as well as the language and the strategies used by teachers to support learners' language development. It appears then that the theory of the mind which presents a frame for understanding the processes dealt with in the present dissertation is a theory of situated cognition which "recognizes the central role that social relationships and

culturally constructed artefacts play in organizing uniquely human forms of thinking" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, pp. 30-31).

This dissertation explores how learners and teachers construct knowledge in interaction through narratives. Therefore, it explores the role of narratives in the English as a foreign language (EFL) class on two levels. First, it looks at how stories shared in EFL affect children's cognitive, in particular their linguistic and literacy development, as well as their affective growth. This is shown by presenting children (aged 6-14) and their teachers interacting with authentic picture books.

On another level, the discussion addresses the role of narratives as frameworks for in-service teachers to construct meaning in their professional contexts. In this sense, as a means for organizing ideas and making implicit knowledge explicit, narrative thinking has been increasingly recognized in the social and human sciences (Bruner, 1987; László, 1999, 2005a, 2005b; Pléh, 2007; Ricoeur, 1981, 1984). In our context, teachers' narratives of their teaching appear to be crucial in teachers' construction of knowledge in more than one way. First, by helping teachers link their practices to theories, and thus interpret classroom phenomena in a coherent framework. This implies another aspect of how narratives contribute to teacher development: while teachers gain a deeper understanding of their practice, they eventually also come to understand the role of narratives in children's meaning making (Wells, 1986) and the need to use narratives on a regular basis in their curriculum (Egan, 1989).

A word of warning is in order. It has become obvious that due to the contextually-based, dynamic and relational nature of the paradigm in which foreign language development is treated (Larsen-Freeman, 2002), the discussion cannot avoid touching on issues related to cognition, affect, as well as social and moral practices and values. However, with all the broad and socially situated treatment they are given, foreign language development processes and their relation to narratives remain in focus. Naturally, this also imposes limitations on the depth of treating certain aspects which are of great significance from a psychological or social-psychological perspective, but which are not the main interest of my dissertation.

2 Organisation

The dissertation is organized in two major parts. In the first one I provide a critical survey of the relevant literature, followed by empirical studies focusing on young learners and their teachers. Chapter One presents the paradigm in which knowledge construction is

conceptualized in what follows. The chapter provides an overview of major schools of thought in psychology, with special focus on approaches to learning which take into account its social context, including participants' personal, professional and cultural history, and which therefore treat language development as a complex, dynamic and nonlinear activity emerging from the interaction of the individual components.

In Chapter Two I discuss the contribution of narratives to children's cognitive, linguistic and affective development, with special reference to their role in constructing self and social identity (Bruner, 1987; Bettelheim, 1991; Schank & Abelson, 1995). Why, in spite of the benefits they present as educational experiences, narratives still tend to be on the margin of the educational culture in Hungarian primary schools also remains to be examined in this chapter. As for the role of narratives in teachers' development, I will address the role of narratives as means for meaning making, and also as research tools which help reveal teachers' thinking processes (Bruner, 1987; Horsdal, 2006; László, 2005b).

As children's development through authentic narratives is a main concern of this dissertation, Chapter Three addresses literacy development as a cognitive and social process (Heath, 1982, 1994; Hudelson, 1994; Mercer, 1994). I will evaluate strategies that support growth into literacy, in particular story-telling and story-reading, and relate them to success in foreign language acquisition.

Chapter Four narrows the discussion of narratives to the role of picture books in English language education, in particular to the development of young learners and their teachers. I will argue that authentic picture books provide complex educational experiences, which connect foreign language learning with other areas of human growth, including cognitive, affective, moral and artistic development (Arizpe, 2006; Marriott, 1998; Stephens, 1992; Zipes, 1983, 1997). They do so by involving learners' imaginative faculties through their ideologically patterned text and through the visual element, and by providing samples of natural language in meaningful contexts.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven are empirical studies, presenting children and their teachers in interaction with narratives in EFL lessons. In these studies foreign language developmental processes are explored within the complex pattern of relationships among students, teachers and their environment. Chapter Five gives an account of how Hungarian primary-school children (aged 7–10) and their teachers benefited from a reading project, in which authentic picture books were used to complement the EFL syllabus, both as in-class and as home reading. The study reports on the linguistic, affective and social effects of the

project on children, teachers, as well as the close community, involving colleagues, children's siblings and peers.

Chapter Six reports on the impact of narratives on students and teachers from a double perspective: (1) as teaching materials in the EFL class, and (2) as frames within which teachers reflected on their own practice and attempted to link apparently isolated classroom events in coherent methodologies. This latter aspect seems to be crucial in that it shows teachers' learning to be explicit about their minds, and developing expertise in a dialogic process, which legitimizes the role of classrooms as spaces for teacher learning (Johnson, 2006, p. 241).

Finally, through the data presented in Chapter Seven I analyze children's spontaneous comments on what they hear and see while sharing picture books in English. Children's comments are shown to provide opportunities for teachers to gain access to students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1981b), and mediate learning experiences for them.

3 Research methodology

In the studies reported here qualitative data were collected, relying on self-observation, external observation, lesson plans, teaching diaries, semi-structured interviews, and teachers' narratives of their own teaching experience. Out of the data collection processes teachers' narratives stand out as particularly relevant: besides providing a "landscape of action," they also offer what Bruner (1986, pp. 11-12) calls a "landscape of consciousness." That is to say, they give access to the ideas behind the described actions, and by this, they provide insights into socially embedded processes which go deeper than what meets the eye. Experiences with narratives from several perspectives have made it clear that the dynamic socio-cultural categories they involve demand a research paradigm which is flexible and leaves space for interpretation. Therefore, in analysing the collected data I have also relied on qualitative processes, which are typically descriptive, analytical, and interpretative (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

In his introduction to Betty Rosen's narrative of comprehensive school boys' literacy development, Harold Rosen (1988, p. 172) claims that there is a demand for accounts of actual experience because they "give off that special arome of the authentic." Besides, narratives of teaching experience are "neither a-theoretical nor anti-theoretical, for always, however implicit, there are principles and assumptions at work" (H. Rosen, 1988, p.172). The

accounts of teaching and learning presented in this dissertation show "actual" experience analyzed and explained in relationship with complex socio-educational factors. They aim to present teaching and learning experiences both from an emic perspective (i.e. the participants' viewpoints), as well as from the researcher's etic perspective, thus involving an interpretative framework for the perceived phenomena (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

As pointed out above, the stance taken to learning and teaching in the empirical studies is one that assumes a dynamic reality. Therefore, the focus is predominantly on processes at work, rather than on measurable outcomes. Presenting statistically measurable and replicable data has not been a priority. Rather, my aim has been to research knowledge construction, while giving credit to the sociocultural processes related to teaching and learning. In this sense, the "stories" told below may contribute to raising questions, highlighting trends, and to constructing an understanding of learning as a socially and culturally situated process (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). In this sense, the research presented is unique as much as each classroom context is unique in the experiences it offers: the participants come from specific sociocultural contexts and have grown into a specific culture of education. Therefore, their perceptions and stories of teaching and learning are also one of a kind.

Chapter One

Perspectives on learning and education

1 Orientations in the study of language development

In analysing models of cognitive development, Richardson (1998) and Robinson (1981) show that contemporary thinking about learning and education has grown out of centuries of thinking about the origins of knowledge, and that the assumptions that underlie our theories about learning date back to antiquity. Frequently, the theories or models that have been put forth in this respect are conceptualized in metaphors which offer a more holistic understanding than the requisite information only (Gould, 1991; Lakoff & Robinson, 1980). The field of language development has been no exception in this respect. Kramsch (2002) distinguishes two fundamentally different metaphors that have inspired research into the way children and adults relate to their environment through language. These metaphors also reflect two distinct orientations of the study of language.

The first metaphor, inspiring the field of language acquisition, is the image of the *learner-as-computer*, where the language learner is seen as "an information processor that receives input from caretakers, teachers and peers, processes this input into intake, and, ultimately, produces output of a measurable kind" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 1). This frame of understanding views acquisition as information processing, that is a predominantly cognitive process, and therefore it prompts research that focuses on how skills are *acquired* and tends to disregard the *use* of these skills from the domain of inquiry of second language acquisition (Kramsch, 2002). This also implies that social context and negotiating meaning, otherwise crucial for successful communication and central to a communicative curriculum (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 92) remain, in this approach to SLA research, in the background.

The second relevant metaphor to capture interaction of learners with their environment comes from the field of language socialisation. The view of the *learner-as-apprentice* is born

out of linguistic anthropology (Heath, 1982; Schiffelin & Ochs, 1986) and refers to the process of socialising children and other novices through language (Ochs 1996 cited by Kramsch, 2002, p. 2). As Kramsch (2002) notes, the focus in this paradigm is not on the way symbolic systems are acquired, but on the way novice members learn from more expert members to use language appropriately, and thus "enact social relationships and other sociocultural phenomena that will make them into expert members" (Kramsch, 2002 p. 2). Instead of focusing on mental operations, research here focuses on how novice members grow into a community of practice.

It appears that the two different metaphors which reflect the way children and adults relate to language also impose different research traditions. While language acquisition researchers are primarily interested in linguistic and mental processes at work (Ellis, 1997), language socialisation researchers have been interested in sociocultural phenomena at work (Heath, 1982). The co-existence of different views and traditions in research into language development phenomena does by no means imply that one approach is necessarily better than the other. Both research traditions and the schools in which they originate bring their own contribution to a more complex understanding of second and foreign language learning phenomena (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Therefore, there is considerable effort on the part of researchers (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Leather, 2002; Lemke, 2002; Ochs, 2002; van Lier 2002) to bridge the gap between the two traditions in order to get a more complex framework for scrutinising phenomena related to learning.

Before analysing proposed frameworks and metaphors for bringing together the psychological and the social dimensions of research, I will consider in more detail how both cognitive and sociocultural schools account for creating meaning and language development. This is important because understanding how these theories emerged and connected or conflicted with each other enables us to see their contributions to research on language development and also to place teaching and learning in a meaningful context.

1.1 A cognitive approach to language development

The learner-as-computer metaphor has been shaped by what is called the cognitive theory of learning and development. According to Gardner (2000, p. 67), the key notion of the cognitive revolution is "mental representations". Adopting a fundamentally different view of learning (and teaching) than the previously ruling behaviourist perspective, cognitive

psychologists believe that "individuals have ideas, images, and various 'languages' in their mind-brain" and that "these representations … are susceptible to study by scientists and to change by educators" (Gardner 2000, p. 67).

The rise of representations in this sense is primarily attributed to the coming of age of computers (Gardner, 2000; Richardson, 1989; Williams & Burden, 1997): information processing theorists have tried to explain how different aspects of learning take place in terms of rules and models by drawing on the analogy of complex computers. By constructing various models (Atkinson & Schiffrin, 1968; Schank & Abelson, 1977, 1995), information theorists tried to account for the way in which the human mind works and claimed to predict the kind of mental processes necessary for effective learning to take place as well as to identify "malfunctioning" in case of learning difficulties. This kind of investigation of the workings of the human mind, although concerned with the mental processes involved in learning, and perceiving learners as active participants in the learning process, information processing is an essentially mechanistic approach, and is "not at all concerned with meanings or emotions" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.15).

Within the cognitive approach to learning, it is constructivism that is concerned with individuals' active participation in the construction of meaning. According to Piaget's view of how children's thinking develops (1966, 1972), individuals are, by their innate capacities, involved in constructing their personal understanding of the world. Williams and Burden (1997) consider this emphasis on the constructive nature of the learning process as one of the most enduring aspects of Piaget's work, which comes in sharp contrast to more traditional (e.g., positivist) views which see learning as the accumulation of facts.

Piaget's views on the role of maturation and personal experience have had positive implications for teaching in that they have focused teachers' attention on the learner as an individual, actively involved in constructing meaning and consequently, on the importance of matching the requirement of any task to the cognitive level of the learner. However, Piaget's view on maturation and the individual construction of knowledge has also been interpreted as minimising the role of teachers in the process. This links to another common criticism addressed to Piagetian theory, namely that by its emphasis on individual development, it overlooks the importance of the social environment for learning. Although, as Smith (1989) points out, Piaget makes several references to collaboration and communication, his theory of development is basically "individualistic" and "biological" rather than "social" and "cultural" (Mercer, 1994, p. 94). Piaget's developmental theory is taken up by Bruner (1966) precisely for its emphasis on what is individual in children's ways of representing the world, and thus,

for its implications for individualized, "discovery learning". Bruner's vision of education is one in which young learners are given the opportunity to discover for themselves the solutions to educational problems set for them in a meaningful way that is not artificially sectionalised into subjects, and thus come to a coherent understanding of the world. Instead of the accumulation of facts, Bruner (1966) advocates the development of conceptual understanding of children and the central role played by meaning in this process.

The focus on individual attributes of learning and language development prompted valuable research on individual differences in second language acquisition (SLA) and has had implications for second and foreign language pedagogy. However, due precisely to its emphasis on the individual construction of knowledge, the research inspired by cognitive theory is one where cultural and communicative factors are marginalised and is therefore of limited use in understanding human learning and facilitating pedagogy.

Another shortcoming commonly attributed to cognitive science in general is that it minimizes the role of affective factors in the process of learning. Gardner (2000) points out that educators' understandable focus on cognition has sometimes had the consequence of decreasing awareness of other equally important factors, such as motivation. It is only in recent research that affect is integrated in a cognitive perspective. Cognitivists like LeDoux (1996, cited by Gardner, 2000, p. 77) and Damasio (1994 cited by Gardner, 2000, p. 77) have proposed models that highlight the influence of emotions on the structure of mental representations and thus acknowledge the role of emotions as equally important in providing a valid portrait of human nature.

1.2 Sociocultural theories of learning and development: Vygotsky and neo-Vygotskian perspectives

Mercer (1994) points out that the late 1970s and early 1980s saw a growing dissatisfaction with psychological theories of learning, cognitive development and intellectual achievement which "focus on individual development and marginalise cultural and communicative factors" (1994, p. 94). In order to gain a broader view of the factors influencing language development, the cognitive, affective and social aspects of teaching and learning also had to be taken into consideration. Thus, the new perspectives that emerged on language development were of a more social nature, and emphasised social interaction and the cultural context of learning.

As I have pointed out, a research tradition that has approached language development in a different way than language acquisition research has been that of language socialization, born out of linguistic anthropology and conceptualized in the metaphor of the learner-as-apprentice (Heath 1982; Schiffelin & Ochs, 1986). The socially-oriented perspectives on learning view language use in real-world situations as fundamental to learning (Zuengler & Miller, 2006), and see language not so much in terms of input than as a tool for getting things done (Kramsch 2002, p. 2). Thus, the focus is not on linguistic processes at work in language acquisition but on language use and the sociocultural phenomena at work when language is acquired. Therefore, two common, axiomatic themes in this strand of research are that (1) knowledge is normally acquired and applied in specific cultural contexts, and that (2) meaningful discourse is necessarily context-dependent (Mercer, 1994).

Kramsch (2002) and Larsen-Freeman (2002) suggest that interaction between the fields of language acquisition research and language socialization research has been rare not only due to the different role they attribute to social context, but also to the differences in the ultimate criteria of success. While the success of language socialization is full acculturation into the language-speaking community, the success of language acquisition is mastery of the linguistic and communicative aspects of the language, not primarily assimilation into the target language community (Kramsch, 2002). There is, however, an articulated tendency to express the goals of language acquisition and language socialization in similar terms. The success of language acquisition is increasingly expressed in terms of communicative and cultural competence, while socialization is increasingly dependent on language ability (Genesee, 1994; Hudelson, 1994; Leather, 2002; McKeon, 1994). It makes sense, therefore, to attempt to see language acquisition and language use within one framework in order to be able to formulate complex learning theories that may inform our theories about teaching and learning.

One of the attempts to bridge the gap between the psychological and social dimensions of research was prompted by Vygotsky work (1962, 1978), who highlighted the importance of language use and teaching and learning in social context, and thus gave theoretical foundations for socially oriented research on language development. Vygotsky (1962, 1978) offers a perspective on human development and learning that is fundamentally different from dominant Western psychological theories in that it treats human learning and cognitive development as a culturally based process: in this frame of ideas knowledge and understandings are constructed in cultural contexts. Given the importance of the social environment of learning, Vygotsky's work is contrasted with Piagetian theory in that Piaget's

research and theory are seen as individualistic and biological, whereas Vygotsky's model is seen as social and cultural or historical. Crook (1991 cited by Mercer 1994, p. 93) suggests that from the perspective of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory "the unit of psychological analysis becomes activity in a *context* – and the study of cognitive change, therefore, must dwell on the settings in which understandings are acquired".

The neo-Vygotskian theoretical perspective, to which Crook (1991 in Mercer 1994, p. 93) refers as "cultural psychology," and Smith (1989, p. 72) as "socio-cognitive developmental theory" incorporates elements of Vygotsky's s work and draws on post-Vygotskian, socially oriented research. Sociocognitive theorists look for an understanding of human cognition and human development in social context. One of the theoretical models shaped in this tradition is the "social-constructivist" or "social-interactionist" framework discussed by Williams and Burden (1997).

A social-constructivist approach to learning encompasses salient features of both cognitive learning theory, where individuals are active participants in the construction of knowledge and Vygotskian emphasis on the role of the social context and social relationships in developing knowledge. It is to be noted, therefore, that in spite of their emphasis on the social aspect of learning, theories that find their origin in Vygotsky's ideas do not exclude psychological investigation, but rather they offer a relevant theory for cognitive development in social context.

1.2.1 A different model of classroom education

Castle (1970 cited by Wood, 1988, p. 1) makes the point that ideas about the nature of infancy and childhood shape the views on the nature of learning and therefore dictate the ways in which we think about teaching and education. That is to say, the metaphors we draw on when we think about the nature of learning (such as the learner-as-computer or the learner-as-apprentice) will inevitably be reflected in our teaching philosophies.

Thinking and formulating theories about learning has always generated theorizing and new practices in the field of teaching. In the case of Piaget, for example, promoting a view of the child as an individual constructing knowledge in defined stages of development resulted in teachers taking into consideration the age-related cognitive characteristics of learners and setting tasks accordingly. Similarly, Vygotskian theories (1962, 1978) offer not just a different model of cognitive development, but also a different model of classroom education,

with an explicit social orientation. Vygotsky emphasised the relevance of meaningful learning activities for learners and the role of educators in creating opportunities for meaningful learning.

A central concept to Vygotsky's theory and social interactionist theories in general is the concept of mediation (Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein, Rand, Hoffman, & Miller, 1980). It term refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners' lives, who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 40). Thus, effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between more people with different levels of knowledge. The role of the meditator is to help the learner to move through the next layer of knowledge or understanding. The concept of mediation has obvious implications for teachers with regard to what they can do to help children in their learning. As opposed to the Piagetian model of development, where language and social interaction had little role to play in development (and this also minimised the role of parents' and teachers' intervention), the social interactionist perspective attributes a crucial role to language and talk, as it is by language that culture is transmitted and thinking develops.

Bruner (1966) explains that it is by the acquisition and use of words as symbols that children free their thinking and experience from the here-and-now, and so they become able to think in abstract terms. Rather than being a consequence of cognitive development, language appears to be a means for concept formation. This is also supported by Donaldson's findings (1978), suggesting that by adequate intervention, mediators can stretch learner's development instead of waiting for readiness to happen. A useful metaphor to illustrate the process of building on the learner's actual knowledge in order to bring about further development is that of "scaffolding." Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) talk about scaffolding to illustrate how adequate mediation on the part of teachers supports learners' development and helps their construction of expertise.

It appears that, as Lantolf and Thorne (2006) point out, despite the connotations suggested by the term sociocultural (for a discussion of the term see Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), the sociocultural theory presents itself as a theory of the mind, rather than a theory of the social and cultural aspects of human existence. It is a theory of situated cognition which gives credit to the role of social relationships in organizing thinking (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, pp. 30-31) and in constructing meaning in interaction.

1.2.2 Teacher learning as a socially situated process

Regarding students' learning as something which emerges out of experiences in social contexts has also made an impact on the way we understand teaching and teacher cognition. Johnson and Golombek (2003) argue for the relevance of the sociocultural perspective on teacher learning by showing how the key constructs of the theory provide insights into teacher development. In Vygotsky's understanding, higher cognitive development is a process of internalisation achieved in collaboration with someone more expert (Vygotsky, 1978), or with the help of cultural artefacts (Lantolf, 2000). It is, as pointed out above, a meditated process, in which a person's activity is initially mediated by other people or cultural artifacts, but later comes to be controlled by the person, as he or she develops internal resources to regulate his or her activities and move forward (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 733). In this frame of ideas, the shift in teachers' understanding occurs not through imposing new external resources (e.g., methods and materials), but by understanding existing beliefs and practices, and relating them to theories of teaching and learning.

This does not imply that the role of subject matter knowledge in teacher learning should be underestimated. However, given the socially negotiated nature of learning, teacher education needs to take into account the specific settings and the shared understandings these settings promote in order to be able to support teachers in linking theory and existing practice. Thus, seeing teachers' knowledge as constructed in community in a dialogic process is an epistemological shift which also allows us to see classrooms as legitimate spaces for lifelong teacher learning (Johnson, 2006, p. 237).

The empirical studies in this dissertation (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) all draw on the explanatory power of the sociocultural theory for the way teachers conceptualize their work and construct meaning in their settings. This emerges in particular in Chapter Five, where narratives of teaching experience emerge as mediational means through which in-service teachers reflect on their practice, and gradually internalise new knowledge.

1.3 Dychotomy reconsidered: an ecological framework

In sections 1.1 and 1.2 of this chapter I have explored two dominant approaches to language development based on two metaphors that inspired research. The learner-as-computer and the learner-as-apprentice images of how languages are learned point at two equally important

sides of human nature: the individual and the social sides. I have also tried to make it clear that language acquisition research has mostly situated itself in the paradigm dominated by an emphasis on the individual/psychological traits of language development.

Commenting on the unequal representation of the social and the psychological dimensions in mainstream SLA research, researchers like Firth and Wagner (1997) and Larsen-Freeman (2002, 2000) point out that in the traditional paradigm research on language use is downplayed in favour of the individual cognitive strand of research. Also, although the existence of at least two major positions in this respect can be considered a healthy sign (Lantolf, 1996 in Larsen-Freeman, 2002, p. 35), as it "prevents either view from remaining or becoming hegemonic," some researchers urge for a reconciliation of these two points of view and for trying to achieve a balance between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives.

In its emphasis on the social aspect of learning, the Vygotskian framework has proved to be wider and more inclusive than either the cognitive or the language socialisation approaches. Vygotsky's theory of learning does not, in principle, oppose the idea of innate elements in cognitive development, but it primarily situates mental functions on the social plane. Based on the central tenet that social relationships genetically underlie all higher mental functions and their relationships (Vygotsky, 1981a), learning is seen as occurring first "between people, as an interpsychological category and then within the child, as an intrapsychological category" (Vygotsky 1981b, p.163). This being the case, rather than solving the basic dychotomy of individual/mental vs. social Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian approaches to development seem to be strongly biassed toward a social deterministic plane.

Therefore, researchers urge for a reconciliation of these two points of view. Achieving a balance between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives would mean getting a more complex picture of how learning, in particular language development occurs, and as such, would be a prerequisite of formulating informed teaching theories. For this, we need to rely on truths conveyed by each "side" and regard the psychological and social aspects of second language development as complementary rather than exclusive.

In his persuasively written book *The Disciplined Mind*, cognitive psychologist Gardner writes:

> Modern Westerners often think of the science of human beings as that enterprise which begins and ends within the skin of the individual. I do not believe this is true. What we learn about human beings from studies of the cultures in which our bodies dwell is at least as important as what we learn from psychology and biology; indeed, educational decisions should not be made without equally firm anchoring in both camps. And so, it is time to consider the insights gained from ethnographers, anthropologists, and other observers of cultures. (Gardner, 2000, p. 85)

In this frame of ideas, psycholinguists, anthropologists and language educationists (Kramsch, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Leather, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Lier, 2002) have drawn on theories from other sciences to inspire the ways of looking at learning and education and picked up the ecology metaphor as it captures the dynamic interaction between language users and their environment as between parts of a living organism.

1.3.1 What the ecological framework has to offer

It is worth exploring how an ecological perspective is more comprehensive than other, previously outlined approaches. Contrary to the traditional separation between language acquisition and language socialization, the ecological framework proposes a non-dychotomizing view of psychological and social aspects of language development: it treats the relationship between them as a complex and symbiotic one. This also means that the language acquisition of individual learners is no longer considered in closed system terms. Instead, learners' linguistic development is acknowledged as "interdependent with their participation in specific communities of practice" (van Dam, 2002, p. 237).

While traditional (linear) models predicted a cause-and-effect relationship between teaching- input and learning-output, the conceptual models shaped within an ecological framework treat language development as a complex, nonlinear, relational activity (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Dam, 2002) and they take into account a variety of factors linked to the time and space of the teaching and learning process, as well as to the participants' personal, professional and cultural history. One such conceptual model that captures the ecology of language learning is chaos/complexity theory (C/CT). Larsen-Freeman (2002) shows that unlike traditional scientific approaches that attempt to understand something by reducing it to its parts and explain the separate behaviours of the singled out bits, then finally add partial explanations into an explanation of the whole, C/CT considers the global patterns that emerge from the interactions of the individual components. Applied to the study of language development, this holistic perspective allows us to look for connections between cognitive acquisition and social use, and see language development within the context of a dynamic, rather unpredictable system. Therefore, language learning phenomena are seen as the result of interaction between learners and their environment, and classroom processes will be understood and interpreted not as isolated bits, but as relational events, set in the framework of cultural, educational and community traditions.

1.3.2 The relevance of the ecological approach

The aim of this thesis is to expire how Hungarian children grow into literacy while reading authentic picture books in English: how they negotiate meaning in interaction and build their understandings of books, cultures and language. It also examines the way in which teachers support students' language and literacy development, and while doing so, they make sense of their teaching and learning philosophies, that is of their identities as teachers, in interaction with the community of practice.

It seemed important that the approach to the data gained from diverse contexts, including the young learner classroom, secondary schools, methodology seminars for in-service teachers and the home environment, should not exclusively focus on the psychological-linguistic plane of development, as has been traditional in second and foreign language acquisition research. Instead, it should take into account the dynamic complexity of the learning context, and view the cognitive, affective and social aspects of teaching and learning as indissociable elements of language development.

The ecological approach appears to be a framework that brings together all these aspects, and by this, transcends existing metaphors in language development, without the intention of replacing them. It is, as Kramsch (2002, p. 14) notes, a level of interpretation which is "of a different logical type" from either language acquisition or language socialisation, and it goes back to Bateson's "frames" (1972 cited by Atherton, 2002, p. 3), seen as schemata of interpretation which give meaning to events that would otherwise be seen meaningless (Kramsch, 2002, p. 14).

The perspective adopted in analysing the collected data employs concepts that are uncharacteristic of traditional models of language acquisition used by either SLA research or language socialisation studies. In the following I will consider three notions by which an ecological approach offers valuable insights and link these to the empirical studies presented further on. The three notions are: (1) relationality, (2) various timescales, and (3) mediation.

1.3.2.1 Integrating language acquisition and language use: relationality

As I have said, this dissertation explores learners' linguistic experiences while reading authentic narratives, in particular picture books in the English lesson and at home. It also investigates teachers' responses to these experiences, and the attempts made by teachers to

talk about learners' and their own development. As such, it cannot avoid looking at both psychological and social aspects of language development. Language, as van Lier reminds us (2002), is located both in the world around us as well as in the brain: "when we speak it is about something and for something – or someone – in the world, not just a by-product of the brain" (2002, p. 158). This contextualized, "dialogical" (Bakhtin, 1980) view of language as something shaped by the context and at the same time shaping the context is reflected in ecologically oriented research, and allows us to look at linguistic phenomena in their interrelatedness.

The findings of the empirical studies presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven suggest that while children share foreign language books with significant others and negotiate meaning, they appear to develop an intrinsic interest in books, as well as motivation to learn and communicate in a foreign language. This process is influenced by and at the same time involves teachers' culturally acquired assumptions about teaching and learning as well as those which they have developed over time. The ecological framework allows us to gain a complex picture of how these components interact in a dynamic system, instead of regarding them as separate objects of study.

1.3.2.2 Various timescales

Also, the phenomena addressed by the studies in this dissertation are inextricably linked with time. Neither teachers nor learners can be isolated at a certain point in time and understood without their previous teaching and learning experiences, but need to be seen in their development over time. Kramsch (2002) notes that "linguistic phenomena are indissociable from an individual's memory of past phenomena and his/her anticipation of future ones" (2002, p. 19). In this respect, ecologically oriented research is also useful because it introduces the notion of various timescales on which participants live and develop, and their linguistic experience unfolds. As shown in Chapter Six, learners and teachers store experiences from the past, learn new things influenced by past events, and all follow their individual learning time, which is not, as Lemke (2002) points out, run by clock time.

1.3.2.3 Mediation

Because it perceives language development as a nonlinear, relational activity, the ecological model also highlights the importance of mediation. As I pointed out above, in Vygotsky's theory (1966, 1978) and social-constructivist theories in general (Williams & Burden, 1997), understanding and communication are constructed through social interaction in the community. As such, the process of mediation involves relationships loaded with participants' life histories, but also their engagement with culturally mediated artefacts.

The concept of mediation will gain significance in all the empirical studies presented in this dissertation, on various levels. The studies deal with children's language development through "mediational means" (Scollon, 2002, p. 134) such as authentic narratives, in particular, picture books. Their engagement with language through books involves in its turn mediated action, that is teachers selecting and shaping learning experiences for students, but also the comments students make in the L1, while they make meaning of the books. As I will show in Chapter Seven (5.4), if teachers decide to build on learners' remarks, they exploit valuable learning opportunities in terms of new language and content, and scaffold their cognitive and language development. This underlines Kramsch's interpretation of mediated action as "leave space for newness and transformation" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 21). It also turns out that teachers react to unexpected teaching and learning opportunities differently, according to their culturally constructed understandings of teaching and learning. This reflects another level of mediation: that of the community mediating teachers' and students' perceptions of what counts as learning in the language lesson.

2 Methods of researching knowledge construction in sociocultural contexts

The focus of the research presented in this paper is not on clear-cut, quantitatively measurable, verifiable and generalizable data, but rather on dynamic and therefore hardly generalizable categories, such as human behaviours and socio-cultural patterns and ideologies which underlie behaviours. It seems appropriate to ask what research methodology is most likely to explore the complex relationships between language, learners and the language learning environment involving teachers, peers, parents, colleagues, as well as cultural and educational traditions at work in the community.

This type of data, typical of ecologically oriented research, lend themselves to qualitative methods of analysis which are typically descriptive, analytical, and interpretative. Kramsch points out that ecologically oriented methodologies tend to focus on relationships and contingencies, as well as on differences in degree, not in clear-cut categories (Kramsch, 2002, p. 24). In what follows I will outline the characteristics of qualitative research, and present their relevance for the focus of the dissertation. I will give special consideration to the role of narratives as a means to explore teachers' thinking processes.

2.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

Although the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research types reflects an overly simplistic view, as these terms mark two extreme ends of a continuum (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Mackey & Gass, 2005), authors indicate certain key characteristics which distinguish one type of research from the other.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), qualitative research is distinctive in that, rather than testing specific hypotheses, it observes phenomena, and provides detailed descriptions of individuals and events in their natural settings. The data gained is viewed in a holistic fashion, in the sense that the picture may include both micro-level phenomena (e.g., interaction within the classroom), as well as the broader sociocultural context (e.g., the ideological orientations of the speech community as a whole) (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.163). Therefore, ethnographic studies and case studies favour an emic perspective, when the observed phenomena are interpreted in terms of the categories which are meaningful in the specific cultural-historical context.

Another distinguishing feature of qualitative research is that it is open-ended, focused on process rather than outcome. This also implies that, unlike the carefully defined research questions of quantitative studies, research questions in qualitative studies tend to be general and open-ended, with no precise hypothesis (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, categories may emerge and hypotheses may be generated during research.

The fact that qualitative studies are discovery, rather than verification oriented, and that they assume a dynamic reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mackey & Gass, 2005) implies that they are less concerned with generalizability. Thus, qualitative researchers may choose to involve and work intensively with fewer participants, and attempt to gain a more in-depth picture of human behaviours and socio-cultural patterns which underlie behaviours (Webster

& Mertova, 2007). With all this said, it important to remember, though, that these two research types are by no means necessarily dichotomous, but, as Mackey and Gass (2005) note, they may often be used in a complementary way, in order to gain a fuller picture of the researched phenomena.

2.2 The relevance of qualitative research methods for our context

The empirical studies presented in this dissertation are all in the qualitative research tradition. They involve longitudinal observations, and aim to provide holistic descriptions of language learning experiences within specific settings. This is the case with the study focusing on primary-school children's reading picture books in the English class and at home. The children and their teachers were observed for four years, and investigation has gone beyond the strictly language learning issues in the traditional, psychological sense. Rather, it views their foreign language acquisition situated in context, exploring how linguistic, affective and sociocultural factors interact.

The studies explore complex relationships shaped along various timescales, and as such, assume a dynamic reality. The study exploring teachers' beliefs about using narratives in the English class in Chapter Five is another example for the complex relationships investigated in this type of research. By analysing the development of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, the research involves various timescales both on an individual and a social-educational level. This explains why the focus is predominantly on processes, rather than measurable outcomes. Also, these processes are interpreted by involving participants' perspectives, and treating emerging categories in ways that are meaningful to them. As I have tried to gain information and reach an understanding about how knowledge is constructed in specific settings, and render detailed pictures of how various factors interact, involving great numbers of participants in order to gain statistically measurable data has not been a priority.

However, attempts have been made to improve the credibility and transferability of "soft" data by collecting data over longer periods of time and in as many contexts and situations as possible. Also, triangulation has been used in order to explore issues from all possible perspectives and to reduce observer bias. For example, in documenting the Real Books Project (Chapter Six), along longitudinal observation, I relied on teachers' diaries, semi-structured interviews with teachers, as well as informal conversations with some of the participant children and their parents. This allowed not only triangulation of findings, but also

illuminated unexpected aspects of using picture books in these specific settings. Similarly, in exploring teachers' beliefs about using narratives in their classes, various data collection methods (e.g. teachers' self-observation, teachers' critical analyses of their teaching, and teachers' oral reflections on their teaching and on the ideas discussed in their own written work) were helpful in uncovering knowledge about the complexities of teachers' mental lives, and in supporting the conclusions of the study.

A final word about the role of teachers' narratives, as they stand out as particularly inciting tools in researching construction of knowledge in interaction. Harold Rosen makes the point that "there is a reservoir of innovatory teaching experience which is never drawn on because it is never translated into stories" (1988, p. 172). By stating this, he also makes the case for narratives of teaching experience, which present examples of authentic contexts and offer personal understandings of teaching and learning. In this sense, personal narratives of teaching experience present the benefits of narratives in general: along the landscape of action, they also offer the landscape of consciousness (Bruner, 1986, 1987), that is the ideas underlying actions. It appears then that narratives of teaching experience, whether in the form of diaries or oral accounts, can be considered faithful expressions of the individual and cultural psychological constructs that underlie behaviour (László, 2005), and need not be dismissed as anecdotal evidence (Cortazzi, 1994, p. 163). I will come back to this point in more detail in Chapter Two (1, 2, 3), when discussing the role of narratives as a way of ordering experience, which is fundamentally different from a paradigmatic approach (Bruner, 1986).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed the cognitive and social approaches to understanding human learning, and language development in particular, and I have related these two dominant frameworks to the different research traditions they inspired in the field of SLA research. I have paid special attention to the social-constructivist approach to learning (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), which, with its emphasis on the role of the social context and social relationships in developing knowledge, attempts to bridge the gap between the psychological and social dimensions of research.

Among the theories presented, the ecological view of language development has emerged as the most appropriate theoretical framework for interpreting the developmental

processes discussed in this dissertation. The conceptual models shaped within the ecological framework view language development as a complex, relational activity (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Dam, 2002), taking into account the teaching-learning context, as well as the participants' personal, professional and cultural history. In this line of thought, Chapters Five, Six and Seven will also treat language education in the social, cultural and historical context of the communities of practice.

Finally, this chapter addresses the methodology which seems most appropriate for researching knowledge construction in various sociocultural contexts. As the data collected and presented in the empirical chapters lend themselves to qualitative methods of analysis, which are typically descriptive, analytical, and interpretative, I have discussed characteristics of qualitative research and its relevance for our research context.

Chapter Two

THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

Anthropologists claim that the story form is a cultural universal: it reflects a fundamental structure of our minds and is therefore one of the earliest and most basic and powerful forms in which we organize knowledge and make sense of the world (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). Due to their potential for meaning making, and for building identity and relationships, in the past few decades narratives have received considerable attention in various fields including literary theory, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, ethics, film studies, and various other, often interdisciplinary fields (Bruner, 1996; Cobley, 2001; Ehmann, 2002; Horsdal, 2006; Keen, 2003; László, 2005). This means that narratives are being scrutinized from new perspectives and for new purposes (Keen, 2003).

In this chapter I will explore narratives from two angles. First, I will discuss their contribution to the cognitive, affective and linguistic development of children, and relate these benefits to the classroom culture. Then, I will consider the role of narratives in promoting teacher awareness, and teachers' construction of meaning. The double perspective implies that the term "narrative" will be used, on the one hand, as a literary genre, an imaginary telling of fiction (Cortazzi, 1994, p. 158) which involves temporality (i.e. a chronological sequence of events), causation (i.e. the middle action causing the final state), and human interest (i.e. inviting a projection of values and motives to characters in the story). On the other hand, I will refer to narratives as the recounting of teachers' real-life experience regarding their teaching and learning process.

While using narratives as conscious research tools which shed light on the construction of meaning has become widespread with the rise of the social-constructivist approach in the human sciences (Bruner, 1986, 1987; László, 1999), humans have always resorted to story-telling as a means to organize past events in coherent patterns. The story goes that long ago a Native American tribe would write the stories on the buffalo hide so that

they remember them. Times of war came, and the tribe had to leave without being able to carry much. As they did not want to leave their stories behind and forget them, each member of the tribe ate a piece of the buffalo's hide, and carried it within from that time on. This is how the people started to tell their stories. And they did so in order to remember who they were, and in order to keep the tribe together.

The myth of the people who kept their stories to re-create their lives presents the power of a story told in oral cultures, while at the same time it makes the case for the meaning and importance of narratives in literate societies: it is through narratives that we attempt to "give coherence to the otherwise inexplicable" (Wells, 1986, p. 196) concerns of human experience. In this sense, Bruner argues for the power of narrative as a legitimate mode of cognitive functioning, along the paradigmatic, or logical-scientific form of thought, which is used in the construction of logical arguments. While Western cultures privilege the logical approach, narrative thinking should be regarded equally significant, as it provides "a distinct way of ordering experience, of constructing reality" (Bruner, 1986, p.11).

The myth of the tribe who ate the buffalo's hide, and from that time on had the stories in them, is also suggestive of the constructivist standpoint taken by Bruner (1987) with regard to the role of narratives: the stories we tell are individual and social versions of what we experience, and by telling them we create and define ourselves as individuals and social beings (Horsdal, 2006; László, 1999, 2005b), bound together by the narratives we tell and hear. As I will show in the empirical studies, this seems to be the case not only when we tell stories, but when we are engaged in reading or listening to them.

1 Cognitive development: Schemata theory in meaning making and remembering through narratives

Abbott (2002) shows that the term "narrative" goes back to the ancient Sanskrit "gna" meaning "know" and that it comes down to us through Latin words for both "knowing" ("gnarus") and "telling" ("narro"). As Abbot aptly points out, this etymology captures the two sides of narrative, which is "a universal tool for knowing as well as telling, for absorbing knowledge as well as expressing it" (2002, p. 11). Whether we tell them or hear them told, narratives have a fundamental epistemological function.

The power of the narrative frame for meaning making and remembering has been recognized and largely investigated by cognitive psychology (Bartlett, 1932; Schank &

Abelson, 1977, 1995). Within the cognitive school, information processing stands out as particularly relevant in this sense. Information theorists have drawn the analogy of the brain as a highly complex computer (Williams & Burden, 1997), and have sought to explain the way in which people take in information and process it in terms of rules and models. One such commonly used model to account for knowledge organisation is the schemata theory (Schank & Abelson, 1977, 1995).

The notion of schemata was originally proposed by Kant (1963, cited by Eysenck & Keane, 1995), who suggested that innate, *a priori* structures of the mind allow us to conceive of time and three-dimensional space. The concept of a schema was revisited by Bartlett (1932), who argued that every human cognitive reaction, such as perceiving, imaging, remembering, thinking and reasoning, is essentially an "effort after meaning" (p. 44). Based on an experiment in which he asked his subjects to reproduce stories and pictures experienced earlier, he found that they worked from a general impression of the whole (i.e. schemata) towards the construction of details. He also noted that participants typically elaborated or distorted the originals in a way that imposed their personal and social conventions over the original story line. Bartlett concluded that remembering is a process in which experience and personal as well as cultural expectations interact, and suggested that these expectations were mentally represented in schemata. Thus, he became the "acknowledged originator of the use of schemata to describe story recall" (Thorndyke, 1984, p. 144).

According to Glaser (1984 cited by Richardson 1998, p. 90), a schema is a "modifiable information structure that represents generic concepts stored in memory." Eysenck and Keane (1995) describe a schema as a "structured cluster of concepts," which usually "involves generic knowledge, and may be used to represent events, sequences of events" (Eysenck & Keane, 1995, p. 262). In her comprehensive definition, McCabe (1998) suggests that schemata are "mental structures acquired through many experiences with an event" (1998, p. 281). She also notes that once acquired, schemata guide people by setting up their expectations for what is likely to happen, and will also help them interpret what does happen, and remember what did happen (McCabe, 1998, p. 281). It needs to be added here that Bartlett (1932) also identifies the role of affective attitude and interest as fundamental aspects of remembering. The idea that we tend to remember things best when we are interested in them, and when they are linked to an affective stance stands in favour of using narratives as opportunities to provide memorable context in the language class (see Chapters Five and Six).

Out of the above definitions, certain features of schemata emerge, which I find relevant concerning the treatment of narratives in our discussion. It is important to retain that schemata are (1) acquired through encounters with an event, and therefore they tend to be (2) culture-specific. They (3) set up expectations about what will happen, and (4) frame our experiences by helping us make sense of what happened. Finally, schemata are (5) continually modified by experience. Fox (1993, p. 69) notes that the idea that these mental frameworks employed in remembering are seen as "active developing patterns" implies that schemata are not blueprints which enable us "passively to regurgitate material," but that "we construct for ourselves what it is that we remember."

One of the ways to test the theory of mental schemata for story recall is, as pointed out by Fox (1993), to match it with corresponding studies of simple story texts, Propp (1970) showed that in spite of their superficial diversity, some genres of story, such as folk and fairy tales could be reduced to a set of fundamental structural units, and therefore at a deeper level most stories shared a fundamental structural base. Propp's work has generated a large number of studies on the structure of simple narratives (Fox, 1993; Maranda & Maranda, 1971; Propp, 1970; Rumelhart, 1977), which then have been used as a basis of comparison for the way humans create meaning. While studies provide general evidence for schemata theories (see Eysenck & Keane, 1995 and McCabe, 1998 for reviews), some authors also point out that they are not without their faults (e.g., they are not as predictive as one would like them to be). However, they also go on to suggest that schema theories "remain the most overarching set of proposals" on the structure and organisation of knowledge in long-term memory (Eysenck & Keane, 1995, p. 268).

While this dissertation does not set the aim to verify the validity of the schemata theory for conceptual development, the empirical studies support the epistemological function of stories read and told. The potential of narratives for the construction of meaning and organizing knowledge will emerge in particular from the comments made by young children when sharing picture books with adults (Chapter Seven), as well as in Chapter Five, where teachers' talk about their teaching will help them make sense of their experiences in culturally satisfying ways and achieve more coherence in their views about teaching and learning.

2 Constructing identity through narratives

Narratives affect human existence in various ways. As discussed above, one of these is cognitive development. It must be kept in mind, though, that beyond the scientific understanding of humans as biological beings, there is a perspective that deals with the development of humans as social and spiritual beings, who are ultimately constructed in and by narratives (László, 2005a, 2005b). From this perspective, a fundamental tool in humans' effort after meaning is telling and listening to stories. As shown later, Bettelheim (1991) makes the claim that by reading fairy tales we interiorize patterns which help us deal with challenges set by life. This suggests that we ultimately listen to stories or read them so that we can live our lives in more meaningful ways. Narrative psychology complements Bettelheim's idea by focusing on telling stories about our lives, as a fundamental means to make sense of events, structure time, and construct identity. By structuring the apparently chaotic events of our existence in and by narratives, time becomes meaningful "human time" (Ricoeur, 1981, 1984).

In what follows I focus on those aspects of human development which concern not so much the cognitive, as the affective realm. I will show that along its role in constructing knowledge, narrative practice can have a deep impact on a person's construction of self and identity.

2.1 The development of personhood

Bettelheim (1991) argues for the impact of stories, in particular, fairy tales, on the emotional development of children because these stories process human experience and present patterns of behaviour which help children make sense of life and cope with their anxieties and archetypical fear of the unknown, most often depicted as dark forests involving all sorts of challenges as dangers. In fairy tales children encounter anxieties related to death, separation and loneliness in a symbolic form: heroes fight dragons, they may be left without parents and lost in dark forests, and are also presented with symbolic solutions: they become kings and queens, that is to say, masters of their own existence. According to Bettelheim's theory, these narrative patterns and the imagery by which they convey relevant content also offer an outlet for unconscious pressures and fears.

Fairy tales support children in their efforts to make sense of the world, to make sense of themselves in relation with others. Bettelheim also makes the point that by understanding himself better, a child will learn to understand others and learn to "relate to them in ways which are mutually satisfying and meaningful" (1991, p. 3). The idea that stories help us grow in relation to others also has implication for the classroom, namely that using stories promotes learning in interaction, through collective scaffolding. However, it is important to realize that it is not simply the fairy tale as a genre that contributes to the development of personhood, but narrative thinking in general. Bruner (1996) talks about the role of "narrative as a mode of thought" in framing self-identity and cultural identity in the sense that a sufficient story about oneself on the one hand, and awareness of myths and histories of one's own culture on the other, will help individuals in their effort after meaning. In this sense, the tribe who saved their stories saved their collective identity, at the same time creating ground for the construction of their personal identities.

2.2 Forging relationships

A function of narratives which links the personal with the collective, and thus helps shaping both, is that they create social bonds. Horsdal (2006, p. 5) remarks that "we are building communities while we narrate." That narratives forge relationships by their intimate sharing is supported by descriptive studies of story-therapies, in which participants learn to provide and accept support from one another, gain confidence and courage, and ultimately make sense of their lives through telling and listening to stories (King, 1993, 2005; King & Nikolov, 1992).

Not only is telling one's own narrative a forging power for relationships, but telling stories in general has positive effects on relationships within smaller and larger social groups. Chapter Six brings an example of how sharing stories in the primary EFL class, as well as lending and borrowing the story-books influenced students and teachers in building a relationship based on more empathy and trust than before, and contributed to building a sense of community. Betty Rosen (1988) also presents how long-term exposure to myths and other deep impact narratives affected comprehensive school boys' self-expression, it helped them come to terms with themselves, and at the same time provided opportunities for the teacher to know her students better, and construct her identity as a teacher. It is to be noted that by praising her students' self-expression, Rosen means valuing the variety of it, rather than a comparison of talents, and makes the very poignant consideration that self-expression, be it of

any kind, "is significant to a child's development and to anyone's peace of mind" (Rosen, B., 1988, p. 115). Briefly put, it is central to shaping identity.

3. Narratives as educational experiences in EFL

3.1 Cognition and language

Schank and Abelson (1977, 1995, p. 1) claim that "all human knowledge is based on stories constructed around past experiences" as "new experiences are interpreted in terms of old stories." Therefore, stories function as schemata on the basis of which we organize the world and make sense of it. From the point of view of its implications for cognitive development, the schemata theory suggests that if we expose children to stories we provide them with more opportunities to interpret new information and gradually develop "disembedded", more abstract ways of thinking. Similarly, Nelson (1986 cited by Richardson, 1998, p. 90) argues that such scripts serve as the basis for the formation of higher (superordinate) levels of conceptual representation. In Margaret Donaldson's (1987) view, this is the prime function of education.

Along conceptual development, promoted by repeated readings in the case of young learners (Elley, 1989; Evans, 1998), narratives provide memorable context for new language. While the mnemonic function of narratives is fundamental in oral cultures, where it enables people to remember key points about their history (see the myth quoted above), McCabe (1998, p. 281) talks about the potential of narratives to make past events present and abstract concepts vivid as still highly relevant in literate cultures. The idea that narrative patterns facilitate understanding and remembering gains particular importance in the language classroom, where through stories children may acquire words and structures in contexts that are relevant to their lives. Elley (1989) documents that children process the L1 at deeper levels if the focus is on meaning, rather than form: that is to say, they tend to remember more from stories than from contrived exercises, especially when narratives can be related to learners' lives (Elley, 1989, p.176).

Donaldson (1987) argues that childhood learning in general and language learning in particular, occurs in a meaningful context which children can relate to their own experience. Story-telling and story-reading are situations that are both socially and linguistically meaningful for children: children are familiar from their mother tongue with the story-telling-

reading frame and with the kind of discourse stories involve. This familiarity allows them to build on knowledge and skills acquired during story telling sessions in their mother tongue. Thus, they will rely on their repertoire of traditional fairy tales, but also on their awareness of the story structure (Propp, 1970) while making sense of the new language.

It needs to be added, though, that familiarity with schemata and skills appropriate for operating with stories may not always be the case. This means that "sensitive intervention by an adult" (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1994, p. 43), which is also welcome during shared reading sessions in the first language, becomes a must in foreign language learning. In this case adult talk both supports learners in decoding meaning and provides comprehensible input in the target language. Research also suggests that language addressed to children in interaction situation is more valuable than environmental language for the following reasons: it focuses attention more than environmental language, compels the speaker to make the input comprehensible, elicits immediate feedback and invites listeners to use the language (Blok, 1999). Therefore, interactive reading is expected to have a stronger effect on child language acquisition than passive reading (Blok, 1999, p. 370).

3.2 Affective considerations

It has often been noted that Western thinking has predominantly focused on the rational functions of our mind, dismissing the value of imaginative and affective learning experiences. As I will show further on in this chapter, this view has also infiltered our notions about learning and teaching, although evidence supports the importance of affect in learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998).

Stevick (1996, 1998) talks about a "depth factor" in language learning, and claims that there are certain kinds of teaching that can reach into the affective realms of students. A good example for this is a qualitative study in which Deacon and Murphey (2001) use narratives with Japanese secondary school students and present powerful evidence that stories have the "power to reach deep within us into areas that regular teaching may not visit" (p. 11), thus, validating the language classroom for reasons that go beyond language learning.

Studies of using narratives in EFL classes from primary to adult suggest that story-telling and story-reading are social events that invite participation (Arizpe, 2006; Freemantle, 1993; Rosen, B., 1998). With few exceptions, learners are familiar with the story-telling frame from their home culture: reiterating this event in the classroom is the foundation of a

natural and secure environment. Taking into account Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis, according to which acquisition proceeds best when the acquirer's anxiety level is low and self-confidence is high, using stories on a regular basis sounds sensible.

In tune with Bartlett's (1932) observation that what we remember is linked to an affective stance and is interest-determined, Elley (1989) shows that intrinsically motivating stories, where humour and the element of suspense prevail, create the optimal conditions for remembering new language. Elley's (1989) research also reveals that the acquisition of new words was most successful when the children found the readings culturally relevant. In the case of a Japanese story, New Zealand children showed little interest and involvement, and word recall was less significant. This finding highlights two things which are of great importance for our discussion.

On the one hand, it tells about the good effects of intrinsically motivating texts (including pictures), which elicit affective response from readers and promote acquisition. On the other hand, it makes us think about our openness as readers to narratives from various cultures. Taking it further, it makes us even think about how open we are to take in narratives which reflect the world and human experience from other angles than what we have been used to. This remains an issue not only in terms of intercultural communication, but also when it comes to articulating our own experiences from new perspectives: it is an issue that I will revisit in connection with in-service teachers who, while narrating their teaching experiences (Chapter Five), have difficulties in understanding other paths than those along which they have been socialized.

4 A place for narratives in education

Considering the benefits of telling and listening to stories and "thinking in stories," a prime scheme of schools should be to create and cultivate narrative sensibility (Bruner, 1996) and build on the potential of the narrative form as a tool for learning.

However, narrative as a mode of thought is valued differently in different cultures. Bruner (1986, 1996) distinguishes between paradigmatic and narrative thinking, and points out that most Western cultures privilege the logical-scientific approach in organizing knowledge of the world. This dichotomic perception of facts and fiction, according to which facts are considered to be true, while stories, if not false, certainly less reliable, is the reason why imaginative and affective responses to experience are seen to be in competition with

analytic lines of thought, and that one of them, regularly the former is of less value than the other (Wells, 1986). This explains why narrative, along with other imaginative frames of learning, is regarded in most schools as decoration instead of exploiting its potential as a means for cognitive development.

In the same line of thought, Egan (1986) and Gardner (2002) suggest that the model that dominates educational programmes draws on a part of children's capacities only, namely logical-mathematical thinking, at the expense of other kinds of intelligence. Imagination, along with the story form which creates a context for imaginative and meaningful learning will thus constitute the "educational margin or frills" (Egan, 1989, p. 29). Egan (1989) also presents a critique of some of the principles which influence teaching, learning and curricula, and which, in his view, tend to suppress imagination and lead to a mechanistic way of thinking about planning. These pedagogical principles such as the views that educational development proceeds in all cases form concrete to abstract, from simple to complex, from known to unknown are derived from research mostly focusing on children's logical thinking skills and considered by Egan (1989) a "combination of Dewey's and Piaget's influence, and, of course, the perversions, degenerations, elaborations and simplifications their ideas have undergone in educational literature" (pp. 105-106).

While it is not denied that these principles may be valid and helpful in some areas of teaching and learning, the question that needs to be asked is whether children learn best or only from these experiences and whether there are things that cannot be learned from them (Egan, 1989, p. 8). Egan brings convincing examples to suggest that children use "formal" concepts routinely, provided that these concepts are in a context that makes human sense to them. For instance, children make sense of heroes' behaviour while reading fairy tales not in terms of abstract ethical concepts, but because the contexts in which these concepts are embedded are relevant to them. They are able to choose between good and evil and to appreciate loyal behaviour, which shows that although they may not be able to articulate abstractions, they are certainly able to use them in making sense of stories. This also suggests that certain features of stories contribute to using children's conceptual abilities, whereas if we push stories on the edge of the curriculum, we may neglect early stimulation and development of those concepts which generate logical-scientific thinking.

In terms of planning, Egan (1989, p. 17) suggests reconstructing the curricula "in the light of a richer image of the child as an imaginative as well as a logico–mathematical thinker." His alternative model for curriculum development draws on the power of narratives as frames for teaching content more engagingly and meaningfully, and by involving both

cognitive and affective domains, helps achieve a better balance in thinking about planning. Wells (1986) also supports the persuasive influence of stories on all aspects of learning. He argues that narrative is relevant to all areas of the school curriculum, since through the exchange of stories "teachers and students can share their understanding on a topic and bring their mental models of the world into closer alignment" (Wells, 1986, p. 165). I will revisit the contribution of narratives to constructing meaning in interaction from an empirical perspective in Chapter Seven.

5 Understanding teacher cognition through narratives

The development of narrative psychology has offered new ways to investigate the various functions of narratives, and suggests that no other research tool is apt to uncover the complexities of mental life conveyed through language (László, 2005a,b). Therefore, life narratives can be regarded as the most faithful expressions of the individual and cultural psychological constructs that underlie behaviour (László, 2005a,b), and need not be dismissed as anecdotal evidence (Cortazzi, 1994, p. 163). Narrative analysis is also seen as fundamental in educational research, where keeping diaries of the practicum, writing personal histories of their own teaching and learning, and sharing experiences in a community of practice may promote teacher awareness. However, as Cortazzi (1994) points out, little has been written about this application of narrative analysis. (A discussion of how Hungarian teachers of English share experiences and construct meaning in interaction through narratives is provided in Chapter Five.)

In order to understand what we mean by teachers' narratives, and how they support teacher cognition, we need to examine what characterizes narratives as a genre. Narratives, as defined by McCabe (1998, p. 291), concern real or pretend memories of something that happened. Therefore, they tend to contain a chronological sequence of events, and are often in the past. Besides temporality, causation (i.e. the middle action causing the final state), and human interest (inviting a projection of values and motives to characters in the story) are also identified as necessary conditions for narratives by literary theorists. In this sense, as Cortazzi (1994, p. 158) aptly points out, "a narrative is not simply a succession of recounted events but is an interesting intelligible whole." Hardy (1977, p. 12) puts this definition into a broader perspective, when she claims a narrative is "a primary act of mind" by which we attempt to provide a cultural interpretation of human experience.

Considering narrative as a culturally conditioned mode of expression is crucial in understanding its role in researching lives and the underlying latent or explicit philosophies that shape lives. This is also the case when it comes to understanding teachers' ideas about teaching and learning and their roles in this process. In what follows I will consider current research on autobiographic narratives and extend these ideas to teachers' accounts of their teaching. Then, I will provide an overview of ideas on teacher cognition, and show the implications of the sociocultural turn in teacher education. In this paradigm, narratives of teaching experience become sources of information about teachers' mental activities, and instruments for teacher learning.

5.1 Autobiographic memories as research tools

5.1.1 Culturally constructed stories

Bruner adopts a constructivist view in investigating the nature of narrative thought, and claims that we "create worlds" by narratives (1987, pp. 691-692). In this sense stories are constructed in people's heads, and are therefore an interpretation of experience rather than a precise record of what happened (Horsdal, 2006, p. 2). This raises the question whether autobiographic memories can be considered reliable in spite of their being unstable in the sense that they are not necessarily "true" when measured by external criteria. While in the case of logical thinking verification criteria are stable, in the human sciences in general, and in the case of autobiographic narratives in particular, it is difficult to specify criteria to verify the rightness of any theory or model (Winch, 1958, cited by Bruner, 1987, p. 695). The reasons for this instability, claims Bruner, have to do with the deep cultural impact: the historical circumstances incorporated in the culture and language of a people.

The fact that autobiographic narratives, including teachers' narratives about their teaching are shaped by the cultural understandings of norms and values implies that when we scrutinize individual lives, we need to see them within the beliefs and traditions of the community, with personal, professional and cultural history merging (Horsdal, 2006, pp. 5-6). This emerges as an important point when we examine teachers' beliefs and their practice Chapter Five (7). Bruner (1987, p. 699) cites Jean-Paul Sartre (1964) in saying that " a man is always a teller of stories, lives surrounded by his own stories and those of other people, he sees everything that happens to him in terms of these stories…," and significantly, adds that

individual life stories mesh within a community of life stories. The idea that no story stands on its own makes sense from an ecological perspective, in which human development is seen as a non-linear, relational, dialogic process, best understood by the global patterns that emerge from the interactions of the individual components (Bakhtin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 2002), as shown in Chapter One.

5.1.2 Creating life through narratives

Another aspect of Bruner's discussion of autobiographic narratives refers to the two-way mimetic relationship between life and narrative: not only is narrative shaped by the historical circumstances incorporated in culture and language, but the way we tell our stories may impact our lives. As Bruner puts it, "the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very "events" of a life," that is: to create life through narrative (1987, p. 695).

In this sense, it must also be remembered that collective narratives contributed to the concept of tradition, and even assisted in nurturing an absolutist conception of cultural difference, for instance in upholding the primacy of the "Western tradition" over other cultures (Cobley, 2001, pp. 38-39). Extending this idea to shared cultural assumptions about teaching and learning, we can't avoid thinking about how certain ideas related to successful teaching are considered superior and more appropriate than others, solely on the basis of educational traditions dominant in society. I will provide a more in-depth discussion of this phenomenon when I explore teachers' beliefs in Chapter Five (7).

5.2 Teachers' narratives

5.2.1 Teacher cognition: a contextually situated paradigm

In order to understand why narratives of teaching experience emerge as important research tools in understanding and shaping ideas about teaching, we need to look at how teacher learning has been conceptualized. In her overview of the ideas related to teacher cognition, Johnson (2006) observes that teacher learning and thinking about teaching has been

historically grounded in the positivistic paradigm: teachers were supposed to learn about the content they were expected to teach, then observe and master teaching practices, and finally develop pedagogical expertise during the years of teaching. With the reflective movement (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Schön, 1983) teaching increasingly became recognised as an activity which involves both thinking and doing (Freeman, 1992). Johnson (2006) highlights the importance of teachers' questions and reflections that arise from their practice, and have the potential to "infuse the traditional knowledge base of teaching with insider knowledge" (Johnson, 2006, p. 241).

The reflective practice movement was a major turn in the field's understanding of teachers' work, as it brought into focus the complexities of teachers'mental lives, which came to be seen indissociable from their prior experiences and contexts. This also implied that the former positivistic paradigm which attributed students' learning outcomes strictly to teaching behaviours was no longer sufficient in second and foreign language educational research. A more interpretative and situated paradigm was offered by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Chapter One, 1.2), which presents an understanding of cognition as indissociable from the social context and the shared, culturally organized practices this context engenders. The epistemological stance of this theory of mind (Johnson, 2006, p. 238) is that humans develop as participants in cultural communities, and "their development can be understood only in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities – which also change" (Rogoff, 2003 cited by Johnson, 2006, p. 238).

In the social constructivist paradigm students' learning is regarded as something which emerges out of experiences in social contexts. This implies that teachers, as parts of these dynamic contexts, also develop as a result of the teaching-learning processes, and that they make decisions about teaching which are in tune with their specific settings. As Johnson (2006, p. 241) points out, the fact that teachers' knowledge is not just abstracted from theory, but also appears to be constructed in community in a dialogic process (see Chapter Five, 6.6), legitimizes the role of classrooms as spaces for teacher learning.

The research prompted by this new perspective on teacher learning aims to explore teachers' development based on the principles that guide behaviour, linking teacher thinking to an underlying system of socio-cultural, in particular, educational beliefs. As shown in Chapter One (2), the methods of researching knowledge constructed in various sociocultural contexts tend to be ethnographic and descriptive. In this sense, narratives stand out as particularly apt to reveal processes which would otherwise go unobserved.

5.2.2 Narratives of teaching experience

If teachers' knowledge is seen as constructed from previous experiences through social interaction, narratives of teaching experience become important in two ways: on the one hand, as authentic accounts of teachers' actions, feelings and ideas. In this sense, teachers' narratives display the dual landscape typical of narratives: besides the landscape of action, there is a "landscape of consciousness" (Bruner, 1986, pp. 11-12) which displays the inner worlds of the protagonists and along with this a subjective treatment of events. These narratives involve an emic perspective: they capture meanings from the teachers' perspectives. This also suggests that teachers' narratives may not necessarily render a complete and objective picture. However, as shown in the empirical study investigating teachers' beliefs about using narratives in the classroom (Chapter Five), these accounts are interesting in what they reveal as well as in what they may omit.

On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that there is more to teachers' narratives than revealing relevant information about teachers' individual and professional histories, and of the educational context in which they are rooted. They also turn out to be useful in that they involve teachers into a self-scrutinizing process, which is ultimately a process of becoming. In organizing their experiences in narratives, and eventually making sense of them, teachers need to be reflective and explicit about their minds. Thus, narratives contribute to developing higher-order thinking skills and along with this, informed practice.

A consequence of scrutinising the processes of the mind which underlie teaching is that practice may change. As said above, Bruner (1987) perceives autobiographic narratives as both shaped by culture, and shaping culture themselves. Extended to teachers' narratives about their teaching, this idea suggests that making teachers tell their stories about teaching and reflecting on those interpretations in interaction may bring about changes in the way they reiterate their practice. In this sense narratives appear not only as research instruments, but also a potential way to influence the deep structures of teaching and learning. Chapter Five describes an attempt to involve in-service teachers to document and understand their experience by means of teaching narratives. At the same time it warns that ongoing reflection is essential for lasting change to occur in teachers' thinking and practices.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the significance of narratives for the way humans organize meaning about the world and about themselves. First, I considered the contribution of narratives to the cognitive, affective and linguistic development of children, and I suggested that in spite of the benefits narratives present, the power of story-telling and story-reading is still largely ignored in formal education. As shown above, this is mostly explained by the value attributed to paradigmatic rather than narrative thinking in Western tradition (Bruner, 1986, 1996; Wells, 1986), as well as to the simplistic interpretation of some of the research focusing on children's thinking skills (Egan, 1986).

The other perspective taken to narratives in this chapter highlights their potential as a method of introspection. I argued that narratives of teaching experience reveal teachers' perceptions of educational processes set in a broad social-historical and cultural context. In this sense, teachers' narratives give access to the intricate patterns that shape educational practice.

Finally, I related Bruner's point that narratives are not only created by culture, but they create culture themselves (Bruner, 1987), to the culture of education. I suggested that accounts of teaching experience support teachers' meaning making process by helping them organize and articulate their understanding of professional practice, and link it to relevant theories of teaching and learning. It appears then that teachers' narratives may encourage a more acute practising of metacognition, which is crucial lest, as Gardner (2000) warns, we end up like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain, who latterly discovered that he had been speaking prose all his life.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: A DIALOGIC PROCESS

Bakhtin (1980) suggests that language is shaped by context and at the same time shapes context. This dialogic view of language implies seeing linguistic phenomena in their interrelatedness, and it allows us to view foreign-language developmental processes tied to development in other areas of cognition, and to growth in the affective and social realms of the personality. In the previous chapter I suggested that one of the basic ways in which humans construct meaning and build identity and relationships is through narratives. I will now focus on the linguistic process which in literate cultures is closely interrelated with cognitive, affective and social development, and with the narrative frame itself: this is literacy development.

In talking about the decisive role played by literacy in the Western culture, Bialystok (2001) suggests that future academic skills depend on how well children master reading. And since academic success in our part of the world determines children's future, in Western middle-class families, deliberate attempts are made to bring children into the world of literacy from very early on. One way to attempt this is to create an environment which allows children to grow into literacy. Hall (1994) also notes that children in the Western world grow into a most complex and demanding print environment, and they cannot but become involved in it. While growing, children witness the existence of print and the relationship between print and people. Despite this, it is a common, although sometimes implicit assumption that children are ignorant about the nature and purpose of literacy before going to school and that literacy development starts as some kind of initiation which is part of formal schooling.

In order to understand where the shared cultural assumptions related to literacy come from and why they have shaped our attitudes and teaching practices the way they have, I will attempt to define our concepts related to literacy development and give a brief historical overview of the ideas related to it. I will then elaborate on our recent understanding of literacy

development, as a cognitive and social process which emerges naturally in the appropriate context. Finally, I will talk about strategies that support growth into literacy, in particular story-telling and story-reading, and relate them to success in foreign language development. Seeing literacy development as an integral part of language acquisition is yet another strand to understand the empirical studies presented in this dissertation in their completeness.

1 Perspectives on literacy development: from reading readiness to emerging literacy

While dictionary definitions of literacy and of the state of being literate imply little more than the ability to read and write, studies suggest a more complex picture of literacy than that of a set of skills that would make learners able cope with print. In providing a historical perspective on the shift in our understanding of literacy development with young children (from reading readiness to emergent literacy), Teale and Sulzby (1986) point out that early research on reading and writing focused on elementary school years and it was not until the 1920s that it became recognized that literacy development starts before formal instruction. The recognition of early childhood as a "period of preparation" for reading and writing implied the concept of reading readiness, that is a point in development when a person is ready to read. As such, it also prompted two diverse lines of research on preparing children for reading, reflecting the two basic assumptions that underlie thinking about children's development in general: nature and nurture. Consequently, one approach saw reading readiness as a result of biological maturation, while the other line of research emphasized the need for appropriate experiences that precipitate readiness. Teale and Sulzby (1986) note that later on, during the 1950s and 1960s reading readiness came to be seen as the result of intervention (in the form of reading readiness workbooks and tests), rather than the result of a natural process.

The increased role attributed to intervention tools gave rise to a number of conventional assumptions about literacy development, such as (1) the perception of literacy development as a visual/perceptual process concerned with decoding symbols in a mechanical way; (2) the view that literacy needs to be taught directly and in a systematic and sequential way; (3) and that teaching the "basic" skills of literacy is a neutral, value-free activity (Hall, 1994, p. 16). Later on in this chapter I will come back to the way these beliefs have influenced our views of children and their learning, and consequently our teaching theories.

1.1 Emergent literacy

In spite of these common beliefs about literacy development as a linear and controllable process, which is the result of structured instruction, empirical evidence suggests that there are a number of things that are "like reading" which children do "before that epiphanic moment" (Bialystok 2001, p. 154), such as printing their name or re-telling a familiar story based on pictures. This leaves us with the question whether this reading-like behaviour counts as reading or not.

Clay (1966) used the term emergent literacy to describe children's behaviour with books at a stage when they cannot read yet in a conventional sense. More than just a term used to label a stage in literacy development, the concept of emergent literacy challenged traditional reading readiness attitudes and practices (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). While reading readiness suggests a point in time when a person is ready to read, emergent literacy suggests a perspective which regards children's literacy development as a continuous process, from early reading-like behaviour to independent reading. As in most other developmental areas, children do not progress in literacy on a definite sequential path, but take routes that are influenced by their individual variables and the context.

The fact that literacy is seen as a continuous, emerging process also implies that it is seen as a natural one. Teale (1986 cited by Bialystok 2001, p. 154) makes the claim that learning to read is the acquisition of culture, and is therefore a central part of children's socialization from the earliest encounters with texts. According to this view, developing reading is not a specialized skill acquired through effort and special instruction, but it comes as the natural consequence of gaining oral proficiency in a language. Proponents of emergent literacy claim that "children will learn to read as surely as they will learn to speak, because reading grows out of the same abilities that are part of children's use of language" (Bialystok 2001, p. 153).

1.2 What counts as natural? The role of environment in supporting emergent literacy

Using the term "natural" to describe the way children become literate has proved to be quite controversial, as for many it may imply some kind of maturational phenomenon that occurs as a result of biological programming (Hall, 1994, p. 22), occurring irrespective of environmental support. However, proponents of emergent literacy as a natural process of

development claim that literacy is learned in a way that is similar to oral language: both necessitate an appropriate context in order to develop (Holdaway, 1979; Trelease, 1984). This context implies people using print in appropriate ways, and thus providing children with "social experiences where literacy is a means to a variety of other ends" (Hall, 1994, p. 22). Studies of the family context of language use provide evidence that support and early exposure to literacy and social interaction are crucial for the development of literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Heath, 1982; Snow & Tabors, 1993; Wells, 1985a).

To highlight the role of early environment in developing literacy, Krashen quotes one of the observations of a study (Clark & Foster cited by Krashen, 2005a, p. 1) carried out in England, involving about 8,000 children (2,300 in elementary and 5,875 in secondary schools). When asked about who taught them to read, the sample as a whole identified their mother as having the most significant contribution (87%) and only afterwards their teacher (72%). For reluctant readers the role of the mother in the acquisition of reading amounts to 82 percent, while the role of teachers scores 69 percent. For enthusiastic readers mothers figure with 87 percent, whereas teachers 75 percent. The results of the study, in this sense, warn against regarding reading as strictly skill development, and support views which consider it a process that emerges as a result of adequate support from the environment, including a print-rich environment and appropriate intervention on the part of knowledgeable adults.

The role of early literacy-related interaction is also supported by Heath (1994), who shows the bed-time story to be a significant literacy event, as it contributes to shaping early attitudes to literacy, and also develops routines which prepare pre-schoolers for displays of knowledge expected in school. Such is the case with the labelling activity, which trains children very early in the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) cycle, a basic interaction pattern of classroom lessons. The role of adult scaffolding for literacy development is also acknowledged by studies of primary and secondary school children in first, second and foreign language settings (Arizpe, 2006; Blok, 1999; Freemantle, 1993; Hudelson, 1994; Walsh, M., 1993), and support Heath's claim that being literate includes not only reading and writing, but also talking about reading and writing (Heath, 1992; Langer, 1991)

Besides exposure to print and meaningful interaction related to print, literacy development is also influenced in a much less obvious way: the shared understanding of what literacy means and its importance in the community. The cultural group influences the emergence of literacy not only by providing a print-rich environment, but also by conveying implicit messages and expectations related to literacy in the broader society. If, therefore, children are expected to cope with the challenges of print in the form of picture books and

cereal boxes, as it is often the case in the Western world, it is likely that they will grow into these expectations and literacy will emerge "naturally," with encouragement and support from the environment.

Finally, the "naturalness" of reading has attracted a lot of controversy not only concerning terminology ("natural" suggesting, as I have pointed out, something that occurs irrespective of environmental influence), but also in terms of its pedagogical implications. Bialystok (2001) warns that exclusive adherence to either of the reading programmes which implement the philosophical premises of the two approaches to reading, is likely to end up in failure. On the one hand, whole language approach only may not give enough support to learn basic tools of decoding, while exclusive support of the phonics approach will result in a reading programme which lacks interest and in which children are unmotivated to persevere (Bialystok, 2001). Also, as Cheung and Slavin (2005) show in a review of research on elementary reading programmes for English as a second language learners, success in reading is not so much in function of reading programs, but rather of the quality of instruction (e.g., teachers' quality, class size and other resources).

2 Reading as a cognitive and social process

2.1 Reading: a meaningful activity

I have already talked about the view of literacy as a primarily visual/perceptive process in which focus is on decoding messages in a mechanistic way. The view of emergent literacy has re-shaped the positivistic perception in that it treats literacy from a more contextualized perspective, involving cognitive and social dimensions. Hence, a more recent understanding of the concept of literacy suggests that at the core of the definition should be construction of meaning (Hiebert, 1991; Hudelson, 1995; Langer, 1991). Within this cognitive approach reading is regarded as a process that involves interpretation in the sense that it is influenced by the reader's past experiences, language background, and cultural framework, as well as the reader's purpose for reading. Similarly, writing can be defined as a language process in which an individual creates meaning, and the text that the individual constructs will be influenced by the same factors as the process of interpretation described above: the writer's past experiences, his or her cultural and language background and the purpose of writing (Hudelson, 1995, p. 15). In this frame of ideas the concept of emergent reading brings into

focus not only the view of literacy development as a continuum, but also the central part played by meaning in the process of mastering reading and writing.

This approach to literacy as a process by which children make sense of print in the environment because they encounter it as an integral part of interesting and important life activities (Smith, 1988) is very similar to the view taken to the emergence of oral language events seen as meaningful activities. Halliday claims that "learning language is learning how to mean" (Halliday 1973 cited by Hall, 1994, p. 23). Like oral language events, literacy events are experienced as meaningful activities, which involve not only linguistic but also cognitive and social strategies in order to process print for meaning (Clay, 1982; Smith, 1985a).

It appears, then, that emphasis on meaning adds not only a cognitive, but also a social dimension to the definition of literacy. This means that literacy cannot be seen as an isolated skill, but rather as a social practice that is related to certain ends within a particular culture (Dubin & Kuhlman, 1992; Langer, 1991; Smith, 1988). It is, as Willinsky suggests, "a way of working with the world" (Willinsky, 1994, p. 5). This is very much in tune with post-Vygotskian considerations (Lantolf, 2004; Williams & Burden, 1997) about the role of environment in children's construction of meaning: children build their way into literacy in the web of social relations in which they are involved and set against the background of shared cultural assumptions about reading and writing.

2.2 Building on students' home culture

An issue educators have to face when it comes to developing literacy is being aware of the manifestations of various literacy practices and understanding their significance in the specific culture of each child. This is mostly a problem in multicultural settings. Studies (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1982, 1994; Johnson, 1995; Philips, 1983) bring evidence of how such cultural discontinuities in communication patterns may affect classroom communication, and students' academic achievement, and emphasize the need for appropriate mediation on the part of teachers.

One of the examples in this sense is brought by Philips (1983), who argues that mismatch between patterns of interaction in the Warm Springs Indian community and in the Anglo-American classrooms children attended explained students' unwillingness to participate in classroom interaction. The learning process experienced in the primary group (i.e. increased amount of listening and watching, as well as competence demonstrated by the

completion of the task) focused on competencies unappreciated in mainstream classrooms. A good example for the discontinuity between the ways of communication acquired at home and the linguistic behaviour and communicative style required at school is the case of Hungarian Gypsies. The value attributed to oracy in the Gypsy culture, the rich language exposure and the dominance of display questions in child-directed speech (Réger, 1990) contribute to the fact that Gypsy children not only eagerly respond to, but frequently comment on and interrupt teacher talk. On this basis Gypsy children tend to be regarded as undisciplined and unable to conform to the patterns of classroom communication. The lack of teachers' understanding of the Gypsies' home culture frequently leads to wasting valuable resources in the classroom.

The case is similar in developing literacy. In the context of formal education, literacy development practices become meaningful for children if their social and cultural experiences of literacy are built into the literacy programme. As discussed later in this chapter as well as in the chapters presenting empirical research, a successful example of providing meaningful literacy experiences for children is by exposure to narratives, both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language. Experienced in the home culture, stories told or read make human sense to young learners, and thus offer opportunities to bridge children's home culture and the culture of formal schooling.

When educators are unaware of children's backgrounds and the existing literacy practices, they may miss out on valuable opportunities to develop literacy skills, as well as cognitive and social skills. An example for this is offered by Huss (1995), who studied young children's beginning ESL literacy in a multiethnic classroom in England, where the teacher perceived children and their families as culturally and linguistically deficient and therefore getting little literacy. Also, the teacher saw it as her role to give the children the language and ideas in connection with their writing, that is to closely control their writing. As Huss (1995) comments, the teacher's methods reflected Bandura's (1979 cited by Huss 1995, p. 771) social learning model in which students are perceived to learn by observing, internalizing, and reproducing a model. However, the ethnographic research revealed that the participant children had greater English language and literacy learning abilities and were much more interactive literacy learners than their teacher perceived and that with the assistance of adults and more advanced peers, they were able to work within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) to accomplish their writing and the tasks related to it. Huss (1995) reports that support from researchers not only promoted their literacy development, but also gave them a sense of self-confidence and personal efficacy in themselves as literacy learners. This again encouraged them to take further risks and experiment with new types of literary

response. The study is a telling example of how a context and teacher control may restrict the children's literacy growth, whereas a more expanded context and more control over their own learning (e. g., choice of topics and writing methods) allow them to test their hypotheses about language and literacy.

Another main conclusion of Huss's study (1885) refers to the role of competent adults in scaffolding learners' literacy development in a way as to build on uses of literacy encountered at home in the first language. The study showed that children were more successful in their literacy activities at school when these activities were structured into experiences that made human sense to them. Talking about interaction patterns in second language classrooms, Johnson (1995) points out the need to get to know learners' "acquired ways of communication" in order to provide opportunities for successful interaction between the teacher and the students and between the learners themselves. This is especially poignant in multiethnic classrooms, where participants come from a variety of backgrounds, but also in classrooms where, although coming from the same language environment, learners' communication patterns learned at home are different from the teachers' background (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1982, 1994; Philips, 1983).

It appears that the shift in our understanding from literacy seen as a set of skills to literacy seen as a meaningful act obviously involves changes in the role of educators. I have surveyed how conventional assumptions about literacy development call for direct instructional practices, where the manner and rate of learning are controlled by teachers, while the child's role is to follow routes prescribed by teachers. It seems, though, that this does not always have the desired outcomes in terms of literacy development, mostly when educators are not aware of the ways in which reading and writing are used at home by learners. I have shown that literacy development is believed to occur best when teachers create a motivating and supportive environment and provide appropriate scaffolding by building on children's competence.

2.3 Empowering learners

A final point to be made about literacy refers to its potential to empower learners by developing higher order thinking skills. Hudelson (1995) points out that children will use reading and writing "to learn about and interpret the world and reflect upon themselves in relation to people and events around them; they will use reading and writing to explain,

analyze, argue about, and act upon the world" (Hudelson, 1995, p. 130). Understanding literacy in these terms, as a process which has the potential to change not only the individual learner, but also the world, will imply conscious choices made by teachers when choosing methods and texts to develop literacy both in L1 and in a foreign language.

Teachers who assume that reading is basically a mechanistic process of decoding print, may well opt for strictly regulated reading schemes as the shortest and safest way to teaching reading. On the other hand, teachers who understand literacy development as a way of acting in a given socio-cultural setting are more likely to challenge learners with methods and texts that build on learners' capacities and interests and help them develop higher order thinking skills while reading and writing. I will come back to the choice of texts in more detail in Chapter Four (4), when discussing the potential of the multi-layered nature of picture books in the language classroom. For the time being, I will limit myself to the comment that knowing that teachers' practice is underpinned by beliefs, there is a constant need to scrutinize these beliefs. In particular views related to literacy development: whether literacy development is seen as developing a set of skills by instruction or understood as a complex process entailing most complex forms of learning (Holdaway, 1979) in a particular social context, where learners and teachers are willing and able to make choices and assume responsibilities.

3 The role of narratives in literacy development

Emerging literacy is nourished by exposure to print and social interaction. One of the ways to bring these two together is through story-telling and story-reading. In Chapter Two (3) I argued that reading and listening to stories make human sense to young learners. Thus, children will find reading a meaningful and pleasant activity, which may be worth experimenting with. In this sense, narratives are crucial for developing literacy both in the mother tongue and in the FL. Extensive literature supports the value of repeated encounters with stories for literacy development across genders, age-groups and language backgrounds (Elley, 1989; Fox, 1993; Rosen, B., 1988; Snow & Tabors, 1993), and it is suggested that early childhood education should embrace literacy programmes which "actively employ storytelling to bridge their children's established oracy skills and their new found literacy skills" (Phillips, 2006, p. 5).

What are the benefits of children listening to stories, or reading them with more proficient readers? Along the joy of listening to a story and, thus, developing positive attitudes and motivation to read, early reading experiences with an adult involve the acquisition of certain routines that pertain to the nature of reading, such as turning the pages, proceeding through the book, but also talking about the book, as described in Chapter Seven (5.2.3). As the impact of narratives on affective, social, cognitive and in particular children's foreign language development has been treated in detail in Chapter Two (1,2,3), I will now focus on the role of early reading experiences from the perspective of developing literacy and concepts related to literacy. In doing so, I will partly rely on studies carried out in an EFL setting, and partly on research on the acquisition of literacy in the L1, as the latter may provide an important framework from which the circumstances of foreign language learners can be examined.

3.1 Building vocabulary

In terms of language development, Cooper, Collins and Saxby (1992 cited by Phillips, 2006, p. 1) claim that regular storytelling experience increases young children's vocabulary. Snow and Tabors's (1993) definition of writing as a system that builds on the base of oracy suggests that children's increased oral vocabulary will promote development of their written vocabulary and writing style.

Elley (1989) also found sharing picture books with young learners a significant source of incidental vocabulary learning, whether or not the reading was accompanied by teachers' explanation of word meaning. Another remarkable observation of Elley's research referred to low scoring students, who gained as much from reading exposure as high scoring students. As far as EFL is concerned, similar results were reported by Bózsa (2006) in an EFL context, where Hungarian children between the ages 7-13 presented substantial gains in vocabulary, after being involved in repeated story-telling and story-reading sessions.

Similarly, in a summary of research on the effect of reading exposure, Krashen (1989, p. 93) presents good evidence that sustained silent reading (SSR) programmes, self-selected reading programmes, pleasure reading, as well as print environment and reading resources have a strong effect on the development of language abilities necessary for academic achievement. This is in tune with Frank Smith's (1988) approach to reading, who uses the metaphor of the "literacy club" in order to describe the social nature of literacy learning, and

claims that we learn by "joining the club" of people whom we see as being like, and who help us engage in their activities. The most significant people in learners' lives are therefore not only their formal (school) teachers, but also the informal teachers (teachers in the world outside school), and the teachers who are the authors of the books we read. Therefore, it is important that students see good reading models at home (Hall & Coles, 1999) and at school (Krashen, 1993), and that they are offered diverse reading experiences. This is highlighted by the studies reviewed by Krashen (1989), suggesting that reading exposure promotes language development, reading comprehension, writing style and more sophisticated grammar and vocabulary. The study presented in Chapter Six offers further support in this sense.

3.2 Language style

There is a substantial body of research in first language development which indicates that read-alouds provide children with opportunities for exposure to the conventions and to the style of language used in stories and help them develop the language and grammar stories (Elley, 1989; Fox, 1993; Krashen, 2005b) as well as their background knowledge of a variety of topics. Fox (1993) documents the highly imaginative oral storytelling of pre-school children who had extensive experience of hearing stories read aloud. The stories the children tell demonstrate that at every structural level, early interactions with literature have profound cognitive and linguistic gains.

Purcell-Gates (1988, 1989 cited by Bialystok, 2001, p. 158) examined preschoolers' understanding of the reading register by asking kindergarten children to pretend to read aloud the story of wordless picture books. Children who had been read to regularly at home showed greater facility with the style of language used in books and gave more complex "readings" of the wordless picture books, with clearer references to background and characters than did children who were not. This tells us that early read-alouds have a powerful positive influence on the development of both language and a deeper understanding of the topics.

Herman (1996 cited by Bialystok, 2001, p. 158) extended this research by examining the development of story-telling ability in bilingual preschool children whose home language was English, but they were schooled in French. It was found that the amount of exposure to English storybooks at home increased children's ability to use the literate register in English, that is the style they were otherwise not typically exposed to due to their French schooling. It appears then that reading to children has implications beyond the general effects of

introducing literacy (such as developing motivation to read) in that it also develops language-specific competence in the language of those stories. As shown later in this chapter, studies also suggest a strong interdependence between first and second or foreign language literacy skills, in the sense that skills may transfer from one language to the other.

3.3 Developing literacy-related concepts

Repeated readings, which children often claim, eventually deepen their understanding of certain concepts in the story (Elley, 1989; Evans, 1998). Meta-analyses of the research regarding the effects of read-alouds are also provided by Blok (1999) and Bus, Van Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995), both concluding the benefits of interactive reading, which not only scaffolds children's understanding of language and concepts related to the story line, but also provides opportunities to discuss the stories, and thus creates interest in reading.

Here again educators have a crucial role in shaping literacy experiences in a way that children can work within their zone of proximal development, and thus expand their knowledge. As shown by Baghban (1984) in a case study of her own daughter's reading acquisition, it is through the demonstration of literate behaviour by a proficient reader that novice readers understand notions related to reading and writing, and the structures of narratives.

Research also supports that through regular exposure to narratives, children will learn to expect certain features of the text (Jennings, 1991; Mallan, 1991, cited by Phillips, 2006, p. 1), and will thus build a sense of story. Such is the case with the typical story-beginnings and endings (i.e."Once upon a time…" and "happily ever after"), as well as with certain recurring motives in stories. The story-schema children build, will subsequently give them a framework for understanding (Phillips, 2006) and creating stories (Rosen, B., 1988). In the case study in Chapter Seven I provide examples of how young children in an EFL context draw on fairy tale motifs to interpret new texts, and also on how they use stylistic information gained from picture books to identify similar motives in other fields of art, as well as in creating their own stories.

3.4 Questioning the academic benefits of storybook reading

Not everyone appears to be so enthusiastic, though, when it comes to the role of storybook reading in developing literacy. A study which seems to dismiss the pedagogical value of read-alouds is by Fryer and Levitt (2004 cited by Krashen 2005b), who conclude that frequency of being read to by parents is not a significant predictor of children's academic achievement. Parents had to report the amount of reading aloud to their children on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 read to: "not at all" and 4 read to: "every day." As an outcome, parents of black children reported an average of 3, while parents of white children reported an average of 3.4. As Krashen (2005b) points out, the problem with the study seems to be methodological: with so many high scores in the sample, it seems impossible to determine if those read to more did better than those read to less. It is also worth noting that it is difficult to determine how much reading aloud actually took place, since the data is self-reported.

Some researchers caution parents on expecting too much from the joint reading sessions with their children. In two studies carried out with four- and five-year-olds, Evans and Saint-Aubin (2005 cited by Alphonso, 2005, pp. 2-3) conclude that while storybook time has developmental benefits (promotes understanding of the storyline), it does not necessarily help children to learn to decode the words on the page, as preschool children pay very little attention to the printed words on a page. Rather, they attend to pictures while adults read the text. Therefore, reading aloud, although a valued home activity, is believed by the above authors to have little link to the development of children's literacy skills.

What is debated here, however, seems to be a matter that goes back to the definition of literacy: whether it is seen as an essentially mechanistic process limited to the ability to decode printed symbols on a page, or whether it is seen as a cognitive and social process. There is indeed no evidence that story-reading as a strategy for promoting literacy skills will teach children their phonics. However, studies quoted above support the role of read-alouds in developing grammar and vocabulary, especially the language style used in stories, in promoting conceptual development and in creating and maintaining interest in reading. That is to say, reading aloud to children is likely to lay the foundations for independent reading in the long run. Conversely, suggestions from Evans and Saint-Aubin (2005 cited by Alphonso, 2005) that parents should point to letters as they read in order to promote literacy development, "run the risk of killing interest in the story, and killing interest in reading in general" (Krashen, 2005c, p. 1).

4 Crosslinguistic relations and literacy development

Linguistic knowledge of second language and literacy knowledge from the first language are both identified as key factors in explaining how bilinguals acquire high levels of reading comprehension in the second language (Durgunoglu, 1997; Koda, 1994, cited by Bialystok, 2001 p. 175). Cummins (1991) also claims that L1 proficiency is one of the cognitive resources which, along with other individual factors (e.g., motivation) and contextual factors (e.g., the amount and type of exposure) contribute to the rapidity and ultimate success of L2. More than that, he points out that decontextualized / academic language skills transfer not only from L1 to L2, but also from L2 to L1.

This interdependence hypothesis implies, on the one hand, that developing literacy skills by reading aloud to children in the L1 will have benefits for their second or FL development, not only in terms of developing motivation but also in the sphere of academic language proficiency. On the other hand, it suggests that story-telling and story-reading in the foreign language class may influence literacy development not only in the target language, but also in the L1.

The interdependence between first and second or FL literacy skills is especially important in contexts where learners come from culturally disadvantaged backgrounds. In this sense, story-reading in the foreign language class provides opportunities for learners who have no or limited access to such learning experiences in their L1. Heath (1983) shows that even in developed countries non-mainstream homes provide different opportunities for literacy development from mainstream homes: in families where children are socialized into sharing books with adults, as well as into the routines and discourse of story-telling and story-reading, are likely to be more successful in literacy-related activities at school. Krashen (1997) shows that children in less developed countries are at a disadvantage compared to children in developed countries when it comes to access to print and books. Ghosn (2004) also notes that the transmission-oriented, rote-learning approach to instruction still prevailing in socially and economically disadvantaged countries, does not foster the kind of cognitive language development in L1 that might eventually transfer to L2.

As I have pointed out, the interdependence hypothesis suggests that not only do L1 academic skills transfer to L2, but L2 cognitive skills may also transfer to L1. This means that if homes do not provide equal opportunities for literacy development, second- and foreign-language programmes may help bridge the gap. As Ghosn (2001) suggests, EFL programs based on a syllabus including authentic, high quality children's literature in English, would

facilitate not only second language development for these children (and would thus prevent them from an early drop-out in case they fail to come up to the standards of the general curriculum), but it would also entail the development of critical thinking skills expected in academic classes, such as looking for main points and supporting details, comparing and contrasting, looking for cause-effect relationships, evaluating evidence, as well as they would become familiar with the type of language needed to express the thinking (Ghosn, 2004, p. 60).

The empirical studies presented in this dissertation provide further evidence in support of the interdependence hypothesis. Research carried out with young Hungarian EFL learners supports the benefits of reading in English for developing motivation to read in the mother tongue. This has been the case with the children growing up in deprived settings, and reading picture books in the English lesson and at home (Chapter Six, 7.1.5 and 8.1.2), as well as with some of the privileged children referred to in their teachers' reports (Chapter Five, 6.1.1). Also, the case studies in Chapter Seven indicate that exposure to English picture books from an early age enriched children's conceptual knowledge, as well as their awareness of conventions of narrative in terms of narrative devices at the level of text and pictures.

Conclusion

"It is in the earliest years of formal education that children define themselves as learners, largely on the basis of reading success, " claim Cheung and Slavin (2005, p. 243). This statement sets challenges for teachers as key figures in creating an environment which allows for literacy to emerge in an efficient way. I have shown in this chapter that creating this environment implies teachers' view of literacy development as a socially constructed process, the aim of which is not only that children be able to read and write, but also that "they *choose* to read and write" (Hudelson, 1985, p. 130).

Out of the diverse meaningful activities that promote literacy development, I have focused in particular on story-telling and story-reading, as they are activities that are relevant to young learners' lives, and thus have the potential to bridge the gap between children's oracy and emerging literacy. As shown above, the benefits of narratives for developing literacy are numerous: they rely on L1 knowledge (i.e. schemata) and contribute to conceptual development, they promote acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, and of the literate

register, they familiarize learners with the conventions of narrative, and last but not least, motivate novice readers to join the "literacy club" (Smith, 1988).

Another aspect discussed in this chapter relates to the interdependence of L1 and L2 literacy and academic skills, suggesting that literacy development in one language will have implications for the development of the other language. Seen from this angle, the role of providing motivating reading material and related tasks in the English lesson is immense, mostly in cases when children come from socio-culturally deprived settings.

I conclude by emphasizing that although in print-oriented societies children engage in making sense of print from very early on, the support given by more proficient readers, who shape literacy experiences for young readers is crucial. As I have shown, along selecting appropriate resources and providing opportunities for intelligent talk around stories, educators must be aware of the value and of the functions attributed to literacy in the children's home culture in order to be able to build on them.

Chapter Four

AUTHENTIC PICTURE BOOKS IN DEVELOPING

VERBAL AND VISUAL LITERACY IN EFL

In Chapters Two and Three I examined the significance of narratives in human development. Along with their contribution to building self and social identity, and to cognitive development, special attention has been paid to the role of narratives in young EFL learners' linguistic development, and their growth into literacy. In this chapter I will narrow down the discussion to authentic narratives in particular authentic picture books and their potential for the education of young EFL learners.

I will first define the picture book genre, depicting its versatile and multi-layered nature. Then, I focus on features which underpin the role of authentic picture books in the EFL class. In doing so, I consider different, occasionally complementary approaches to the concept of authenticity, and argue that authentic narratives, as opposed to texts written for didactic purposes, motivate learners by involving their imaginative faculties and contribute to their language development by providing samples of natural language in meaningful contexts. Finally, I present the potential of artistic picture books for developing critical thinking, visual literacy, and language skills in the EFL class.

1 Polysemic picture books

Marriott (1998, p. 1) claims that "our perennial view of picture books is as an age-related form of entertainment particularly appropriate for children before and in the early stages of formal schooling." This view implies that picture books are meant to support initially incompetent readers who are in need of picture cues to help the decoding of the written text. As stepping stones to more serious literature, they are put aside as soon as the child develops

an expertise in decoding print. The mental processes involved in meaning making, that is the question of how children learn to make sense and respond to the intricate interplay of words and pictures, is usually not raised by the proponents of this view. On the contrary, it is taken for granted that children can follow and construct a narrative, recognize causes, anticipate consequences and consider the motives involved (Wells, 1985b), and therefore have no problems in making sense of seemingly simple texts.

However, when it comes to defining picture books, the image appears to be far more complex than the one provided in Landsberg's survey of children's literature (1988), where picture books are only briefly discussed as one genre within written fiction for children, under the telling heading of "Books to encourage the beginning reader." More subtle approaches treat picture books as a complex and polysemic genre (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1994; Evans, 1998; Graham, 1990, 1998; Stephens, 1992; Styles, 1996), which is highly intertextual, and involves discourses such as painting, film, as well as traditional pre-texts. An example for this is *Outside Over There* (Sendak, 1981), which builds on a remarkable range of intertexts involving a Grimm tale (*The Juniper Tree*), Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Runge's painting *The Hulsenbeck Children*, William Blake's paintings, and Mahler's *The Youth's Magic Horn*, as discussed by Cott (1983).

It appears that picture books are multi-layered in that the pictures and the written text are interrelated to contain more than one definitive narrative (Walsh, Sh., 1993, p. 15). I will talk about the complexity of the discourse and the reading of picture books as a creative process later in this chapter. What is important to note here is that the plural quality of picture books in terms of the complexity of the verbal and visual narrative suggests that despite their deceptively simple format, they offer challenges to both adult and young reader audiences. As Marriott (1998) claims, although the different perspectives ranging from baby books to polysemic texts have their limitations, they are all valid. The genre is hard to define exactly because picture books are so diverse in format, style, subject matter and putative audience, and because they incorporate heterogeneous intertexts, making references to the structure of different narratives, such as the novel and the short story, as well as to painting and photography (Marriott, 1998, p. 3). It is due to their eclectic nature that picture books are not only hard to define, but are also flexible and versatile in use. Therefore, they can be legitimately seen and discussed as books for different audiences and different aims.

Marriott's perspective on picture books highlights their flexible and versatile nature, which makes them suitable for different audiences and purposes. This also takes us to their potential for EFL through providing meaningful language in relevant and enjoyable contexts,

and thus stimulating interest and discussion (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998), as shown in Chapters Five and Seven. In what follows, I will address features of picture books that make them not only suitable for developing foreign language skills, but also develop cognitive abilities, and create opportunities to grow into a literate context. The discussion will treat three of the most distinctive features of picture books. These attributes are by no means the only ones that define the genre, and therefore cannot be regarded in isolation from other characteristics, but they are indispensable in understanding the potential of picture books for learning.

The first of these features relates to their authenticity: picture books are samples of authentic narratives, namely children's literature, written with no explicit language teaching purpose. Another perspective concerns the ideological nature of picture books. In Stephens' view (1992), all literature, including children's literature, is inherently ideological in the sense that it conveys implicit or explicit messages about social issues, and therefore has the capacity for shaping audience attitudes (Stephens, 1992, p. 3). This is also true about picture books (Marriott, 1998; Stephens, 1992), and I will discuss this as the second defining feature. Finally, the third feature I will examine relates to the complex relationship between words and the visual element, which make picture books valuable resources in the foreign language lesson.

2 Authenticity

2.1 Approaches to authenticity

When discussing the concept of authenticity related to foreign language education, it turns out that while it is easy to find synonyms for the term "authentic," it seems problematic to decide what passes for authentic in the language classroom. The reason for this is, as Taylor (1996) points out, that the different types of authenticity are not clearly distinguished and defined. It seems that one of the ways to approach the notion of authenticity in the foreign language classroom is to make a distinction between the various aspects of the educational process to which it refers. A useful distinction in this sense is made by Breen (1985, p. 61), who distinguishes authenticity of texts, of learners' interpretation of such texts, authenticity of tasks and finally, authenticity of the social situation of the classroom. It is beyond my scope to analyze the different types of authenticity here, and I will focus the discussion on the

authenticity of narrative texts in the EFL educational process. However, as it appears in Chapter Seven, the nature of texts used in the educational process is inextricably linked to other above-mentioned aspects of authenticity, such as the authenticity of tasks and of the social situation.

In the related literature authentic texts are defined as stretches of real language which are designed not for language students but for a real audience, and therefore convey a real message (Harmer, 1991, p. 146; Morrow 1977, p. 13; Nunan, 1989, p. 54). The picture books referred to in this dissertation are authentic in the sense of the criteria set above: they are narratives which are designed for a "real" audience and convey a "real" message in the sense that they do not have an explicit language learning purpose. Adding to these criteria, some authors also make the point that it is not only the quality of the text in itself, but the particular use to which it is put, and the response given to the text that creates its authenticity in the classroom setting (Edmondson, 1995/6; Widdowson, 1979, 1985). This suggests when we go beyond the text itself, authenticity emerges in connection with other variables of the teaching-learning process, and that it remains very much a matter of interpretation (Taylor, 1996, p. 4).

On the other hand, the interrelatedness of texts, tasks and the teaching-learning context implies that the authenticity of texts in itself will not necessarily produce a more motivating learning situation, and therefore more success in attaining the educational goals set. Cullen (1998) and Seedhouse (1996) bring examples of extracts from teachers' discourse, and show that despite the repeated IRF cycle, classroom discourse is "natural" within its own frames of reference, and it constitutes as such, a sociolinguistic variety in its own right. Widdowson (1990) also makes the distinction between language-learning activity and language-using activity, and points out that inauthentic language-using behaviour may, however, be effective language-learning behaviour (Widdowson, 1990 p. 45). In the same frame of ideas, Kramsch (1993, p. 184)) contends that what goes on in the language classroom needs to be measured against the communicative and cognitive goals that are set in that particular educational setting. This links to the theoretical frame set at the beginning of this dissertation, according to which classroom phenomena need to be interpreted in their interrelatedness, and in function of the context. Therefore, just as the so-called "artificiality" of the classroom discourse is not necessarily a weakness, authenticity is not valuable in itself. It becomes an advantage, though, if it promotes learning.

2.2 Authenticity in the young learner classroom

It is often suggested that instead of being too concerned about authenticity in the language classroom, teachers should have more confidence in learners' sociolinguistic abilities and educational experience (Taylor, 1996, p. 7). I need to add to this that while it is true that students have to grow into coping with the demands and conventions of the language class frames, it is also true that the teaching-learning situation is more intricate, and varies greatly as we look across cultures, age-groups, teachers and students.

An example to suggest that authenticity is not necessarily something we ought not to worry about is the young learner classroom. Research shows that young learners are more ready to process new knowledge and show signs of cognitive development, if new information is embedded in a context that makes human sense to them (Donaldson, 1987; Elley, 1989). One of the contexts which make sense to most children is the narrative frame, where they encounter new language and concepts in a familiar way, and which is for them, therefore, authentic. In this sense, a well chosen authentic picture book is a genuine context for children to rely on in their efforts to make meaning of the language and of the information embedded in it. In certain educational contexts, such as in Hungary, where language teaching is deeply rooted in a positivistic tradition, teachers tend to rely on teaching techniques and methods which often do not take into consideration the way young learners think and learn (Nikolov, 2002). In this case the question of "authenticity" in the sense of tasks and situations which are relevant to learners' lives is an issue that certainly gives cause to worry.

Classroom situations which are familiar to children also help them relate what happens in the classroom to their lives. Heath (1994) found that children who had early encounters with literacy and with the patterns imposed by shared reading (e.g., labelling activity, IRF) performed better at school than children who came from deprived backgrounds in terms of literacy. Besides the need to provide children with early literacy experiences, Heath's (1994) study points at the need to provide children with bridges that link discontinuities between the home discourse with the educational discourse, as discussed in Chapter Three (2.2). Using authentic reading materials or even telling stories appears one of the ways to mitigate differences between the "authentic" home culture on the one hand, and the "artificial" school culture on the other.

On the basis of what has been said so far, it appears that the question of authenticity in EFL, even at the level of authenticity of reading materials is a highly controversial issue, both in terms of the definitions it involves, and in terms of the attitudes towards it. While the

related literature (Carter & McRae, 1996; Chavez, 1988; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Edmondson, 1995/6; Richards, 2001; Taylor, 1994; Widdowson, 1985) as well as participant teachers' voices in the empirical studies presented later (Chapters Five and Six) articulate strong opinions as to whether authentic or inauthentic materials constitute more valuable learning sources in EFL, this should not necessarily end up in a theoretical debate of which is better. After all, neither of these materials needs to be used exclusively. Instead, they are to be looked at as complementary ways to provide more varied opportunities for language exposure and practice.

2.3 Creating personal involvement through authentic narratives

In what follows I will look at what authentic narratives may offer as compared to texts, in particular narratives written with a language learning purpose. Ghosn (2004) suggests authentic children's literature as an alternative to the traditional bottom-up approach to EFL, claiming that literature presents examples of real-life language in motivating and meaningful contexts, as opposed to the highly structured texts of EFL course books. Ghosn also cites David Crystal, who strongly argues against the "nice, decent, and characterless" characters, the "generally unreal and dull" situations and the unnatural language presented in of EFL textbooks (Crystal, 1987 cited by Ghosn, 2004, p. 59).

Similar arguments are made by Bettelheim (1991), who recognized the relevance of the reading material in one's search for meaning (Chapter Two, 2.1), and argued for the role of authentic narratives, namely children's literature in education instead of texts specifically designed to develop reading skills. Bettelheim's dissatisfaction with preprimers and primers used in school to develop reading comes from the perception that "these books are so shallow in substance that little significance can be gained from them." He then adds that the "acquisition of skills, including the ability to read, becomes devalued when what one has learned to read adds nothing of importance to one's life" (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 4). Bettelheim's point is equally valid for the foreign language teaching context. Studies bring evidence to support that reading materials in the classroom appear to be most motivating and elicit response when they make a deep impact on readers (Deacon, 2005; Walsh, M., 1993; Walsh, S., 1993), and readers can relate them to their lives. Thus, they create opportunities both for exposure to cognitively engaging input in the target language, and for meaningful interaction.

2.4 Involving imaginative faculties

Authentic texts can make a difference by creating personal involvement. McRae (1991) suggests that this is made possible by the representational quality of the language which authentic texts display, as opposed to inauthentic texts. Based on Jacobson's (1960 cited by McRae, 1991 p. 2) discussion of functions of language as a starting point, McRae (1991) makes a distinction between referential and representational language. Referential language reflects basic language use and is therefore the basis of second and foreign language learning. Most language learning textbooks give "models of usable referential language" that students are encouraged to adopt and manipulate in various situations (McRae 1991, p. 5.), but they do little in the way of involving learners' imaginative faculties and generating thinking. That is to say, the focus is on the mechanistic aspects of language, on how to communicate, while content becomes of secondary importance.

On the other hand, literary texts display features of language that go beyond the referential function, which is giving or asking for information, or handling a social situation. The language used by literature not only refers to the world, but it invites readers to interpret how it represents that world (Carter, 1996; Widdowson, 1985). It is exactly this process of interpretation which involves readers' imaginative faculties: it calls upon and stimulates areas of the mind which referential language does not reach (McRae, 1991, p. 3). Examples for this will be provided in Chapter Six (7.3.2), when children are depicted using representational language as acquired from picture books in new contexts.

In this sense, Egan (1986) notes that in school, the efforts to capitalize on the uses of imagination are scarce, and therefore, what would otherwise be a powerful tool in educating children, is largely lost. As I have shown in Chapter Two (4), the emphasis on the cognitive at the expense of affective is due to the paradigmatic thinking tradition in European culture (Bruner, 1986, 1996), as well as to the fact that our most influential learning theories have been derived from research focusing on a limited range of children's logical thinking skills (Piaget, 1966). Egan (1986) argues convincingly that using the narrative frame when planning classes in social studies, language arts, science and mathematics, is a way to integrate imagination, and thus, to create an engaging context which makes human sense to learners. If we take McRae's (1991) point about the power of representational language to involve readers' imaginative faculties, it appears that authentic narratives may have a great role in stimulating neglected learning potentials. This links well to Frye's view of the role of

literature teaching, which is essentially "the transfer of imaginative energy from literature to the students" (Frye, 1964, p. 129).

2.5 Cultural negotiation

The potential of authentic narratives to develop pragmatic competence, and thus, bridge the cultural gap between native and non-native speakers is also highlighted by McRae (1991). This he claims to be particularly significant in second language contexts, where linguistic competence alone is not sufficient for shared communication. In such contexts, the basic level knowledge which course-books offer can be segregating rather than integrating, and this may lead to a series of social and political implications in the long run (McRae, 1991, p. 5).

In this sense, authentic sources are relevant also in terms of content. Literature may explicitly deal with cultural information, such as topics related to specific cultural traditions. But more importantly, authentic narratives are inherently ideological in the sense that they imply and convey shared cultural values of the society which has produced them. Stephens (1992) points out that a "narrative without an ideology is unthinkable: ideology is formulated in and by language, meanings within language are socially determined, and narratives are constructed out of language" (Stephens, 1992, p. 8). This suggests that literature transmits cultural assumptions implicitly, by virtue of the language used. Dealing with literature implies understanding the signifying codes used by society. Therefore, implementing authentic texts in teaching may promote a deeper understanding of the cultural schemata of the target language, and help create shared cultural awareness, which is again a key-factor when it comes to communication in second and foreign language contexts (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).

The cultural load transmitted both by the content and language of authentic narratives may make these sources more difficult to understand. In the case of picture books, pictures scaffold young learners' understanding to a great extent. But most importantly, the interaction which takes place between text and reader is also meditated by the teacher. This is especially true in the case of young learners, where, although the authentic situation (e.g., the story-telling and story-reading frames) and books are highly motivating, and factors such as background knowledge and teacher and learner comments support understanding, teachers have a crucial role in scaffolding children's meaning making process (Read, 2006).

An example for the importance of mediation comes from the study presented in Chapter Six, where primary school teachers of English used a wide range of authentic picture

books as complementary materials. The teacher from the socio-culturally deprived area pointed out that these books offered information that was not accessible for these children elsewhere: *"Most of the children have never seen African-Americans, and found the subject intriguing."* The teacher's diary also reveals that the book was followed by a discussion in Hungarian about the politically correct terms (in English and in Hungarian) for African-American, and the cultural-historical background which motivates the importance of the socially accepted term. This shows that by appropriate scaffolding, cultural implications can be made accessible to students.

The example also supports the role of authentic readings for promoting tolerance for cultural differences. This is a valid point for both students and teachers. A study carried out by Marshall (1979 cited by McKay, 1986, p. 192) shows that using literature promoted not only students' understanding of cultural concepts, but while working with students through the difficulties of the text, the teacher also clarified her understanding of the text, and increased her appreciation for her students' own cultural framework. This depicts cultural learning not as a process of learning stereotypes about the target language culture, but rather as a process of interaction between cultures, during which we also come to terms with our own frames of reference.

2.6 Authentic narratives perceived as difficult readings

In spite of the benefits they present, it is rarely the case that Hungarian teachers resort to authentic narratives as supplementary materials in the EFL class (Nikolov, 2002; Lugossy, 2006). As shown in some of the empirical studies (Chapters Five and Six), when it comes to the question of using authentic narratives in the language classroom teachers often oppose the idea claiming that unlike texts designed for language learning purposes, authentic stories are linguistically too demanding for their students. I will examine the reasons for these assumptions more deeply in Chapter Five (7), when teachers' beliefs about authentic narratives in the language classroom are analyzed.

However, the difficulty attributed to authentic narratives links, on the one hand, to teachers' schemata of authenticity of texts in general. As suggested in Chapter Five (7.2.2), teachers' shared assumptions about the difficulty of authentic texts in the language classroom partly originate in their lack of experience concerning authentic readings which make sense to students. It appears from the study presented in Chapter Five that teachers' schemata of authentic literature, in particular children's literature, include canonized sources only, and that

teachers have hardly any experience with authentic pieces which match both the cognitive and the linguistic competence of their students. So the concept of authenticity necessarily evokes the notion of linguistically demanding texts associated with native speakers' proficiency.

On the other hand, the perceived difficulty lies not necessarily in the quality of the text, but in teachers' understanding of reading. In Chapter Five (6.4.2) I will bring examples for teachers' reluctance to use authentic narratives, based on the assumption that these texts contain unknown words and structures which the learners will not understand. As discussed later in more depth, this view suggests that teachers do not perceive reading as a top-down process, where meaning making is supported by the context and by students' background knowledge, but believe that when reading or listening to a story, one has to understand all the words, or else one might not be able to make sense of the text. However, both experiences we have from our own efforts of meaning making and cognitive models about how we organize and interpret knowledge about the world (Schank & Abelson, 1995) seem to contradict this worry. As I pointed out earlier, familiarity with the prototypical story structure (Propp, 1970) and certain features of the text, as well as the pictures in the case of picture books may compensate for at least some of the words that the learners might not know.

Looking at it from another angle, the fear that learners do not understand the text because some of the words are unfamiliar to them also carries the implicit assumption that in order to make sense of language it is enough to know all the words. That this may not necessarily be so, it suffices to read George Mikes's (1984) account about the beginnings of his "learning to be a Brit," and to find that whenever reading a leading article in *The Times*, he understood everything perfectly well, except that he could never make out whether *The Times* was for or against it. This gives us an idea of how the knowledge of words and grammar alone will not result in pragmatic competence and will not, by themselves alone, bring an understanding of the text.

The idea that authentic narratives are difficult to cope with in the language classroom usually goes together with the belief that simplified versions of original texts are easier to understand. Therefore teachers who feel tempted to use "real-like" narratives often resort to texts specifically designed to match learners' level. Contrary to the belief that in order to be understood, a text should be kept simple, and consist only of words that learners know,

Cameron (1994) argues that the natural redundancy of authentic texts (as opposed to simplified versions) may actually assist learners in the meaning making process. Removing or changing some of these text features such as the tense (simple present in the easy-to-read versions, as opposed to simple past, which is basic to narratives), vocabulary (more general or

even more specific words instead of basic level expressions which give the listener help in understanding) and story structure (the simplified version often dropping well-known and easily acquired formulae for the beginning and end) affects the natural redundancy of the text, and may deprive readers of valuable clues in understanding the story.

Finally, when talking about the difficulty of authentic narratives, it is worth considering that what is perceived as linguistic difficulty may actually be a matter of conceptual difficulty for learners. Similarly to a L1 learning situation, where children learn the concepts by which they organize the world at the same time with the language for these categories (Lakoff & Robinson, 1980), learning a second or a foreign language also implies concept learning. For children this may be the case with virtually any new concept they encounter, while with adults concept learning will usually refer to learning cultural concepts. Therefore, when we perceive texts as difficult for the learners, one of the questions that needs to be asked is whether the difficulty is of a linguistic or of a conceptual (involving cultural) nature. Scarcella and Oxford (1992, p. 107) note that when students appear to lack the knowledge of the world for certain texts, teachers "must fill them in on what they need to know to comprehend the reading" by focusing on concepts central to understanding (p. 107). I will provide examples for scaffolding children's understanding of concepts in Chapter Seven (5.4).

I am not assuming that authentic narratives are all easy, indeed easier to make sense of than texts which are carefully constructed to match learners' level. But it seems that we have more worries than we should in this respect, and that, as shown in the empirical chapters in this dissertation, careful selection of authentic stories and sensible scaffolding on the part of the teacher can assist learners in the meaning making process.

3 Creating meaning through authentic picture books

In what follows, I will examine the potential of picture books as plural art forms to socialize the target audience by promoting an awareness of the culturally shared assumptions, while also encouraging critical thinking about these assumptions. Then, I will look at how picture books promote literacy development not only in terms of teaching reading and writing, but also in the sense of familiarising readers with literate discourse both at the level of written and visual text.

3.1 The "secret agents" of education: ideology in picture books

Picture books are inherently ideological. Stephens asserts that "they can never be said to exist without either a socializing or educational intention, or else without a specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them" (Stephens, 1992, p. 158). As a cultural practice meant to socialize the target audience (Stephens, 1992), picture books often depict social practices which concern ways of regulating behaviour with a view to meet parental and societal expectations. *Harry the Dirty Dog* (Zion, 1996) evades from home in order to escape a wash. On his return, he is apparently not recognized by his family, but as he agrees to a serious wash-and-brush he instantly recaptures his former status in the family and is rejoiced over, prodigal as he is.

Although expected behaviour may be reinforced through a reward-and-punishment pattern, often the "moral imperative" (Marriott, 1998, p. 5) is tacit rather than asserted. Baddeley and Eddershaw (1994) document how ten-eleven-year-olds make meaning of *Not Now, Bernard* (McKee, 1990) by relating it to their own experience, and develop complex cognitive and affective understandings in spite of the minimalistic text. In the story Bernard desperately tries to attract his parents' attention, while they are engaged in apparently unimportant occupations. Even when he is eaten by a monster in the garden, the fact goes unnoticed, and while the monster makes similar attempts to get in touch with the parents, the only response he elicits is "Not now, Bernard." The text does not spell out a moral, and offers no information as to the characters' emotions. The subtle interpretations mentioned in the study (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1994) provide evidence that readers rely on the pictures in order to fill the gaps in the written narrative, and explore Bernard's feelings of loneliness. It appears then that perspectives on ethical and moral ideas can be conveyed overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, "through the combination of images and words, themes and ideas, texts and subtexts" (Marriott, 1998, p. 6).

This "moral imperative" contained in picture books is of great importance during childhood, which is a crucial formative period in life, when the intention is to make sense of the world, and come to terms with what to believe and how to relate to other people and oneself. The ideologies that come through are constructed within social practices, and they render "a representation not only of how the world is, but how it ought to be" (Marriott, 1998, p. 6). In this sense the ideological nature of picture books reinforces the function of literacy as a whole, seen, as shown in Chapter Three, as a means to act upon the world (Mercer, 1994).

3.2 Interrogating ideologies

Quite because all literature, including texts intended for children are inherently ideological, some authors dismiss classical fairy tales on grounds of their being "secret agents of an educational establishment" (Zipes, 1983, p. 46), and consider them therefore obstacles rather than incentives in the process of individual growth (Tatar, 1992; Zipes, 1983, 1997). Instead, these authors propagate the emancipatory value of fairy tale discourses other than the classical one. By developing contrary to cultural expectations, these "liberating" stories (Zipes 1983, p. 170) encourage re-thinking some of the ideologies (i.e. personal and cultural assumptions) attached to traditional fairy tales, while at the same time they encourage thinking creatively about the fairy tale genre.

A wide range of picture books subvert canonical fairy tales, and thus interrogate implicit cultural beliefs. Elizabeth in *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch & Marchenko, 1980) inverts all classical paradigms when she rescues her prince by outsmarting the dragon, and finally decides not to marry him, after all. The fact that our expectations about a narrative develop differently from what we expect based on our cultural schemata is useful for two main reasons. In terms of literacy development, the ironical handling of the obvious pretext enhances awareness of traditional narrative frames, and encourages detachment from what we take for granted in terms of fairy tales (e.g., wolf-eats-little-girl-in-red, or prince-saves-princess-and-she-marries-him patterns). Zipes (1983) believes that this detachment encourages re-thinking what we believe to be a frozen genre, and hence a more daring and creative approach to the fairy tale discourse. On the other hand, inverting stories leads to an awareness of the ideologies implied. Most often these counter-cultural versions interrogate stereotypes related to gender roles or representatives of authority, and by doing so, they encourage re-thinking what is taken to for granted in terms of patterns of behaviour.

Besides its uses in terms of developing critical thinking and literacy, it is in order to add some explanation as to why children may find such subversive discourse appealing. In her analysis of nonsense in children's word play, Whitehead (1995) identifies the therapeutic function of the "drive in early childhood and through to adolescence, and even beyond, to subvert the systems of language and culture" (p. 53), and by this to violate taboos of the grown-up world. This is apparent in children's silly or even rude versions of traditional rhymes, songs and advertisements with which they subvert conventional ideas in order to defuse deep anxieties and at the same time to probe the extent of adult power (Bettelheim, 1991; Lurie, 1990; Whitehead, 1995). In this sense, the function of subversive children's

literature relates to what the anthropologist Geertz (1976, cited by Whitehead, 1995, p. 55) identified as "deep play." Participation in deep play, that is in activities which involve a high risk factor, has been seen as a way to overcome fear in many different cultures.

Finally, subversive children's literature involves what has been introduced by Bakhtin (1984) to the literary imagination as the notion of carnival. Bakhtin (1984) shows that the carnival provides a context for challenging social control, and by this it provides a safety valve for the subversive elements in any system or social group. Therefore, the picture books which overturn conventional patterns challenge traditionally accepted norms, and they remind us that "any text, no matter how serious, can be questioned, manipulated and re-worked" (Whithead, 1995, p. 53). In this sense, the carnivalesque aspect takes us back to Zipe's (1983) concern with the role of children's literature to appeal to critical faculties.

Authentic narratives written for children in general and picture books in particular promote a network of beliefs and values with a socializing intent. It has also become clear that some of these stories go counter cultural expectations, and thus provoke reader response. It is exactly in this appeal to children's critical faculties that Zipes (1997) sees one of the main merits of children's literature: its potential to offer an alternative to consumerism in society.

3.3 Visual experience

Alice, when beginning to get very tired and peeping once or twice into the book her sister was reading, found that it had no pictures or conversations in it. Then she thought: *"what is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversations?"* (from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll). Indeed, there is no doubt that young readers welcome pictures in books. In spite of this, illustrations are usually looked at as "cobwebs to catch flies" (Graham, 1990), which do little to contribute to young children's literacy development. However, authors (Graham, 1990, 1998; Freemantle, 1993) point out the potential of illustrations to create readers in their own right, as in wordless texts, such as *The Snowman* (Briggs, 1978), and also when combined with a carefully constructed text.

Along their potential to create motivation to read, pictures may become invaluable sources of information, and they may scaffold readers' understanding of the text (Elley, 1989; Klippel, 2006). Elley (1989) reports that children exposed to picture books learn new vocabulary best when the words used in the story are supported by pictures. This becomes particularly important in English language education. Research on the strategies used by

young Hungarian learners while making meaning of picture books (Lugossy, 1999) reveals that in order to understand the story, children tend to rely primarily on pictures, then on the teacher's and on one another's comments in the first language, and to a much lesser extent on the text read by the teacher.

Finally, studies also reveal that pictures come to function not only as support for understanding the words, but as a sign system on the basis of which young children may acquire an awareness of the subtext (Arizpe, 2006; Coulthard, 2003; Walsh, S., 1993). Therefore, it appears that along their potential to create readers, pictures have a salient role in the complex process of meaning making. This involves not only supporting the meaning of words, but rather scaffolding a deeper understanding of the text and the possible subtexts. In what follows, I will look at this function in more detail.

3.4 Training in visual literacy

Authors agree that a main function of children's books is to train in visual literacy, that is, the ability to comprehend meaning in images (Enever, 2006; Graham, 1998; Hughes, 1998; Klippel, 2006). Manifold (1997) points out that our need to process volumes of data quickly and efficiently increases as we enter the information age, and claims that unlike moving images, images in picture books "allow the sustained viewing time necessary for developing critical viewing skills through exploration, critique and reflection" (p. 1). Thus, if well used, picture books may become useful tools for providing understanding of abstract concepts, complex events or relationships, and ultimately, handle decontextualized language.

Learning to read the pictures involves learning the conventions of representing the actual world, such as stylized forms, for example. Stephens (1992) makes the telling point that viewers have to learn how to interpret or 'read' a picture just as much as a verbal text, and that learning is part of acculturation. Contrary to the naïve and somewhat sentimentalistic view that children see with unspoiled perceptions, Stephens refers to Nodelman (1988, cited by Stephens, 1992, p. 158), who points out that visual representations cannot be understood without a knowledge of learned competencies and cultural assumptions. In Chapter Seven (5.2.3.1) I will bring examples to illustrate how shared cultural assumptions underlie the process of reading the pictures, and therefore the process of interpreting the multiple layers of a text.

The power of pictures in this sense is also apparent in that they are the first medium to introduce readers to the field of literary discourse. The range of themes, motives and characters they present will promote children's familiarisation with literary conventions they may encounter in subsequent texts. A classical example is *A Dark, Dark Tale* by Ruth Brown (1992), where spatial organisation (i.e. a sequence of dark, diminishing spaces enclosing one another), together with the motive of the black cat introduce a setting, which, quite obviously to the well-trained eye, is meant to illustrate a state of mind rather than a geographical space.

Intertextuality, a frequent attribute of picture books, is another feature which contributes to developing literary competency in the audience, as it reinforces the idea that "no text exists in isolation from other texts, and from their conventions and genres" (Stephens, 1992, p. 84). An example for this is *Hansel and Gretel* by Anthony Browne (1995), which, besides relying on the classical pre-text, also alludes to discourses other than literary: pictures hanging on the wall or merely suggested by a reflection in the window (referring to Magritte's surrealistic style) carry core messages related to the meaning of the story and challenge readers to construct new meanings.

3.5 Reading picture books: a creative process

When it comes to pictures in books, one is too often tempted to remember that Bettelheim (1991) strongly disapproves of illustrations in books written for children. The reason for this is that he places great emphasis on the process of interior visualisation which generates personal meanings, "different for each person, and different for the same person at various moments in his life" (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 12).

Due to their intriguing and often intertextual nature, reading picture books is a complex process, which requires more than processing the written text and looking at the pictures. On the one hand, far from providing ready-made and stereotypical interpretations of the text, pictures in good quality picture books allow space for meaning making. On the other hand, the subtle interplay between text and pictures encourages personal interpretation. Evidence suggests that when children are exposed to picture books, they reflect on what they see and hear, and give personal and sophisticated responses (Arizpe, 2006; Coulthard, 2003; Freemantle, 1993). This suggests that picture books create an environment which encourages thinking and talking about reading, which is ultimately part of a literate behaviour.

Considering the different media involved, Marriott (1998) notes that the act of reading a picture book requires the reader to focus on the gap between words and pictures, and thus engage in a creative process by which he attempts to integrate the apparently discontinuous. Similarly, Whitehead (1997) likens reading picture books to "authoring" or creating a story on account of the "narrative spaces that must be filled by the reader" (Whitehead 1997, p. 109). It appears that the economic use of text, which is mostly responsible for the apparent simplicity of picture books, along with the imaginative and often upsetting illustrations actually place demands on readers of all ages.

The ambiguous relationship between text and pictures is resolved by readers in different ways, and therefore texts are understood at different levels. In this sense, Styles (1996, cited by Evans, 1998, p. xv) claims that polysemic picture books are the ultimate postmodern text. This links to Rosenblatt's (1978) reader-response-theory, in which the reader has a most important part to play in constructing meaning, and therefore there is no one definitive reading to a text. The meanings we attribute are partly determined by the culture in which we grow up. This is exemplified by studies where children from various ethnic backgrounds were found to render socioculturally constructed interpretations of picture books while exploring the subtext (Arizpe, 2006; Coulthard, 2003).

In calling for a change of metaphor in thinking about language and literacy, Frank Smith (1985b) suggests that the model which perceives "language as synonymous with communication, and communication as the transmission of information, the exchanging of messages like sums of money or bags of oranges" (Smith, 1985b, p. 195), is a view which necessarily narrows our perceptions of literacy as well. Therefore, instead of a set of skills in decoding and comprehension, he perceives language as the "primary fundamental and continual activity of the brain" (Smith, 1985b, p. 195). The brain, claims Smith, *creates* experience. In this sense, there should be more to literacy development than mastering a bank of skills which make us able to decode texts. Rather, it should be seen as a continual process which creates worlds, and which is in turn constructed in action: through reading and engaging in the interpretation of texts. The metaphor of "creating worlds" instead "shunting information" (Smith, 1985b, p. 195) comes as a further reinforcement for the need to use plural authentic texts, which can be read differently depending on each reader's life story and experience. Seen from this angle, reading authentic literary texts may appear as a necessary requirement for learners to grow into language and literacy.

4 Picture books in the language classroom

4.1 Picture books as narrative and visual art in the language classroom

In her book entitled *How Texts Teach What Readers Learn*, Margaret Meek (1988) writes about the "untaught lessons" in reading, those which readers experience only through deep involvement in what they read, and through shared reading with others (Meek, 1988, p. 7). She points out that often the picture book itself is doing the teaching, and claims that depriving children of early and crucial interactions with picture books is potentially to do them a grave disservice in relation to their literacy development. As foreign language development can be seen as part of children's literacy development, this view also holds true in the context of language education.

In the EFL class, good quality picture books bring with them the advantages of authentic narratives in general: they have an intriguing story-line, situations which make human sense to readers and memorable characters, unlike, as quoted above, the "nice, decent, and characterless" characters and the "generally unreal and dull" situations of EFL textbooks (Crystal, 1987 cited by Ghosn, 2004, p. 59). Also, authentic picture books use real-life language, which is not specifically tailored to students' level, but which is memorable because the story makes human sense to learners.

Alongside these features which support the use of picture books as authentic narratives in the language classroom, it must be considered that picture books are an art form combining different media. That is to say, they present benefits not only on the level of narratives, but also through the presence of the artistic visual element and its potential for EFL learning. Arizpe refers to Perkins (1994 cited by Arizpe, 2006, p. 41.) in claiming that through certain attributes it exhibits, art in itself is a supportive context for enhancing thinking dispositions.

One of the features of picture books as a form of art, and which also makes them valuable resources in ELF education, is that they provide instant access: books are physically present, and they can be handled, read and reread for clarifying ideas in terms of content and language. No translation of the images is needed, and as such they scaffold understanding of the text. Like works of art, picture books also invite personal engagement, and encourage a dispositional atmosphere where "affective impact brings with it the potential to cultivate thinking and broaden attitudes" (Arizpe, 2006, p. 41). A next feature of works of art that applies to picture books is that looking at them involves wide-spectrum cognition, that is it involves visual processing, analytical thinking, posing questions, verbal reasoning, and so on,

all of which, as shown by Arizpe (2006) are part of learning to communicate in a different language. Finally, picture books encourage multi-connectedness, by allowing us to make connections with many other contexts of human experience, including art, literature, history, philosophy, morality, and other cultures. These features which characterise works of art and picture books alike open a much wider perspective on what is, or what can be going on in EFL lessons. Considering picture books as mediating artefacts which can be resources for newness and transformation in the EFL lesson, is to treat foreign language development as part of a complex educational event inherently connected with other areas of human growth, including cognitive, affective and artistic development.

In support of the potential of verbal and visual narratives in the classroom, Arizpe (2006) reports on the impact of picture books in a study involving bilingual children in a London school. Discussion of the findings reveals that the instant access in terms of touching the books and turning the pages gave participants "a sense of ownership and confidence" (Arizpe, 2006, p. 41), and invited personal engagement. The fact that children could relate the stories to their own experience enhanced the affective impact, and allowed them to take interest in artistic features such as style, pattern and perspective, and to make meaning based on the verbal and the visual context. In this sense, language difficulties set aside, there were few differences between native and non-native speakers of English in terms of involvement and in making critical comments and observations. The use of language being one of the cognitive processes which was encouraged during study, Arizpe notes that even students with a weaker command of English were found able to arrive at sophisticated responses to picture books, tackling complex language structures in order to communicate their insights with the rest of the group (p. 43). The conclusions of the study suggest that, taking into account the sophisticated thinking children demonstrated through using picture books, their cognitive skills can be developed and built on in order to help them become fluent speakers, readers and eventually, writers.

4.2 Language development through exposure to picture books

Despite the intriguing results in terms of how children make meaning of picture books in an ESL context (Arizpe, 2006), as well as of the benefits of these books in terms of literacy development in the first language (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998; Walsh, M., 1993), there seems to be relatively little research done in the area of foreign language learning. Research

carried out in this field focuses predominantly on children's, teachers' and parents' attitudes to picture books (Jones Mourao, 2006; Kierepka, 2006), rather than the language gains they may bring about. Therefore, in providing evidence for the potential benefits of picture books for the acquisition of new vocabulary, I will rely on a comprehensive study carried out by Elley (1989) in a first language setting (New Zealand). Elley (1989) documents that exposure to picture books is a significant source of vocabulary acquisition, whether or not reading is accompanied by teachers' explanation of word meaning. The study also reports that learning is relatively permanent and those students who start with less vocabulary knowledge gain at least as much as others. While the results can be attributed to the fact that new vocabulary is presented in, and supported by a meaningful verbal and pictorial context, there is certainly a more complex set-up of interacting factors accounting for language development.

Elley (1989) identifies certain critical story features that need to be present learning to occur. One of these features relates to Krashen's (1985) comprehensible input hypothesis, claiming that new input should contain language beyond the pupils' present level of understanding. Another key variable refers to the frequency of exposure: in order for significant learning to occur there has to be normally more than one exposure to each word. This is often the case with picture books, as they often include repetitive patterns, which on the one hand reduce the cognitive load on learners, and on the other hand it involves them into reading and telling the story. Helpfulness of the verbal meaning cues and depiction of the new words in illustrations were also found to predict whether a particular vocabulary item would be learned. Finally, children's involvement is also seen as crucial in determining effective language learning. The study reports that there are certain features of stories which "attract and hold children's attention" (Elley, 1989, p. 185), such as an interesting plot, the element of humour and the familiarity of the setting in which the story. For example, children were found to lack involvement in the case of a culture-specific Japanese story, which they apparently could not relate to their lives, either in terms of the narrative or in terms of the illustrations.

Elley's experiments are reassuring in that they offer empirical evidence for what parents and educators have long known intuitively: namely, that along the recreational and cultural benefits, story reading, in particular sharing picture books, has advantages for children's language development.

Conclusion

It appears that in spite of teachers' reservations about using them in EFL education in Hungary (see Chapter Five, 6.4), authentic narratives present important qualities compared to texts written with an explicitly pedagogical purpose. The advantages of authentic narratives in terms of creating personal involvement, engaging imaginative faculties and developing pragmatic competence do not necessarily question the potential of textbooks to promote successful language learning. They do, however, suggest that by relying only on texts designed specifically for teaching aims, one might deprive learners of more varied types of input, and therefore of opportunities for developing language through involving their imagination, and for developing positive attitudes towards the target language culture, while gaining a more articulate knowledge of their own cultural beliefs.

Within authentic narratives I have given special consideration to picture books as complex, ideologically patterned narratives which invite involvement and interpretation on the part of the readers. As such, authentic picture books develop not only reading but also critical thinking, and scaffold the process of growing into a literate behaviour.

Finally, these qualities portray authentic picture books as valuable mediators in EFL education. Artistic picture books widen teaching and learning opportunities in the EFL class by allowing learners and teachers to construct meaning in interaction, while involving dimensions which go beyond language learning in the strict sense. That is to say, they create a framework which "engages our senses, allows for many kinds of cognition, connects to many facets of life," (Perkins, 1994 cited by Arizpe, 2006, p. 41.), and in which participants negotiate their understanding of language, literacy and cultures.

Chapter Five

SHAPING TEACHERS' BELIEFS THROUGH NARRATIVES

Introduction

In the previous four chapters I explored theories that underlie the importance of narratives in organising experience and knowledge. In the three chapters that follow I provide empirical evidence for how narratives contribute to cognitive, affective, social, and foreign language and literacy development of learners, teachers and their close communities, involving peers, siblings, parents and teachers' colleagues.

This chapter involves a double perspective on narratives, due to the fact that they appear both as teaching materials in the EFL class, and as teachers' accounts of their teaching experience. Thus, this study explores narratives as a means to scrutinise teachers' beliefs and to interpret these beliefs in terms of the specific social-cultural context in which they are embedded.

What prompted me to look at teachers' beliefs about using stories in the EFL class was something I often hear from in-service teachers: there is no time for stories and there are other, more pressing things to do. Sadly, it seems common experience in Hungarian education that we allow the time for a story only when we have finished with the "more serious" things, and thus ignore the potential of stories for cognitive, affective, social, and linguistic development. In what follows I will try to find answers to why stories fall on the educational margin in Hungarian EFL classrooms and point at latent teaching and learning philosophies that underlie this phenomenon. First, I describe the context of study, then I present my research questions and the participants. The next section gives a detailed presentation of the data collection instruments, followed by the procedures of implementing the study. The results will be presented by research questions, whereas the discussions will focus on emerging issues.

1 The context of research

The background to this study was a methodology seminar for in-service teachers, within the framework of a post-graduate teacher training course at the University of Pécs (see syllabus in Appendix A). The seminar had a double focus. On the one hand, it aimed to provide teachers with techniques and with theories relevant to their practice, and to support participants' reflection on their decisions and actions in the classroom. On the other hand, it was implicitly meant to encourage using story-telling and story-reading in the EFL class on an everyday basis.

As part of the course-requirements, participants were asked to conduct a classroom research project on using a story with a chosen age-group. Although the use of authentic materials was encouraged, this was not a requirement. As during the seminar we had worked extensively with authentic picture books, several teachers decided to work with these, but basically they were free to experiment with any other stories they found appropriate.

Participants were to observe their own teaching and their learners' contribution, and then to analyze and interpret the collected data first in a brief presentation given in front of the whole group, then in a paper which was to be handed in at the end of the semester. The last session was dedicated to discussing the findings and reflecting on participants' papers. I considered it crucial that teachers repeatedly talk about and write down their findings, as I hoped that by going through their stories again and again, they would gain a more profound understanding of classroom events. Narrative psychology argues for the central role of narrative as a founding principle which gives coherence and integrity to the representation of past events. It is, as such, a prerequisite of creating meaning (Horsdal, 2005, 2006; László, 2003; Ricoeur, 1981, 1984).

Repeated reflection on their experiences was also meant to make teachers link isolated bits of practice into a coherent methodology, and thus hopefully acknowledge experiential knowledge as a valuable opportunity for professional development, and their classrooms as legitimate learning sites for teacher development (Johnson, 2006, p. 242).

2 Research questions

As suggested in Chapter One (2), qualitative research aims to observe and describe phenomena rather than test specific hypotheses (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This also implies that this type of research is focused on process rather than outcome, and that, unlike the well-defined research questions of quantitative studies, research questions in qualitative studies tend to be open-ended, with no precise hypothesis. However, new categories may emerge and hypotheses may be generated during research.

In this study my aim was to gain insights into how in-service teachers related to using narratives, in particular authentic stories in their English classes. I also assumed that the project (including the exploratory project, the writing process and the discussion of the findings) would reveal teachers' beliefs about themselves, about their learners and about the teaching-learning process. Therefore, they would be able to regard their practice more objectively and consciously, embedded in a wider spectrum of social-cultural and educational traditions. Finally, I hoped that by gaining more articulate knowledge of their own practice, teachers would be able to provide more conscious support for their learners. I expected to find answers to the following research questions:

- How does using stories influence teachers' and pupils' motivation?
- How do participant teachers relate to the use of narratives, in particular authentic stories, in the EFL class before the project?
- How do these views change over time as a result of the project?

3 Participants

There were 32 participants (30 females and two males) in the study, all of them in-service teachers coming from various primary, secondary, and language schools in Hungary. The participants (aged 28-46) had received their teaching degrees either from teacher training colleges (Tanárképző Főiskola) or from primary teacher training colleges (Tanítóképző Főiskola) in Hungary. Out of the 32 teachers 15 taught in primary schools (one of them as a lower primary teacher), twelve worked in secondary schools and five taught adults (between the ages 18-52) at various language schools, as well as special courses organized for economists and soldiers.

4 Data collection instruments

In collecting data I relied on:

- a questionnaire on participants' professional practice and reading habits;
- teachers' written assignments;
- notes taken during and after the follow-up session and informal discussions with participants.

The questionnaire consisted of six open questions (see Appendix B) inquiring into teachers' attitudes towards the use of narratives in general and authentic texts in particular, about their reading habits as well as their expectations related to the course. With the first question I aimed to find out whether participant teachers used stories in their EFL lessons, while the second question focused on the use of authentic texts. In both cases I was also interested in the reasons teachers gave for using or not using stories, including authentic materials. The third question inquired about participants' image of themselves as readers, while the fourth question inquired about their reading habits. With the fifth question I wanted to find out the extent to which teachers relied on their pleasure readings in finding teaching materials. Finally, I was interested in what participants expected from the course, so that I could adapt the syllabus to what they perceived as their professional needs. In the current analysis I will focus on teachers' use of narratives, including authentic texts, as well as on teachers' beliefs underlying their practice. While doing this I will also rely on data gained from the other four questions, as they provide a broader context for understanding teachers' practices and beliefs.

Valuable data were also gained from teachers' research projects (examples in Appendix C), where teachers had the opportunity to carefully articulate their impressions and opinions. Thus, by means of the written assignments I gained insights both into events that took place in teachers' classrooms and into teachers' beliefs about these events.

Finally, the feedback discussion in the last session provided a rich spectrum of data concerning teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. These discussions, elicited with focus questions, also illustrated how teachers, while discussing professional issues, built on one another's ideas and constructed knowledge in their small community (Vygotsky, 1978).

5 Procedures

The research was carried out in the spring semester of the 2003-2004 academic year. On the first session a questionnaire was administered to participants, before any input was provided in terms of methodology. At the same time teachers were also informed about course requirements, which included (1) participating in seminar activities and discussions, (2) reading the assigned articles, and (3) doing an exploratory project, where teachers had to observe and reflect upon their own story-teaching (Appendix A).

In the second phase participants experimented with using narratives in their EFL lessons and carried out self-observation. Participants were free to choose the stories they found suitable for their projects. The use of authentic materials was encouraged, but not compulsory.

The seminar sessions attempted to provide guidance for teaching ideas (as, according to teachers' answers to initial inquiries about the expectations of the seminar, this was what all participants were looking forward to), and also to involve teachers in discussions in order to highlight the rationale of the activities-in-question. This gave us the opportunity to raise issues related to teachers' professional interests (e.g., language acquisition, the role of grammar, the role of narratives in learners' development, teacher development). The suggested readings also dealt with topics that were considered important for teachers' development. Most of these readings contained short descriptions and analyzes of classroom research, and they aimed to provoke thinking about certain topics.

In the third phase the outlines of the written assignments were discussed. I considered this important partly due to the uncertainty I sensed when the task was assigned. In spite of the written guidelines the teachers received, as well as my initial explanations, the teachers apparently felt the need to come back to the topic of how to structure and write down their observations on every seminar. Discussing the outlines primarily scaffolded teachers' planning process, but it also helped them raise further issues for research in their collected data.

In the fourth phase the written assignments were handed in, and data were analyzed along with the data provided in the questionnaires. This was followed by the fifth phase, which consisted of a follow-up discussion based on the results of the questionnaires and the written projects. The main trends and issues that emerged from both the questionnaires and the research projects were also discussed. This gave participants the opportunity to repeatedly think and talk about the assumptions underlying their classroom practice. I considered this

important, as current theories of learning (see Chapter One, 1.2, 1.3 and Chapter Two, 5) emphasise the importance of relating new information to already existing schemata in order to facilitate learning. By articulating and sharing their understandings of classroom practice with other members of the discourse community, participants added to their „horizons of understanding" (Louden, 1991 cited by Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 52), and were encouraged to further scrutinise apparently minor classroom events.

Finally, in the last phase of the research, data gained from the follow-up discussion were analyzed in the context of the findings from the questionnaires and teachers' exploratory projects.

6 Results

6. 1 Learners' motivation

The first research question aimed to find out how using stories influenced teachers' and learners' motivation. Both in the written assignments and during the feedback session, all participants gave positive feedback, and most of them claimed that they would repeat the "experiment." They found that using stories was rewarding in that it increased their learners' as well as their own motivation. As opposed to the initial opinions expressed in the questionnaires, (e.g., *"I don't think my students would like that [reading stories]. They're not motivated students."*) or, sceptical statements made in an informal context right after the first session on stories (e.g., *"Te nem tudod kik járnak hozzánk!"["You have no idea about the students who attend our school."]*), several teachers claimed that students who were otherwise considered "shy," "lazy," and "passive" enjoyed reading and listening to stories and were motivated to participate in follow-up activities.

6. 1. 1 Young learners

Fifteen teachers out of 32 tried stories with young learners. According to their reports, young learners participated enthusiastically in the shared reading of picture books, and in the related activities. In one case the teacher mentions that the use of authentic picture books in the

lesson encouraged some of the children to bring in their favourite Hungarian story-books focusing on similar topics (e.g., animals).

Another teacher reported that some of the children asked their parents to buy them books like the ones they had seen in the English lesson, and when this turned out to be impossible (as English books were not available), the two children went to the bookshop with their parents, and were happy to receive similar books in Hungarian. This also sounds like good news concerning the benefits of story-telling and reading for literacy development in the long run. It can be hoped that exposing children to narratives in their foreign language lessons, especially in the early years, creates positive attitudes not only towards the foreign language and towards reading in the foreign language, but towards reading in general.

In addition to gains in motivation to read both in English and in Hungarian, story-reading in English may, in the long run, bring benefits in children's reading skills in the first language. I will provide a more detailed discussion of the possible interdependence (Cummins, 1994, 1991) in this sense in Chapter Six (7.1.5, 8.1), when exploring the effects of extensive reading on the development of unprivileged children. In the study presented in Chapter Six, one of the participant teachers who regularly reads and lends high-quality picture books to the children, claims that the children in her group had never seen books of the sort, and were happy to touch them whenever they were allowed to do so. In such contexts, it seems that EFL programs can bridge the gap through including a selection of authentic, high-quality children's literature in English (Ghosn, 2003/2004).

6.1.2 Secondary school students and adults

Seventeen teachers conducted their research in secondary schools and language schools. Much to the participant teachers' surprise, gains in motivation were also identified in the case of secondary schools and adult groups in language schools. In spite of the fact that, as some teachers mention, it was believed that stories would not attract the attention of these age-groups, they experienced the opposite: teenagers and adults enjoyed the stories and the follow-up activities, and asked their teachers to *"bring some more of this next time."* Also, adults learning in a language school in the evening felt that *"this* [e.g., reading and listening to stories] *was more or less the only thing they felt like doing at this time of the day"* and *"they didn't even realize time went by and the lesson was over."* It becomes clear from teachers' reports that these age-groups were not used to dealing with stories in the English

class. In the discussion part of this chapter I will try to identify possible reasons why story-telling and story-reading are considered to be out of place beyond the young learner class.

Two teachers also quoted their students, saying that the story-telling frame and the meaning-focused talk that followed the story allowed students to feel more confident about using the language (*"... they told me they at last dared to say the things they were thinking about - in English..."*). This is an important point to remember, mostly because research suggests that confidence and risk-taking are important variables in successful second- and foreign language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 1994).

Another point which emerges from the remark made by students (*"...dared to say the things they were thinking about – in English..."*) is that, while creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, stories generate thinking, which, in turn, generate further language. As discussed in Chapter Four (2.4), McRae (1991) argues that it is especially authentic literature which involves learners' imaginative faculties, by giving content for talk and understanding in the foreign language. This also supports the development of the "fifth skill", that is thinking in English (Carter, 1996).

Besides the enthusiasm expressed by secondary and adult learners, there were also worries related to the contribution of stories to their learning. Some learners (as well as some teachers) made it explicit that, although they found stories engaging both cognitively and emotionally, and therefore they preferred them to other activities, they also believed that they could benefit more from direct instruction. This paradox can partly be explained by the socio-cultural background and educational traditions of the teaching and learning community. I will provide a more detailed discussion of the interaction of the cultural context and beliefs about teaching and learning further on in this chapter.

6.2 Stories offer personal learning experiences

Seven teachers noted that using stories gave the learners the chance to show their competence in other skills than the ones they were usually expected to display. In the following extract one of the teachers talks about how using narratives gave her the opportunity to challenge her views of "good students" both in terms of performance and of behaviour. Stories and activities related to stories proved to be cognitively engaging, and therefore prevented learners from misbehaving:

"Some students were a complete surprise to me because they were very good at story telling, much better than in any kind of other activity in connection with language learning. Those who are often fed up with the exercises and seem to be bored or would misbehave, sometimes turned out to be the best in this particular area of learning. On the other hand, some students, who always are prepared and ready to answer the teacher's questions, were less successful and imaginative."

Besides the realization that discipline problems are often rooted in the lack of appropriate methodology, the passage also highlights the importance of offering personalized learning experiences for pupils. In his theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner (2000) unites the study of mental representations with a focus on differences among individuals, and claims the existence of eight or nine different intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and interpersonal and possible existential intelligence), each featuring its own distinctive form of mental representation. In fact, claims Gardner, "each intelligence *is* a form of mental representation" (Gardner, 2000, p. 72). This view presents significant educational implications. If we understand the specific mental representations of each learner, learning experiences can be made more personal and, by this, more fulfilling and deeper in their impact. For example, working with narratives from across cultures and in ways which allow learners access to their content (Gardner, 2000), will address learners' multiple ways of representing and organizing knowledge about the world and will create chances for optimal performance.

In the above passage, the teacher expressed her surprise about the successful performance of learners she had misjudged as problematic, but who, surprisingly, proved to be *"good at story-telling."* It seems that it takes a project to make teachers resort to one of the earliest and most powerful teaching forms, which is story-telling. This is so mostly because course-books do not build on the educational potential of narratives, and what they offer in terms of texts are hardly the ones that learners find worth thinking and talking about. I have previously quoted Bettelheim (1991), who argued for the importance of appropriate reading experiences for children's development, and warned against reading materials which do not offer significant experiences to children in that they do not satisfy their search for meaning. This again seems to justify the integration of authentic literature in EFL programs.

6. 3 Teachers' motivation and professional development

6.3.1 Teachers' motivation

As for the enhancement of teachers' motivation, both the written assignments and the discussions on the final session made it clear that teachers found experimenting with stories enjoyable and worth the effort, both for the sake of the project, and, as several participants pointed out, further on. There was, however, one notable exception in this sense: a teacher who, although considered his lesson successful (*"more successful than I had expected"*), and gradually grew to enjoy it (*"I felt more tense at the beginning, but then I got more relaxed and started to enjoy telling the story."*), concluded that *"story-telling was not my cup of tea."* I will come back to this teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning, about his learners and about himself in the discussion part.

For the rest of the participants, though, the project was motivating because they experienced a feeling of success by attempting to do something most of them had not tried before, and because they evaluated this experience in positive terms. Also, they perceived the project as a task for which they got feedback and a grade, and which was part of a university degree programme that was essential in their lives. Therefore they tried to gain from it as much as possible.

6.3.2 Teachers' professional development: risk-taking and new interests

According to teachers' analyzes of their own teaching, another factor that influenced their motivation, besides successful story-teaching, was the realization that by planning and thinking about their teaching, as well as by challenging and revisiting the ideas related to their practice, (e.g., *"I never thought it would work in my classes."*), they developed their expertise.

All teachers found their involvement in the project challenging for their professional development in the sense that they had to (1) consult sources for finding appropriate stories and read articles on classroom research, (2) think about intrinsically motivating tasks before, while, and after telling the stories, (3) try something new in terms of practice, and (4) articulate and share their ideas.

While in their projects many of the participant teachers talk about their initial worries in connection with carrying out an experiment which was in several cases unusual both for themselves and their learners. However, teachers also express a certain sense of success in being able to accommodate these worries and taking the risk of using a story. As one participant claims: *"Although in the beginning I loved the idea of trying stories in my teaching, I was afraid it might end up in total failure, and I wished I could find a way out of it. But now I am glad I took the risk."* It is the development of a risk-taking attitude that I find crucial for maintaining teachers' motivation in the long run. Huberman's study (1989 cited by Rudduck 1992, p. 89) reveals that in the later stages of their career most teachers tend to be either disenchanted or to adopt a defensive attitude towards their own practice and authority concerning professional matters. This is largely due to the fact that they encounter the same kinds of situations over the years, and are likely to construct routinized patterns of action to deal with classroom situations. In our case, in order to complete their projects, teachers had to consult various sources (i.e. for stories and for their application), observe and reflect upon their own practice. It seems that all this has brought excitement and induced a risk-taking attitude into teachers' professional practice, and thus enhanced motivation.

The described study points at the importance of reflective practice (Schön, 1983; Wallace, 1991), which encourages constant self-questioning and the testing of one's practice against one's beliefs. Reflection assumes seeing things that have been so far taken for granted in a new light, and thus helps teachers to "construct their own versions of teaching" (Freeman, 1992, p. 16) by giving them the chance to articulate their understandings of practice and thus relate them to current theories about teaching and learning. It is important to note in this sense that, as it was mentioned in the follow-up discussion, it was not only the actual story-teaching experiment that teachers found rewarding (mostly because they turned out to be success-stories), but also the thinking and writing process, that is the process of testing their practice against their beliefs. Studies also suggest that teachers' ongoing professional thinking and development have a great role in sustaining their motivation in the long run (Gebhart, 1999; Gebhard & Duncan, 1992; Spada & Massey, 1992). In this sense the project supports Freeman's (1992) definition of teaching as a process which involves both thinking and doing.

The process of thinking about their teaching and problematizing classroom events admittedly brought new professional interests in teachers' lives. While using stories in the English class, teachers tried to find optimal ways to support their learners' meaning-making, and thus they came up with teaching strategies that they found useful in their own experiments. Also, the need for learner training, in particular strategy training (e.g., teaching

learners to rely on certain strategies when reading a text) was raised by several participants during the follow-up discussion.

Finally, along with trying new activities and problematizing classroom events, reading the relevant literature was also mentioned by participants as an event that contributed to their professional development. The articles that were suggested for reading were carefully selected studies of classroom research, and were assigned at the beginning of the semester and discussed during seminars. The fact that participants explicitly found them useful in planning their teaching and writing shows the need for relevant theoretical input and reflection on it in the process of teacher-development.

6.4 Teachers' attitudes to using narratives in the EFL class

The second research question investigated the extent to which teachers use narratives, in particular authentic stories in their classes, and looked at the reasons why they apply or avoid using these reading materials. As I wanted to be able to compare explicit attitudes to using narratives before and after the project, I administered a questionnaire in order to gain a broad view of how teachers relate to reading and making students read in the English class. The questionnaire was administered on the first session of the course, before any methodological input was provided. In what follows I will present the answers given to the questions, then provide a more detailed analysis together with the findings that emerge from the classroom research projects.

6.4.1 Teachers using stories

The answers to the questions revealed that 13 teachers out of the 32 who completed the questionnaire sometimes use stories as complementary materials, while 19 teachers did not. Both yes and no answers list several reasons for their choice.

Teachers who used stories did so because they believed that stories:

- increase students' motivation (11)
- provide a good context for new words and facilitate vocabulary acquisition (8)
- have a positive effect on classroom atmosphere (7)
- are helpful in providing visual support (1).

Reasons for not using stories included:

1. lack of time (13)
2. learners' low language competence (9)
3. language / school-leaving exams (5)
4. incompatibility of available materials with age-group-in-question (3)
5. students' lack of motivation (1)
6. students' cognitive abilities (1)
7. students' lack of literacy skills in L1 and in the foreign language (1).

Those teachers who used stories identified their role in creating motivation and a stress-free classroom atmosphere. They also mentioned that narratives facilitated language acquisition by providing context-embedded, situationally-linked language, occasionally supported by pictures. What is surprising, though, is the relatively small number of teachers who identified these benefits. Taking into account that in-service teachers had already received education in terms of psychology and methodology before this postgraduate course, there are few of them who rely on the theoretical knowledge previously acquired in their first degree programmes. What is even more disheartening, however, is that they do not seem to rely on their common sense and experience gained as educators and even parents.

As for the reasons for which teachers claimed to neglect stories, it is interesting to note that they are mostly attributed to external factors (e.g., time, language exams as well as to students' perceived levels of language competence and motivation). None of these reasons refer the respondent teachers' personalities or professional preferences or the expertise they believe to have. In the discussion part I will analyze more in depth the shared underlying assumptions that these reasons cover.

6.4.2 Teachers using authentic stories

It also turned out from the questionnaires that out of 32 teachers 20 claimed to use no authentic stories, because they found them too difficult for the learners' level, and because they considered it hard to find materials which are appropriate to their level. However, four teachers sometimes used extracts from *Newsweek*, five used nursery rhymes, one teacher used *Winnie the Witch* (Korky & Thomas, 1997) along with the activity book, and two of them mentioned songs. Twenty teachers claimed that they never used authentic materials in their English class.

Two out of the five teachers who used nursery rhymes and the two teachers who used songs, mentioned that rhymes and songs may have clear story-lines and could therefore be considered narratives in their own right. One of the arguments for using traditional nursery rhymes was that they are *"the real thing."* Teachers claimed that *"it's natural to use them. ... this is what we would use in Hungarian with children.*

It is curious though, to see "*Newsweek* articles" on teachers' list of authentic stories. While most teachers agree that their learners are below the linguistic level that they suppose to allow them to cope with authentic stories, four teachers claim to use extracts from *Newsweek* as "authentic stories" in their lessons. Apart from the fact that texts from *Newsweek* may not be among the prototypical examples of narratives, it is also interesting that these teachers do not mention using other, perhaps more appropriate authentic readings. It may also well be due to the Hawthorne effect: by alluding to authentic materials which are considered difficult and therefore of high prestige, teachers may have wanted to convey what they thought would be a positive image about themselves as informed and demanding teachers.

All the reasons for which teachers do not use authentic reading materials relate to the level of difficulty of these materials compared to students' level of language skills. However, studies focusing on using authentic stories in the young learner classroom (Jones Mourao, 2006; Kolsawalla, 1999; Williams, 1995) show that learners from a very early age find the adequate strategies to cope with reading materials which are not meant for pedagogical purposes, and therefore do not offer language specifically tailored to the learners' level.

6.5 Change in teachers' views about using narratives

The third research question aimed to investigate whether the project brought about change in participants' views about using narratives, in particular authentic stories in their classes. Both teachers' written assignments and the opinions worded in the follow-up discussion suggest that participants have to a certain degree re-evaluated their beliefs about the role of stories in their language classroom. As I pointed out above, out of the 32 who completed the questionnaire, 19 claim that they did not use stories, while 20 teachers claim they did not use authentic stories. The apparent contradiction of this finding (e.g., that there are more teachers who claim to use *authentic stories* than *stories*) is explained by teachers' broader interpretation, and at times even their inadequate use of the terminology: several teachers referred to nursery rhymes, songs and newspaper articles as narratives.

Therefore, the first change brought about in teachers' practice is that 19 teachers who had not used stories before, now used them for the purposes of the project, and perhaps even later on. While the initial inquiry indicated that narratives are neglected learning tools in both primary and secondary schools, after the project most participants claimed that they would *"try stories again,"* or *"do the same story with other groups as well."*

As for changes in teachers' views, it can be stated that most teachers no longer reject them ab ovo, (e.g., *"I teach in secondary school,"*), but they acknowledge them as motivating learning experiences. I previously mentioned that participant teachers identified benefits of stories in terms of learners' and their own motivation and development, as well as classroom atmosphere. Thus, a change in teachers' attitude towards using stories in the EFL class is noticeable.

6.6 Teacher learning

However, a deeper analysis reveals that the change in teachers' attitudes to stories is rather on the level of expressed beliefs than a fundamental change of beliefs which consistently shapes teachers' behaviour. For, although teachers explicitly talk about the benefits of narratives, and some of them even claim to use them again in the future, the belief that stories may not bring about the desired learning outcome is also repeatedly articulated. It must be added that teachers' beliefs that no real learning takes place with stories are reinforced by similar opinions expressed by some learners. Thus, it appears that teachers' attitudes towards using

stories, as well as their beliefs about teaching and learning are part of a broad context of shared cultural assumptions about teaching and learning, as well as the particular educational context. I will analyze this issue in more detail in the discussion part of this chapter.

During the semester participant teachers had the opportunity to discuss issues related to language acquisition and research carried out in this area, in particular classroom studies similar to what they were doing. However, when it came to implementing ideas in practice, and making sense of their own teaching situation, teachers did not seem to rely on the knowledge gained during the course, but rather on their own teaching theories. Therefore, even after what they considered to be a successful and motivating attempt to integrate stories in their teaching, participants tended to put more emphasis on form-focused activities, and argued that "direct instruction" saves time and is more effective.

This apparent contradiction is well approached by Schön's (1983) distinction between teachers' theories-in-action, that is their "*a priori* understandings of classroom practice" (Freeman, 1992, p. 4), and teachers' espoused theories, that is the externally imposed knowledge on the already existing schemata of assumptions and beliefs. As discussed in Chapter Two (5), theories-in-action are rooted in their personal and professional biographies, as well as in the social, political, economic, and cultural histories of the contexts where teachers learn and teach (Johnson, 2006; Malderez, 1997/1998; Richards & Lockhart, 1994), and are, therefore, slow to change. In a study conducted among in-service lower primary EFL teachers Kiss (2000) also reports on the effect of deeply rooted beliefs on teacher learning. The study suggests that teachers' classroom practice is most often in disagreement with expressed attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning. In this sense, the inconsistencies identified in terms of attitudes towards certain aspects of teaching are attributed to the discrepancy between received knowledge and unconscious beliefs about foreign language learning (Kiss, 2000, p. 180).

In writing and talking about their research the teachers also documented what turned out to be their covert understandings of their teaching situations. The writing of their research papers and the follow-up discussions were meant to give them the opportunity to think about their practice, articulate their beliefs and confront them with the received knowledge, that is their "espoused theories" by means of telling their own stories. Elbaz (1991 cited by Johnson, 2006, p. 241) refers to the use of narrative as an important means of understanding and documenting teachers' knowledge. Johnson also points out that narratives "connect phenomena, infuse them with interpretation, and thus uncover teachers' interpretations of the

activities they engage in" (Johnson, 2006, p. 242). Therefore, they reveal teachers' individual meaning-making processes and the understandings of their particular context.

Making tacit knowledge explicit by reflection is a necessary step in order for fundamental change to occur in teacher behaviour. The research papers document that some change has already begun in teachers' practice. This is supported by teachers' enthusiasm, their recognition of the benefits of using stories and of the project, and also their claim that they would "try stories again," or "do the same story with other groups as well." However, promising as they sound, these statements also imply that teachers do not yet think of using narratives on a principled and regular basis, but much rather in terms of occasional experiences. This also suggests that the process of change has only just begun: although newly acquired theories are there on teachers' palette, they still greatly rely on what (Schön, 1983) identifies as "theories-in-action."

The fact that teachers' implied theories about teaching and learning coexist with newly acquired ones is a normal stage in the process of development. Theories that define human learning as a dynamic social activity situated in physical and social contexts (Rogoff , 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) argue that "knowledge entails lived practices, not just accumulated information" (Johnson, 2003, p. 237). It seems therefore natural that teachers build on their implicit understanding of their practice when making sense of new information.

Also, ecosocial theory and research carried out in this tradition suggest that short timescales do not allow for fundamental changes in attitude and habits of reasoning (Lemke, 2002). Although short-term events (such as teachers' exploratory projects) contribute to such changes, it is only if they are "reinforced by subsequent events which make for the kind of persistent change we really mean by 'learning'" (Lemke, 2002, p. 75).

7 Discussion: Underlying assumptions about using narratives

As I have said before, all participants gave positive feedback, and most of them claimed that they would repeat the "experiment." They found that using stories was rewarding in that it increased their learners' as well as their own motivation, it improved teacher-student rapport, and learners' language use. Most teachers mention, though, that they were "surprised" to find that their pupils enjoyed reading and listening to stories and liked doing the follow-up activities. Phrases like *"much to my surprise"*, or: *"I was shocked when my adult learners*

started to discuss how many children queens usually have…," indicate that teachers had doubts in connection with the reception and impact of stories in their classroom. They also gave various reasons why using stories in the EFL class is problematic. In the following I will look at these reasons from the point of view of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and analyze them in the specific educational context. Linked to the information provided by the projects, I will also look more in depth at teachers' beliefs articulated in the questionnaires they filled in, in order to triangulate findings.

On the basis of the questionnaires, of the classroom research projects and of the follow-up discussion, the following main points emerged concerning teachers' views about using narratives in their English classes: (1) Teachers find there is no time for stories, and fear that by integrating stories in their teaching they might take away time from other, more effective and therefore more important tasks. (2) Stories are considered by some participants a light occupation, with no real learning potential, and which may therefore harm teachers' prestige. (3) Stories are uninteresting for secondary-school students or older learners. (4) Pupils' level of language and literacy skills do not allow for using stories, in particular, authentic texts.

Seen in their social-educational context, these ideas convey messages related to teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, as well as assumptions about their learners and about themselves and their role as teachers. These sets of beliefs are interrelated, and go deeper than what happens in the classrooms. Indeed, they are based on shared and often tacit cultural understandings of what teaching and learning are (Chapter Two, 5). Therefore, when we think about why teachers use or do not use stories, we must approach the question from a wider social context than that of the classroom only, one that involves values transmitted by the whole community.

Commenting on the role of the community in shaping our identities, Lemke (2002) quotes a traditional saying, according to which "it takes a village to raise a child," and suggests that in the ecosocial model, "normal development is the 'process of becoming the village' " (Lemke, 2002, p. 73). From this perspective, our identities too, are performances, "*verbally and nonverbally*, of a possible constellation of attitudes, beliefs, and values that has a recognizable coherence by the criteria of some community" (Lemke, 2002, p. 72).

Therefore, in our frame of discussion, teachers' classroom actions, the performance of their identities, needs to be seen and understood against the background of a community's shared understanding of these practices. In the following section I will analyze data along the

main problematic issues explicitly identified by teachers and try to uncover the underlying assumptions, which may occasionally go deeper than teachers' individual histories.

7.1 Wasting time with stories

In spite of the overall positive feedback, on the basis of the classroom research project it appears that some teachers consider that stories involve merrymaking much rather than learning, and therefore are rather used when they have finished with the more "serious" tasks.

In the data gained from the questionnaires thirteen teachers explicitly claim that they have no time for stories. The worry that by doing stories in the English class one might take away time from other, more important tasks appears in three classroom projects where teachers try stories with students a few weeks before school-leaving exam or a language exam. One of the participant teachers claims: *"[Learners] have to take the language exam. In this case direct instruction is more effective."* From the papers it also turns out that it is not only the teachers, but the learners themselves who are worried about losing time with apparently irrelevant activities. One of the teachers notes: *"They seemed a bit concerned because they thought that we were wasting a lot of time with this exercise, but in the end they said: Hát ez tök jó volt! [It was cool.]"* In another instance an 18-year-old is quoted to have said to her fairly young teacher: *"Erika, we really like your stories, but we think this year we ought to be doing the topics for the final exam."*

7.1.1 Teachers' background

Both teachers' and learners' fear lest stories may take away time from what seems to be more focused activities is partly due to the washback effect produced by exams. At the time of the study, the only accredited language exam and the final examination system in Hungary were strongly focused on grammar and form, with minimal or no emphasis on communication. Johnson (2006) makes the telling point that most second language teachers work in institutions in which "they, their students, and their instructional practices are constructed by the positivistic paradigm that defines good teaching in terms of student performance on standardized tests..." (Johnson, 2006, p. 247). The fact that teachers are held accountable for student learning which is measured by achievements on standardized assessment instruments,

makes it understandable that they would much rather teach content involved in these tests than something that is not directly tested, even if the latter may offer more satisfaction and gains for both teachers and students. Johnson (2006) also notes that most language teachers are the product of the above-mentioned positivistic paradigm, as they have been socialized into normative ways of thinking about language teaching and learning.

Therefore, the view that stories are largely pointless activities, as opposed to more serious language development work, reflects underlying assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers and learners share, due to the educational traditions long existing in Hungary. Most teachers participating in the study belong to the generation taught with the Grammar Translation and the Audiolingual Methods. Therefore, even when they use communicative teaching materials, they enact these materials in noncommunicative ways. Research done by Nikolov (1999, 2003) shows that teachers rely on typical classroom activities, and adopt these traditional techniques in spite of the fact that these techniques go against current language acquisition theories that these teachers study and are expected to know about and apply in practice. That is to say that even though teachers are familiar with the theories, they fail to link knowledge gained from theoretical training (lectures, seminars, readings, projects) to their everyday practice. In other words, they fail to develop what Wood (1988) calls "expertise." Wood argues that the term "skill" is usually applied to describe the quality of overt behaviour, whereas "expertise" may be used "to draw attention to the fact that knowledge and action, or concepts and procedures, are two aspects of a single process (Wood, 1988, p. 13).

It seems that the teachers involved in the project had not succeeded during the semester when the research was carried out to link their classroom actions with what they know in terms of concepts. This is also supported by the fact that when it came to developing follow-up activities to the stories they had used, some teachers preferred activities with a grammatical focus to meaning-focused tasks (for example certain grammatical structures from the story were reinforced with follow-up drills, so that learners would surely remember them). Paradoxically, at the same time they expressed their confidence that by stories learners' communicative competence would develop. As it turns out from the research papers, after reading or telling the stories, most teachers considered that the best way to check comprehension was by (1) true or false questions, (2) comprehension questions, or (3) rendering the summary of the text in Hungarian. While it is true that these techniques can be useful for this purpose, they are not what some teachers believe them to be: meaning-focused tasks for developing communication in English.

The discrepancy between what teachers know about theories and their concrete choices of methods and techniques suggests that the teachers participating in the study believe in a bottom-up, more form- than meaning-focused approach to teaching and learning a language. Also, a product- rather than process-oriented view is detectable with several teachers. I will quote only one suggestive comment in this sense, referring to the fact that after the first reading of the story, learners did not understand all the words. Their teacher then concludes: *"Maybe we should have practised the words before the story, so that they could recognize them while they were reading."*

7.1.2 The gap between theories and practices: words in context

An example for the discrepancy between teachers' implicit and explicit beliefs about their teaching is the way they related to the importance of context in teaching vocabulary. When I anonymously came back to the above statement during the follow-up discussion, it seemed that teachers predominantly agreed with the importance of relying on the context as a basic reading comprehension strategy. They claimed that a text that matches learners' cognitive and linguistic level and is relevant to their interests involves them in guessing the meaning of the words they may not know. Interestingly, their research papers often document quite the opposite: while teaching their lessons, 22 out of 32 teachers resorted to teaching the new words before they actually dealt with the story.

The discrepancy between teachers' expressed beliefs about the role of context as a means to scaffold vocabulary acquisition and their actual practices of teaching vocabulary was also noticeable in the way they related to the idea of accountability. In the feedback session teachers maintained that although repeated exposure to the new words in meaningful and memorable contexts brings about gains in vocabulary development, students' knowledge of new words needs to be tested in order to make sure that they had truly mastered the new language items. When asked about ways of testing, with two exceptions they referred to the traditional "szódolgozat" (vocabulary test), where students are supposed to produce the English equivalent of the Hungarian words, or vice versa, without any contextual support.

This choice is partly explained by the fact that correcting a list of words in either language involves minimal effort and time, and partly by teachers' lack of familiarity with testing techniques. I need to mention that teacher training programmes in Hungary have only recently started to integrate courses related to language testing in their curricula (Nikolov,

1999), and therefore teachers tend to rely on knowledge they themselves were socialised into, that is on their own language learning experience. On the other hand, the choice of test type and the emphatic insistence on accountability show that, although teachers have been exposed to and involved into using communicative methods, they do not integrate their expressed ideas about contextual learning in their day-to-day practice overnight.

7.1.3 Learners' expectations

Interestingly, messages about "right" teaching also come from learners, who are instilled with the beliefs about how learning occurs transmitted by the socio-cultural community (e.g., parents, peers, and their own experiences). Therefore, when we talk about what underlies teachers' classroom decisions in terms of methods, techniques and materials, we need to realize that it is not only teachers and their professional background (including latent teaching philosophies) that influence these decisions, but also learners' and indirectly, parents' ideas and expectations about what should be going on in a classroom for the sake of what they believe to be the best outcome.

Out of 32 classroom research projects, eighteen touch upon the point that while most learners visibly enjoyed the story-telling and story-reading experience and the follow-up activities and discussions, they expressed the fear that no real learning takes place. One of the teachers quoted the example of an upper-primary-school child, who asked for more exercises from *Project English* as homework, saying: *"Ma úgysem dolgoztunk annyit."* [*"We haven't worked that much today anyway"*]. The teacher also noted that while at the beginning of the project she thought she was being innovative, and therefore would be more appreciated by the children and their parents, after this remark she was worried lest parents would object to the idea of her using stories. In an informal comment made during personal communication she said: *"Kiváncsi vagyok, mit gondolnak, mit csinálok én órán…"* [*"I wonder what they think I might be doing in the lesson…"*].

That teachers often tend to evaluate and adapt their teaching according to what they believe to be parents' expectations is also highlighted by the following teacher-comment (made during an extensive reading project currently run by secondary-school teachers among their students): *"Már várom, mikor telefonáltatnak be egy szülőt, hogy én csak olvasgatok angolórán."* [*"I wonder when they* (i.e. the students) *will get one of the parents to call and complain that the only thing I do is keep reading in the English class."*]. The fear that

students and their parents might disapprove of the innovative practices used by this teacher is an understandable cause of worry, as school administration is also likely to react in unfavourable ways to whatever may go against "regular" ways of teaching, mostly if this might displease parents.

7.1.4 Educating learners

As "wasting time" with stories proved to be a major concern, in particular for secondary school learners, it seems that one of the tasks that teachers face in this context is raising learners' awareness about the impact of certain activities in the lesson. This is important partly because being aware of the aim of certain tasks in terms of language development may bring about learners' conscious and active participation in the learning process, and therefore enhance their motivation during the lesson. On the other hand, making learners familiar with the long-term implications of these classroom processes is the beginning of creating the foundations for learner autonomy. Classroom-based studies show that involving learners in decision-making and self-assessment empowered learners and created responsibility in the long run (Nikolov, 2000; Serrano-Sampedro, 2000). In our project, regularly involving students into story-telling and story-reading activities may have far-reaching benefits for students' personal development, their foreign language learning skills and motivation to read in both a foreign language and in the mother tongue.

This is entirely in keeping with a constructivist approach to education (van Glasersfeld, 1995 cited by Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 49). In this framework of ideas, education is essentially seen as a political enterprise the purpose of which is to empower learners to think for themselves. This can be best accomplished by giving learners "the reasons why particular ways of acting and thinking are considered desirable" (van Glasersfeld, 1995 cited by Williams & Burden 1997, p. 49). Therefore, making learners aware of the long-term choices they make should be part of the process of education that teachers undertake. This is obviously difficult when teachers themselves are not able to clearly articulate why they are doing what they are doing in the classroom and are not convinced of their own exploratory study.

One of the largely unexplored areas in current research on teacher cognition is, as Johnson (2006) points out, the relationship between teacher learning and student learning. She also notes that, although teaching does not necessarily result in student learning, therefore the

relationship is not a causal one, there is "a relationship of influence" between what teachers learn, how they organize their classroom activities, and what students learn from engaging in those activities (Freeman & Johnson, 2005 cited by Johnson, 2006, p. 245). This view of the teaching-learning equation suggests that, even if indirectly, learners are influenced by the changes that occur in teachers' thinking and actions.

7.2 Stories are meant for young learners

7.2.1 Stories as intrinsically motivating texts

Besides the idea that stories take away important teaching time, another widespread belief among the participants of the study was that from a certain age upwards learners are no longer interested in stories. The data gained from the questionnaires suggest that teachers associate story-telling and story-reading in the classroom with young learners, and believe that they are no longer of interest to teenagers or adults. Some of the teachers who never or almost never use stories in their classrooms, apart from those in the course book, argue their choice by claiming: *"Secondary-school pupils are not that keen on stories."* Others only imply the lack of interest in narrative by simply indicating the age-group they teach: *"I teach in a secondary-school."* Or: *"I teach adults in a language school."*

One of the questions that would naturally arise is why some of the teachers believe that narratives are suitable exclusively or in particular for young learners. Hardy (1977) talks about the importance of children's fiction in that it responds to the universal human need for narrative. In Chapter Two (1.1) I argued that the narrative pattern is a most basic form in which humans organize experience and relate it to their lives. The schemata we construct as a result of past events will influence the way we make sense of new ones (Schank & Abelson, 1995). I also pointed out that the narrative frame is believed to be a cultural universal: the tendency to make meaning of the world through narratives is there across cultures and age-groups (Lévi-Strauss, 1966).

In spite of the theoretical input and the seminar discussions which explored this topic, the idea that narratives are crucial in constructing meaning does not seem to make sense to teachers. This seems paradoxical, as in seminar discussions these teachers relied on their own experiences as learners and parents, and brought good examples of how narratives and imagination support learning. However, when I inquired about why they found that narratives

should rather target the younger audience, they insisted that older learners "need more grammar," one of them adding in Hungarian: *"Mi is így tanultunk…"* [We also learnt this way…"]. This shows again that teachers tend to rely on what they had experienced as students or what they had found to work with their students, which in this case is a grammar-focused, prescriptive approach. Also, they do not seem to realize that there is more to foreign language development than focusing on the language structure only. I need to add here that as teachers of English, we all do some kind of explicit or implicit strategy training when we teach our students according to what has worked for us as learners of a foreign language. However, it takes constant reflection to validate our practices, and make sure that they are in tune with what we explicitly believe about how learning occurs.

7.2.2 Teachers as readers

Also, if we look at teachers' answers to the question whether they consider themselves good readers, it turns out that they value reading, but most of them wish they had more time to read. This suggests that it is not reading that they find uninteresting for teenagers and young adults, but as it appears from the case of the teacher presented in what follows, rather the kind of texts associated with classroom use. It is also worth noting that in spite of the varied input in terms of texts as well as techniques during the seminar, when it came to using stories in their classes, with few exceptions teachers opted for simplified versions of classical fairy tales.

This indicates that teachers are scarcely familiar with books that are both appropriate for students' linguistic level, and at the same time are relevant to their lives and make human sense to them. Importantly, nobody out of the 32 teachers could recall an instance when in their pleasure readings they found texts that they could use with their students. Also, as it turned out during the feedback discussion, when talking about children's literature, teachers had in mind the great classics (e.g., *Alice in Wonderland, Oliver Twist* (!), stories by Andersen and the Grimm brothers), and thought that, due to their linguistic difficulty, these texts could only be used in adapted forms. I will come back to teachers' schemata of literature as strictly canonised sources when discussing teachers' views about the use of authentic stories. Another interesting point is that whenever teachers mentioned the difficulty of authentic texts such as the ones mentioned above, they would invariably refer to linguistic difficulty, while they seemed to totally ignore the conceptual difficulty their pupils may encounter with these texts.

There is one assignment in particular which is worth dealing with in more detail, as it clearly articulates several of the underlying assumptions that teachers appeared to have in connection with stories, including teachers' view of stories in relation with the secondary age-group. The author of this assignment is a teacher of History and English in a group where he is also form-master. However, for the purposes of the project he chose a group of 15-year-olds whom he did not know. In the introduction to his research paper he argues that his status as a form-master and History teacher in his regular group was incompatible with "story-telling activities" in the English class. He claims, *"...I must admit that I didn't know how I would motivate my students to take a story-telling lesson seriously…"*

It appears that one of his worries is that he might lose face with using stories, which he implicitly believes to be a light and frivolous occupation with no real learning outcome, and which would therefore not contribute to learners' language development and thus, do harm to the teacher's perception as a professional. The image he has about himself as a teacher is defined by the perceived social value of a subject (History being regarded as a prestigious subject in Hungarian schools), and by his status of form-master. His face-saving manoeuvre also indicates the teacher's beliefs about himself and his role as a teacher, which is incompatible with using unaccepted teaching materials: stories. Part of the paradox is that the hero of this story is also a teacher of History, which, along with literature, best cultivates "narrative thinking" (Bruner, 1996) out of all school subjects.

Although the teacher himself was pleased and surprised by the fact that pupils enjoyed the lesson, and even confessed having "enjoyed the task" himself, he summarizes his experiences by saying: *"Leaving the class I had conflicting feelings. On the one hand, I had to admit that the lesson was more successful than I had expected. I was surprised that the pupils were so enthusiastic and that they were keen on listening to a fairy tale."* After the successful outcome and the apparently positive teacher reaction, he concluded his paper by making a rather disillusioning statement: *'On the other hand, it was clear for me that ... story telling was not my cup of tea. ... Moreover, I am sure that with secondary school students this sort of game can be played once or twice but in the long run they would find it odd and boring."*

Quite obviously, this teacher remained unconvinced of the benefits of exposing learners to narratives on a regular basis, in particular of the potential of stories as a tool for learning. From what I can conclude from his research paper, his views about learning as a step-by-step process based on structured input provided by course books remained

unchallenged and unchanged. He implemented his research project and went back to his old practices without considering the value of his experience.

While carrying out their projects, however, some participants concluded that story-telling and story-reading were not incompatible with learners beyond the young learner age-group, and that it was rather a matter of finding the appropriate story and, if the case may be, the task-types that made the story attractive for the chosen age-group.

7.3 Pupils' level of language skills

In the answers provided in the questionnaires a number of teachers argue that they do not use narratives because of pupils' low language and literacy skills. Some of the emblematic answers in this sense are the following: *"I teach teenagers from a disadvantaged background. They don't even read well in Hungarian;"* *"I would like to use stories, but they don't know enough language yet;"* *"It's hard to find appropriate stories for teenagers who are still beginners;"* and *"I teach children. Stories are too difficult for their language level."*

When it came to the question of using authentic stories in the language classroom, the participant teachers tended to resist the idea on grounds that authentic stories, as opposed to texts designed for language learning purposes, are too demanding for their students. When asked whether they use authentic texts (picture books, short stories, poems, comics etc) four teachers out of 32 claimed that they sometimes use extracts from *Newsweek*, five teachers use nursery rhymes, one uses *Winnie the Witch* (Korky & Thomas, 1997), along with the workbook, two teachers use songs, while 20 teachers claimed that they never use authentic materials.

Two observations are in order here. One of the curious things in connection with teachers' list of authentic materials refers to the choice made by four teachers who claim to use *Newsweek* articles. It is important to note that these teachers did not indicate that they would use other, perhaps more accessible authentic readings with their learners. So it is rather hard to imagine that these articles would make appropriate reading for students otherwise considered unable to cope with authentic stories. Also, as I pointed out when discussing the findings of the project, the teachers may have wanted to convey what they thought would be a positive image about themselves as informed and demanding teachers. This would probably be in tune with their underlying assumptions about good teachers.

The other observation relates to the use of a picture book, *Winnie the Witch* (Korky & Thomas, 1997) for pedagogical purposes, along with a workbook containing ELT activities. While there is no doubt that, due to the quality of the pictures and the text authentic picture books assist children in becoming readers and also in acquiring first or foreign language (Arizpe, 2006; Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1994, 1998; Graham, 1990, 1998; Marriott, 1998; Parkes, 1998; Stephens, 1992), there is an inherent danger in using them as if they were meant for language instruction, and thus overexploiting them. The poet Michael Rosen (2005) is of the opinion that in schools, books for children are being turned into worksheets where children are supposed to spot grammatical forms. This happens in order to support more structured literacy development, and also to make assessment of reading skills easier. Rosen (2005) claims that this is the very process which undermines literature and the enjoyment which authentic children's books are meant to generate with readers. By quoting this view, I do not mean to imply that using *Winnie the Witch* and the related workbook are bad options in the young learner classroom. On the contrary, out of all the authentic materials, picture books are among the most suitable options to make in the young learner EFL classroom. But it needs to be added that using pictures books which are not published with pedagogical aims, and exposing learners to stories without the "necessary" follow-up language-focused tasks can also be very useful in terms of language development, and at the same time offer a satisfying aesthetic experience.

7.3.1 Teachers' beliefs about authenticity

It appears that the arguments by which teachers explain why they avoid using authentic materials are similar to the reasons why they avoid using stories in general, namely that they believe them to be too difficult for the level of the learners. This shared assumption most teachers have regarding narratives in general, and authentic texts in particular, may have to do with their schemata of children's literature acquired through education and consisting largely of great classics ranging from the *Household Tales* of the Brothers Grimm to *Alice in Wonderland.* This culturally acquired concept of children's literature is reinforced by the fact that the only choice the Hungarian book market offers in terms of children's literature in English contains examples of canonized literature. Artistic, multi-layered picture books, touching on issues which are emotionally involving and cognitively engaging for older learners as well (e.g., Anthony Browne's *Zoo, 1992* and *Piggy Book,* 1986) are mostly

unknown to the Hungarian audience. Thus, the concept of authenticity evokes the notion of linguistically demanding texts associated with native speakers' proficiency.

However, teachers' opposition in this sense also conceals beliefs about teaching and learning. In Chapter Six (7.3.1) I will quote in-service teachers involved in the Real Books Project, who claimed that they had not used books written for native speakers of English before thinking that literature of this kind would be beyond the linguistic level of the learners and therefore would be demotivating as well as a waste of time concerning pupils' language learning.

The 32 teachers involved in the study seemed to agree when a similar view was worded during the feedback session before trying picture books by one of the primary school teachers: *"I had never tried real English books before. I thought they would be too difficult for the children because they might not know the words… You know the words you sometimes get in these books… they're beyond the level of the learners. I always liked to keep it simple for them: to match their level."* This statement is particularly interesting in terms of what it reveals about teachers' underlying beliefs about how children learn a foreign language and the value of authentic materials in this process.

One of the assumptions implied by the quoted passage is that in order to understand a story one has to understand all the words, or else one might not be able to make sense of the text (*"They might not know the words…"*). However, both experiences we have from our own efforts of meaning making and cognitive models about how we organize and interpret knowledge about the world (Schank & Abelson, 1995) seem to contradict this fear. Anybody with faint memories about *Alice's Adventures Through the Looking-Glass* will remember that despite not understanding most of the portmanteau words from the poem Jabberwocky, Alice concluded: "It seems very pretty,… but it's rather hard to understand! … However, *somebody* killed *something*: that's clear, at any rate."

Similarly, children chant "Ingyom-bingyom táliber, tutáliber máliber…." in Hungarian, without being in the least worried about what these words mean, while at the same time they can retell what the song is about, based on the words they make sense of (i.e. Hová mész te kis nyulacska?). These may be extreme examples. They are, however, reinforcing in the sense that by understanding only some of the words one can still have an overall idea of the story. As I pointed this out in Chapter Two (3.1), familiarity with the story-telling frame, the prototypical story structure and certain features of the text, as well as the pictures in the case of picture books may compensate for at least some of the words that the learners have not heard before.

In the comprehensible input hypothesis, Krashen (1985) argues for the importance of roughly tuned input, containing linguistic information which is one level beyond the learner's actual linguistic level. Krashen claims that by exposing learners to comprehensible input, language development occurs. In the same frame of ideas, Smith notes that we do not learn to read first and then read, but we learn to read by reading (Smith, 1985a). Proponents of emergent literacy (Chapter Three, 1.1 and 1.2), argue for the need of a print-environment and expert scaffolding in the process of developing reading skills with novice readers (Holdaway, 1979; Trelease, 1984). In both first- and foreign-language literacy development, by allowing learners to rely on the power of context, their background knowledge and other extra-linguistic factors, and by involving them into interactive reading (Blok, 1999) they also learn to rely on certain strategies on their way to becoming autonomous readers.

Another belief that is made explicit in the statement quoted above is that the "real" story or the "original version" is always more difficult to understand than a text specifically designed to match learners' level, and is therefore "kept simple" (*"Keep it simple ... to match their level"*). In Chapter Four (2.6) I discussed Cameron's (1994) argumentation referring to authenticity and said that the natural redundancy of authentic texts (as opposed to simplified versions) may actually assist learners in the meaning making process. On the other hand, removing certain text features (e.g., changing simple past, which is basic to narratives, into simple present) affects not only the style of the narrative, but may also deprive readers of valuable clues in understanding the story. I am not assuming then that authentic texts are all easy to comprehend or comprehension is simply guaranteed by authenticity, but we have reasons to assume that careful selection of authentic stories and sensible scaffolding on the part of the teacher can assist learners in the meaning-making process.

Finally, there is one more point I wish to make in connection with participants' use of authentic materials. From the questionnaires it turns out that out of the ten teachers who sometimes resort to authentic materials seven are primary school teachers, and only three teach on the secondary level. One would expect that, due to the importance attributed to the perceived language level of the learners, it is rather secondary-school teachers who would think their learners to be more able to cope with authentic texts, and would therefore be more willing to experiment. One of the reasons for this might be that primary-school teachers tend to use rhymes and songs, which are brief and which offer more here-and-now input, and are therefore perceived to be easy. On the other hand, secondary-school teachers refer to the linguistic difficulty of authentic texts as a main reason for not using them. This leaves us

again with the often inarticulate lack of knowledge concerning accessible authentic materials for learners from upper primary upwards.

7.4 Teachers' beliefs about themselves

One of the issues mentioned in four of the 32 assignments was related to teachers' beliefs about themselves as non-native speakers, that is as imperfect users of the target language. Three teachers considered that stories are easier to use for native teachers than for non-natives, while one teacher noted that working with a story was "a difficult job" for her, as she felt threatened by unexpected situations and was afraid that the adults she taught would "immediately notice every mistake" she made.

Teachers' fear of making mistakes and being criticised by their students reflect an emphatic concern with grammar and accuracy. By this I do not mean to under-evaluate the importance of language competence. Quite the contrary. It seems that having a good command of English is important not only because it guarantees quality input for learners, but also because it has implications for teachers' self-concept as teachers, in particular their confidence. Therefore, it is by all means advisable for teachers to pursue "perfection" in this sense. However, too much concern for correctness may also hinder experimenting and risk-taking in teaching and in teacher learning. In a classroom environment which does not allow for mistakes, students' performance is also likely to be perceived in a product- rather than a process-oriented form. In such instances learners' results are also seen as being largely a matter of teachers' responsibility.

Conclusion

Effects of using narratives on student and teacher learning

The findings of the study suggest that both teachers and their students found story-telling and reading a motivating experience in their EFL lessons. Despite teachers' initial worries that older learners may find dealing with stories odd and boring, narratives turned out to be intrinsically motivating for all age groups, including young learners, secondary school

students and adults. Even students who were otherwise found passive and reluctant to participate appeared to enjoy the story sessions and performed well in new activity types.

However, to most teachers this came as a surprise: despite the theoretical and practical input provided in terms of the contribution of stories to language and literacy development, and their own enthusiasm while participating in story-based activities during seminars, teachers did not expect their students to enjoy and cope with stories. Along the positive feedback, their written assignments also reflect sceptical attitudes as to the role of narratives in the EFL lessons, as compared to the value of direct instruction. As I pointed out earlier, this attitude is largely due to the educational culture, in particular to teachers' ways of knowing about teaching and learning and the stereotypes about teachers and learners into which they have been socialized.

Still, teachers found their involvement in the project challenging for their professional development in the sense that by trying something they had rarely or never done before, they developed a more risk-taking attitude. Also, problematizing apparently minor classroom events as issues for research involved teachers into thinking about their practice more critically. This is an important result in that, as Freeman (1992) mentions, the idea of change does not imply that teachers must necessarily discard their current practices and do something differently. The focus in the concept of change is rather on raising teachers' awareness of their existing constructs by encouraging them to reflect on their practice in a critical way. It seems to me that this process has started.

Further research

The study leaves us with a number of messages for teacher education and areas for further research. It first of all suggests the need to provide would-be teachers with relevant theoretical perspectives, and to help them link these theories with their existing practice or classroom experience (as teachers or learners of English). In the case of already practising teachers, it seems crucial to raise awareness of their classrooms, where they spend a great amount of their lives, as "legitimate sites for teacher learning" (Johnson, 2006, p. 244). It is important therefore that we look at experiential knowledge as a valuable opportunity for professional development, but it is equally important to link these isolated bits of practice into a coherent methodology. This will, on the one hand, help teachers to maintain thinking about their classroom actions, and thus prevent routinization. On the other hand, teachers may become

"active users and producers of theory in their own right, for their own means, and as appropriate for their own instructional contexts" (Johnson, 2006, p. 240).

Equally important is the idea that teacher education should create an awareness of the local context, in particular the educational traditions and shared cultural assumptions about education. The personal stories lived and told are understood as parts of specific cultures which have their own stories. In the case of teaching, shared cultural assumptions about teaching and learning are part of what Bruner (1996) calls "folk psychology," and are among the basic stories of the local educational culture. However, these shared psychological and pedagogical beliefs and the set of practices they inspire, often go unexamined as part of the "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1990) of school life, while the original underlying theories and social and political imperatives behind them get lost (Millard, 1997). Thus, teacher education should aim to explore the ideas and intellectual traditions that shape practice. This might give teachers an understanding of the importance of the communities of practice in which they participate and in which individual knowledge is constructed.

Chapter Six

DEVELOPING LITERACY THROUGH AUTHENTIC PICTURE BOOKS

Introduction

In Chapters Two, Three and Four I explored the theoretical relevance of narratives along cognitive, affective and social dimensions. I paid special attention to the role of authentic narratives in children's' linguistic and literacy development, in an EFL context. In this chapter I will explore how the theory discussed in those chapters is put in practice.

The aim of this qualitative study is to provide insights into how teachers and learners developed while reading authentic English pictures books in the foreign language class and at home. Being discovery, rather than verification oriented, qualitative studies are less concerned with generalizability. In this sense, working with fewer participants is an advantage in that it allows gaining a more complex and more in-depth picture of human behaviours and socio-cultural patterns which underlie behaviours.

First, I present the research framework in which I include my research questions and give a detailed presentation of the participants and their background, as well as the materials used in the project. The next section presents data collection instruments, followed by the procedures of implementing the study. Finally, I will present the results of the study, and discuss emerging issues.

1 The context of research

I will present research on a reading project involving children between the ages of 7–10 and their teachers in four primary schools in Pécs and surrounding areas, where children have no access to the target language outside the classroom. While there have been previous attempts

to involve young EFL learners into extensive reading programmes in Baranya county (Bors, 1999), the present project is special thanks to the quality of authentic reading materials. As shown later, authentic picture books, rarities in the Hungarian context, were used in the class to supplement the EFL syllabus. Another point where the present project is innovatory is the way these books were dealt with. Besides reading them in class, the children were encouraged to take the books home and share them with their siblings and parents.

It will appear from this chapter that involving in-service teachers into using new materials which require new techniques is significant not only from the students' perspective, but also for the sake of encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice, and perceive reflection as a means of teacher learning (Johnson, 2006). As discussed in Chapter Five, the educational tradition in Hungary has not favoured teachers' autonomy to think in terms of their own needs and contexts. Rather, teacher learning has been conceptualized as occurring on a theoretical level. During the years of the project, the four teachers involved were encouraged to observe their own teaching and learning, and thus to link their theoretical knowledge to classroom practice. This is in tune with the sociocultural understanding of cognition as indissociable from the social context and the shared, culturally organized practices of the community (Johnson, 2006).

Finally, as discussed in this chapter, the project is important because it creates links with the broader educational context: children's growth into literacy in the foreign language is shown in relationship with their peers, siblings and parents, as well as with their teachers' development. This reinforces the significance of the ecological paradigm which conceives learning as a relational process where change in a segment brings about change in the larger context (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Dam, 2002).

2 Research questions

In the two phases of our project (2000-2002 and 2002-2004) we assumed that the use of real picture books in the classroom and at home would create positive attitudes and increase children's motivation to learn the language as well as contribute to their language and literacy development in the long run. We also assumed that the use of story books in the English lesson would have a positive impact on classroom atmosphere by enhancing peer cooperation and improving student-teacher rapport. Therefore, I intended to find answers to the following research questions:

- How does using authentic picture books at school and at home influence children's and teachers' motivation?

- How do story-reading and interaction influence pupils' and teachers' linguistic development?

- How do the uses of books influence (1) peer cooperation, (2) teacher-student rapport, (3) cooperation between teachers and (4) cooperation within the larger community (e.g. parents and teachers, siblings)?

- How do literacy skills in L1 and L2 interact with one another?

3 Participants and their contexts

The four teachers involved in the project were graduates of the University of Pécs, where they had previously participated in courses related to story-based teaching and applications of children's literature. While they all showed interest in using stories in their language classroom, neither of them had the ambition to use authentic materials before the project, partly because they did not have access to books they thought would be motivating for young learners and partly because they considered the materials available linguistically too demanding for the pupils. The teachers were selected in a way so as to present a variety of educational backgrounds both in terms of the students taught, as well as in the individual differences among the teachers themselves.

School 1

The first teacher (T1) works in a fairly popular and traditionally acknowledged primary school in Pécs. She graduated in 2000, has a native-like command of English and is professionally very well prepared. Her rapport with the children is excellent. Due to her brief experience in the field, she was, at the time of the study, unsure of her qualities and was afraid that she might not come up to children's, parents' and colleagues' expectations. It may be of interest to point out that the teacher grew up as a member of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Transylvania, which reinforced her feelings of insecurity and undermined her confidence, but had positive implications for her perseverance. Also, as she was a young teacher, parents did not trust her in the beginning, so she was even more willing to experiment with new materials

and tasks in the classroom. She decided to read authentic books to her 15 third graders (nine-year-olds) and 15 fourth graders (ten-year-olds). The children came from a middle-class background with a relatively print-rich environment.

School 2

The second teacher (T2) is a former Russian teacher who received an English teaching degree after participating in a retraining programme in 1996. After teaching Russian and Mathematics for several years, she now teaches English and is not very confident in her language skills. However, she has voluntarily enrolled in various teacher training courses organized at the local English Teachers' Resource Centre, and is willing to experiment in her teaching. T2 teaches in a village school where English is not regarded as a prestigious subject and where most children come from a disadvantaged socio-cultural background. In the children's homes books are scarce, and so is talk about literacy-related issues. The school library is largely unused, and full of books that are irrelevant to young learners' interests. I will return to this issue in more detail linked to the importance of implementing real books in the English programme in contexts where there is a poor selection of literature available in the L1.

School 3

In the second phase, along with the two former participants, I involved a recent graduate of our university (T3) whom we had known as enthusiastic and experimenting and who had had vast experience in tutoring young learners. She has a good command of English, and is quite self-assured as to her qualities as a teacher. She is appreciated by both colleagues and parents. At the time she started her studies for a PhD in Applied Linguistics, and we hoped that she would be able to combine a theoretical perspective with her classroom experiences in terms of applying authentic narratives in teaching English to children.

T3 teaches in a prestigious school, which is one of the so-called "practice-schools" affiliated to the University of Pécs, where parents encourage their children to sit for accredited language exams as early as possible. T3 decided to use authentic reading materials in all her groups, that is with young learners aged 7-14, including the extra-curricular, after-class club for children.

School 4

We also invited a further Russian re-trainee (T4) to join the project. Based on previous observation, T4 appeared to be in need of materials and teaching techniques for young learners. As informal feedback gained from her pupils and parents also suggested that her lessons were quite boring and therefore she was not a popular teacher at all, our hidden agenda was to increase her motivation and encourage her to develop more awareness as to the needs of young learners.

At the time of the study T4 taught at the local Catholic School, which, unlike the previously presented practice school, is not so result-oriented in terms of pressing students to enrol for language exams. Rather, it puts more emphasis on art education, as well as on instilling traditional values in children and nurturing a spirit of cooperation. In this school, both staff and parents are supportive of any experiments the teachers might want to undertake.

The majority of the children come from well-educated, supportive homes, and more often than not, they have several siblings. When they found out about the project, the parents I knew were enthusiastic, as they hoped that this would help create intrinsic interest in their children. The children were also looking forward to borrowing the books, and to "teaching their brothers and sisters English."

4 Materials

The materials were all authentic texts, "written for children's enjoyment and enrichment with no specific or obvious teaching aim except in the case of non-fiction books, which is to impart information" (Dunn, 1997, p. 1). They consisted of storybooks, rhyme and song books as well as information books selected in a way as to meet different learner interests within the young learner age-group. There were books for the very young ones, cognitively not very challenging, but intrinsically motivating (*Old Macdonald; Buzz, Buzz, Buzz, Went the Bumble-Bee* etc.), and books slightly older learners probably appreciate more (*The Big Blue Sea; Coral Goes Swimming*).

Books for boys and girls

Also, knowing how the early classroom readings may influence boys' and girls' attitudes to reading (Hall & Coles, 1999), special attention had been paid to choose books for both girls' and boys' interests (for example, *The Big Red Bus* is usually welcome by boys, while *Cats Sleep Anywhere* is preferred by girls in particular).

his is important not only concerning boys' motivation to read, but their motivation to study foreign languages. It has been pointed out that "boys perceive language study to be a feminine activity", and also that "EFL teaching combines two female-dominated fields, teaching and language" (Adonieu, 2004 cited by Dunn 2006, p. 115). It is therefore important to build on the fundamental differences between the sexes' learning skills and interests, and support literacy and language development by providing a balanced programme of activities for boys as well as girls (Dunn, 2006).

Language

In terms of language the books offer good examples of authentic colloquial English. In spite of the fact that, unlike in the case of graded readers, the language is not adapted to learners' level, all the picture books selected for the purposes of the project make sense to young learners. This is due, on the one hand, to a careful selection in terms of the complexity of language, meaning that very young learners and beginners were presented with books containing relatively little language, or involving a lot of repetition. On the other hand, both pictures and the story structure scaffold children's understanding of the narratives.

Quite a few books draw on the power of rhyme and rhythm (e.g., *Mr. McGee; Noah Built an Ark One Day; Cats Sleep Anywhere*), which have been shown to offer memorable learning experiences for children. Research documents not only children's traditional pleasure from hearing and sharing nursery rhymes, but also that vocabulary elements presented in rhythmic patterns (e.g., rhythmic refrains in a story) facilitate the recall of new words in the target language (Kolsawalla, 1999). This is in tune with recent language development theories which suggest that speech is stored, remembered, recalled and produced in formulaic speech units, and this makes it easier to provide meaning under conditions of real-time listening and speaking (Wray, 2002). In this sense, many of the rhyming books used in the EFL class (e.g., Dr. Seuss books) can make language acquisition easier in that they become memorised routines, and can be recalled as a whole.

On the other hand, rhyme has also been shown to contribute to the development of reading. Bryant and Bradley (1985) draw attention to children's abilities to detect rhyme and

alliteration at an early age and to the strong causal connections between the phonological aspects of language and early reading development. Similarly, in a longitudinal study Goswami (1995) confirms the role of rhyme awareness in reading development.

Visual literacy

The books also varied in the different styles of illustrations as well as in the range of techniques including watercolours, crayon, photographs, embroidery, and collage. Also, many of them contain elements that encourage the children to have hands-on experience with the books (flaps to lift, mirrors to look in) and challenge the teachers to involve the children in telling the story.

Besides creating and maintaining interest, pictures are also an integral part of the meaning making process (Marriott, 1998). I have already referred to Donaldson's (1987) claim that children's thinking is situationally linked, and therefore they make sense of the language by making sense of the situation. Similarly to the process in the first language (L1), in the case of reading out picture books to children in a foreign language, the pictures, along with the familiar context and children's schemata of narratives scaffold their understanding of the language.

Finally, as in picture books there is a subtle interplay between words and pictures to create complex meaning, readers often have to pay attention to minute details to perceive different layers of meaning. Thus, picture book experiences contribute to developing children's visual literacy (Dunn, 1999), and by this they prepare and support construction of knowledge in areas other than language learning.

The novelty element

Many of the books used in the project are interactive books which "can provide children with contained, portable, easy-to-access imaginative play experiences" (Dunn, 2002, p. 3). Because of the attractive layout and interesting content (which is also important from a cross-curricular point of view), children encounter language embedded in contexts that make sense to them and this makes language learning a natural and holistic experience – in the classroom setting.

In needs to be noted here that when I started the study, picture books of the kind used in the project were scarcely known in Hungary. In spite of the wide range of illustrated quality story-books, translations of the genuine picture-book genre have started to appear on the book market only recently. But even now, the English books used in the project are a rarity for children who have no access to books in Hungarian either.

5 Data collection

Qualitative techniques were applied for data collection. In order to collect information about the processes and the outcomes of the project we relied on teachers' self-observation scheme and classroom observation carried out by external observers.

Ongoing self-observation was carried out taking into consideration the following focuses: students' motivation, language development, peer cooperation, teacher-student rapport, cross-curricular links, and teacher development. Teachers were encouraged to take notes regularly on classroom processes, as well as to write down in their diaries any suggestion or feedback gained from children, parents, colleagues, as well as their own reflections about the project (see samples in Appendix D). Special attention was paid to collecting data about how teachers and learners organized and related to borrowing the books. Involving teachers into data collection was important partly because they provided data otherwise inaccessible, mostly in terms of their own thinking processes. On the other hand, we assumed that by writing down their experiences and articulating their reflections, teachers would develop more awareness of teaching and learning processes (Freeman, 1992; Richards, 1994; Schön, 1983; Williams, 1989).

Classroom observation was also carried out on several occasions by two university students attending my course on Applications of Children's Literature, a colleague from the English Teachers' Resource Centre, involved in research on extensive reading, and by me. Although the occasional classroom visits revealed much less about learners' and teachers' development and growth in the process of using books, than what was documented by ongoing self-observation, they still offered valuable information about the way teachers used these books with the learners, and about the general atmosphere of the lessons as a result of integrating real books.

Finally, interviews were carried out with teachers at the end of each school-year (see samples in Appendix E). The interviews were semi-structured, and therefore, besides providing answers to the interviewer's questions, they allowed teachers to touch upon whatever they found important and worth telling in connection with their experiences with real books.

6 Procedures

Two teachers and schools were involved in the first phase of the experiment (academic years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002) and two more teachers and schools in the second phase (academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004). At the moment the project is still going at three settings, and more teachers from other schools have joined in out of their own initiative.

Reading

The participants were provided with a set of 20 authentic picture books that they read regularly together with the children during the English class. We encouraged teachers to apply an interactive rather than passive reading of the books, as research suggests (for an overview see Blok, 1999) that language addressed to children in interaction is more valuable for child language acquisition than environmental language. Therefore, it is expected that interactive reading has a stronger effect on language acquisition than passive reading (Blok, 1999).

Borrowing

The project is special not only because of the extremely beautiful and in the Hungarian context rare authentic materials, but also because after reading them together in the classroom, the children could take the books home to re-read the text and pictures. Therefore, apart from the books used in the lesson the teachers participating in the project were provided with a set of books that the children could borrow. Borrowing was not compulsory, but teachers tried to introduce and work with the books in a way so as to raise children's attention and encourage their reading for pleasure.

First some of the teachers devised a rota system so that each child could take the book home for two or three days at a time. Then, in most cases the children were reported to take over the organisation and kept track of who took home which book and when the books were due. I will elaborate on this issue in detail further on in this chapter.

Teacher preparation

At the beginning of each phase I had a preliminary discussion with the participant teachers regarding the aims of the project. They also received *Realbook News,* a newsletter edited by and published by Opal Dunn (www.realbooks.co.uk), who also generously donated the books for the project. Each issue of the newsletter contains an annotated book list and teaching tips

for the books, as well as a feature article on a relevant topic related to real books in the lives of children.

Classroom observation and interviews

During the school year two university students, a colleague involved in research on extensive reading, and I observed classes and took notes according to certain focal points on several occasions. Besides classroom observation, these visits were also valuable opportunities for informal talks with the participant teachers and some of the children. At the end of each school year the teachers were interviewed in Hungarian. Finally, I transcribed and analyzed data from the interviews as well as teachers' diaries (see Appendix D and E). As teacher interviews were carried out regularly after each academic year, they now provide a large database of teachers' narratives useful for further research. Although these narratives predominantly focus on how teachers think and feel about implementing change in their classrooms, they treat students' and teachers' developmental processes interrelated with diverse aspects of language education, and embedded in the broader historical and socio-cultural context.

7 Results

7. 1 Attitudinal and motivational outcomes for children

7.1 1 Story-reading in class

The results seem to support our assumption related to children's attitude and motivation. According to all four teachers and the external observers, the children look forward to the story-reading event in the English class and they are happy to take part in it. *"It's a totally different atmosphere,"* says T1 in the first interview, *"it doesn't feel like a lesson at all, it's like story telling and they love it."*

All teachers agreed with this comment implying that stories are not associated with learning and therefore create a natural environment, crucial in child language acquisition (Egan, 1989; Elley, 1989; Donaldson, 1987; Wells, 1986). In spite of the difficulties to create life-like situations in the language classroom (Cullen, 1998; Seedhouse, 1996), story-reading

is one of the ways which approximates natural conditions for foreign language acquisition in an institutional setting. This is understandable if we think of story-telling and story-reading as familiar affective contexts in which children encounter language in their mother tongue, and also of the fact that the content of stories (provided they are well chosen) is meaningful and relevant to learners. Therefore, like in any genuine communicative situation, the focus in on meaning, which seems to be a rare experience in Hungarian language classrooms (Nikolov, 2002). At the same time T1's comment (i.e. *"it doesn't feel like a lesson at all,… and they love it."*) implies that "usual" lessons are not really considered interesting either by pupils or by their teachers.

All four teachers remember telling *Can You Spot the Spotty Dog*, a book about finding an increasing number of hiding animals, in conditions that are totally uncharacteristic of Hungarian classrooms: *"They were all involved, even the boys and they're not very keen otherwise… almost stepping on each other so that they could all see the pictures"* (T1) and *"they kept pushing and trying to get closer, stepping on my feet, they were practically everywhere near the book"* (T2).

I have pointed out already that Hungarian classrooms tend to be traditionally organized in terms of classroom arrangement. Also, teachers have been shown to prefer teacher-controlled activities and participation structures (Nikolov, 2002, Nikolov, 2003). In this context, the way in which the children reacted to the picture book suggests that, due to intrinsic interest in the book, they ignored the structures they would otherwise observe, and acted as if they were in "natural" conditions instead of an institutional setting.

During the interviews, all four teachers refer to this overwhelming enthusiasm shown by their students, especially on occasions when children have hands-on experience with the books during the lessons. Such was the case with *All Kinds of People* and other similar books with so many flaps to lift that *"every child could take several turns"* (T2).

7.1.2 Keeping boys interested

In the extract quoted above T1 notes the power of authentic picture books to involve boys. This emerges as a recurrent issue in all teacher interviews, as well as in teachers' diaries. Apparently, boys' active participation comes as something unusual, as they are "not very keen otherwise." They even show their interest in books that I would have considered more for girls' interest, such as *Cats Sleep Anywhere*. However, T2 noted in her diary: They like it

because of the cats. I never imagined the boys in my class would say things like: *"Jaj de cukor!"* [*How cute*] *or: "Az én macskám is pont így szeret aludni."* [*This is exactly how my cat likes to sleep*]. A more elaborate analysis of boys' attitude towards reading and their motivation in the foreign language class will be provided in the discussion part of this chapter.

Teachers report that even those children who tend to be difficult to discipline in the classroom are captured by real books: *"There were always one or two children difficult to motivate and to discipline and when I am telling the stories they are simply glued to the books"* (T2). T1 shares the same experience: *"They looked spellbound. Not even the boys had to be disciplined."* (T1), or: *"They were sitting with their mouths open. The boys forgot to be naughty."* (T3). Very simply put, these accounts suggest that it takes a lot of effort to maintain learners' interest to avoid discipline problems. The books and the shared story-reading proved to be materials and procedures that made human sense to young learners and succeeded in creating and maintaining their interest.

7.1.3 Successful reading experience

Apart from the sensation aspect of the books and of the event of story telling in the classroom, another factor that explains children's increased motivation is the successful reading experience. Due to the usually short and easy-to-understand texts and the illustrations the children understand what they hear and read, and this results in further motivation to read.

The role of interactive reading also needs to be pointed out. Research (Blok, 1999; Bus, Van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Elley, 1989) suggests that language addressed to children in interaction has a stronger effect on language acquisition than environmental language, which in our case would be passive reading. The teachers adopted an interactive reading style, which means that they involved the children into reading by asking them to predict what was under the flap, or by inviting them to join in the rhythmic patterns of the text (e.g. *"We're going on a bear hunt, We're going to catch a big one…"*). Also, linking the text to children's personal experiences (e.g. "And what colour is *your* cat?") and to their background knowledge gave the children the opportunity to contribute with their comments.

Often, comments come even when uninvited (see more examples further on in this chapter), but even then they have a crucial role in the meaning making process. Related to *Where the forest meets the sea*, a book with a slightly more demanding text, T2 notes in her diary: *"Although the text is fairly long, the children could understand the story quite well on*

the basis of the pictures. As I was telling them the story, they kept commenting in Hungarian whatever they could make out of it." Nikolov (2002) draws attention to the role of commenting as a strategy in children's language learning: commenting in the mother tongue gives the children the feeling of success because they guess meaning by relying on the context and on their background knowledge of the world. Besides, commenting provides all children in the classroom with comprehensible input and it allows the teacher to scaffold on student feedback. I will give further examples to illustrate commenting as a meaning making strategy in the discussion part.

7.1.4 Borrowing books

Findings suggest that the "borrowing part" of the project enhanced children's motivation to read in English. In connection with borrowing the books, T2 claimed that *"the only difficulty is to decide who will be the first one to get the book, because they all want it."* Also, during the school year, some children repeatedly borrow their personal favourites.

Children's enthusiasm is partly explained by the fact that they rarely see books of this kind. The only English book they have access to is their textbook. Real books are attractive and interesting, they are in English and the children can even take them home to read and have a closer look at them. According to the teacher from the socially disadvantaged school (T2) *"some of the children have never in their lives seen books of this quality, and maybe they never will."* Also, as it turned out during my subsequent visits to School 2, the school library is not very well equipped, and children rarely borrow books.

Finally, as both T2 and T3 note, children also felt privileged because they could take home the teacher's books. This came to all of them as something totally unexpected, and never before heard of during their school career.

7.1.5 Positive attitudes to literacy and developing autonomy

T1 and T2 note that due to the opportunity to work with the picture books in the lesson and then read them at home, the children read more in English than beforehand. The question whether the project will influence their motivation to read in Hungarian as well naturally cannot be answered. Cummins (1991, 1994) claims that there is considerable evidence of interdependence of literacy-related or academic skills across languages. He notes that the

moderate to strong correlation between academic skills in L1 and L2 suggests that "L1 and L2 abilities are manifestations of a common underlying proficiency" (Cummins, 1994, p. 38). The documented interdependence of academic aspects of proficiency across languages suggests that it is possible in the long run that developing reading skills in English may have a positive effect on reading in the mother tongue.

This becomes especially important in contexts where children come from socio-economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, and therefore are at a disadvantage regarding access to print and books. Krashen (1997) shows that children in less developed countries have little opportunity to read for pleasure in their first language. Also, the rote-learning approach often still prevailing in these countries does not support the kind of cognitive language development in L1 that might transfer to L2.

In this context, T1 found it encouraging to see the children bring in some of their own Hungarian books and ask the English teacher to have a look at them together, arguing that it is similar to the picture book the teacher presented in the previous lesson. In such instances they looked at the books together (either then, or on one of the subsequent lessons), with the teacher asking the children about the story and commenting the pictures in English, and the children responding and adding their comments either in English or in Hungarian.

The fact that children think of bringing some of their own books to the lesson and want to share them with their peers seems to be of crucial importance in their development of attitudes to literacy. Among basic goals to be achieved with elementary school children Hudelson (1994) proposes not only that "children be able to read and write (i.e., be able to construct meaning from their own texts and the texts of others), but also that they want to engage in these activates" (Hudelson, 1994, p. 130.). In our case it seems that children chose to read certain books. First, they showed their preference for certain English picture books and borrowed them, then they came up with their own suggestions as to what they could read together. This suggests that, as shown by Nikolov (2000), with adequate support young learners can gradually develop autonomy and responsibility for their learning. On the other hand, it indicates that learners perceive reading pictures and texts and talking about books as pleasurable activates. Similarly, in the project presented in Chapter Five, where teachers integrated stories in their teaching, some of the children asked their parents to buy them the story books used by their teachers during the lessons. As the bookshops did not have the books in question, the children were happy to choose other similar books in Hungarian (6.1.1).

It appears that all the stories teachers tell about how children became more motivated to read in Hungarian after reading together in English support the understanding of literacy as a process which is not only cognitive, but also social in its nature (Smith, 1988; Willinsky, 1994). In Chapter Three I discussed literacy development from a Vygotskian perspective, as a socially constructed process, in which appropriate conditions support the emergence of the willingness and ability to read and write. In this sense children grow into literacy, just as they grow into language, with adequate support from the environment. This includes a print-rich environment, scaffolding from successful readers, but also growing into the web of shared cultural assumptions about literacy. In this case the fact that parents agreed to search the bookshops for books and eventually buy some, reinforces the value attributed to reading and the culture of books in the community.

Teachers' decision to share children's Hungarian books in the English class, and retell the story in English on the basis of the pictures, has been a pleasant surprise. Based on what I experienced with in-service teachers (see Chapter Five), non-predictable activities, such as story-book reading, as well as more creative and spontaneous follow-up tasks were avoided. The reasons for this may have to do with teachers' language insecurities, and with their fatigue to take risks and do something that had not been previously planned in the syllabus. The fact that the four teachers involved in the present study persisted in their efforts to integrate authentic picture books in their syllabus on a regular basis, is partly explained by the external interest and support which was maintained over years.

Teachers' willingness to read the Hungarian books in English is significant for several reasons. First, it shows that teachers are open students' suggestions to negotiate content, and thus develop a process syllabus, which is quite unusual in the educational tradition in Hungary (Nikolov, 2000). Also, taking into account students' suggestions may encourage them to take steps towards autonomous learning and assume responsibility for their learning choices. Finally, by sparing time to read the books suggested by the children, teachers acknowledge and indicate to children the value attributed reading and convey the message that reading is an important experience, which has a role in the educational process.

7.2 Attitudinal and motivational outcomes for teachers

The interviews with the teachers revealed that using real books in the classroom had brought about changes in their professional lives on different planes, motivation being one of them. All teachers were enthusiastic about the books, and showed interest in dealing with them right from the beginning. However, due to differences in age, proficiency, personality and background, they appeared to adopt somewhat different attitudes to using them in the classroom.

T1 found the books "methodologically challenging" in the sense that she found it important to create varied and challenging tasks related to them. Children could make their own pictures and text to *All Kinds of People*, create crossword puzzles using the vocabulary of *I wish I were a dog* and make projects related to Coral's journey from *Coral Goes Swimming*. *"They like it when there's a task related to it and I also think they get more out of it. So, anytime we start reading a new book"*, said the teacher, *"I rack my brains for something interesting to do with it."*

Young and enthusiastic, both T1 and T3 found pleasure in experimenting with books, and perceived this as a challenge. This is important for their professional development not only because they get to learn new things. But also, as pointed out in Chapter Five (6.3.2), the excitement of taking risks with new materials in new ways is believed to prevent routinization and the professional fatigue that sets in towards the later stages of teachers' careers (Huberman, 1989 cited by Rudduck, 1992, p. 89). Linked to this idea, it is interesting to consider the difference between how the four teachers relate to their experience. On the one hand, the two younger teachers, T1 and T3, and on the other hand T2 and T4 show similarities. To illustrate this, I will elaborate on the way T2 received the project and discuss her development in the course of it.

When we informed T2 about the possibility of joining the project, she sounded unsure, but agreed to come to the preliminary discussion. *"I wasn't sure I wanted to join the project, but I had no doubts the minute I saw the book."* she said later on. At the beginning of Phase 1 T2, less confident, less energetic and possibly more tired than T1, appreciated the books partly because she found they provided an opportunity to relax both for herself and for her pupils for which she did not have to "prepare". In the first interview (end of first year of the project, Phase 1) she declared:

I don't feel this [using real books] as a burden at all. It's good to see children like them so much. And besides, it doesn't really take too much preparation. Just looking up two or three words to make sure that the pronunciation is okay.

Carrying on with the project T2 seemed to have grown more conscious about what she can achieve with the help of the books. At the end of year two (Phase 1) she pointed out:

I wouldn't have believed there are so many opportunities in these books. For instance, after reading Ten Dogs in the Window, some of the children asked if there was a similar book about cats. To which another pupil suggested that maybe they should make one themselves. It was good to see such a great idea coming from the children. So now I try to give the pupils opportunities to use the books creatively.…. I mean I have always asked them, for instance, to draw a picture of something they liked best from the book, but there are so many other things they can do, I mean, like acting it out or writing a sequel and so on.

It appears that in this case pupils' motivation and interest in the books further increase
ed teacher motivation and urged her to create more engaging tasks related to the books. This passage also offers a good example of how learners make suggestions regarding course content, and thus develop more autonomy. On the other hand, the initiative to design a new book made the teacher more aware of what her students can achieve, and of how she can motivate them intrinsically. As in previous examples, T2 sounds willing to take students' suggestions into account, and by this she also develops more flexibility in handling new situations, and consequently, more autonomy. This makes sense in a social constructivist paradigm, where learning emerges out of experiences in social settings (Johnson, 2006; Williams & Burden, 1997). Thus, teachers' learning, also situated in a dynamic context, is constructed in a dialogic process.

As for T4, although enthusiastic at the beginning, she did not seem to benefit as much from the project as did the other three teachers. This was mostly because, as she said in the last interview, teaching English was not the main priority in her professional life. I will come back to her case in more detail further on.

7.3 Linguistic outcomes

7.3.1 Understanding new language

At the end of the first year of the project T2 commented: *"I wouldn't have dared to use this kind of books on my own … even if I had had the chance to order one or two books of this quality from England … I would have thought they were too difficult for my students."* This is a frequent worry teachers share in connection with using authentic materials: because their language is not explicitly tailored to foreign language learners' needs, teachers may fear that these book turn out to be linguistically too challenging for the pupils. Data collected from in-service teachers also suggest that teachers identify authentic reading materials with an increased and, thus, inappropriate level of difficulty (Chapter Five, 6.4.2 and 7.3).

However, it is often ignored that story telling and story reading are situations that are both socially and linguistically meaningful for children. Most children are familiar from their mother tongue with the story telling/reading frame and with the kind of discourse stories involve (Bruner, 1986; Fox, 1993; Heath, 1994). When making sense of a story, pupils build on their schemata of stories in general, as well as other meaning making strategies, such as pictures, teacher's discourse and gestures, and peers' comments in L1. A further argument in support of authentic reading materials is that it seems that there are certain specific features of authentic texts that assist learners in the meaning-making process, and actually make them easier to understand than their quasi simplified versions (for a detailed discussion see Chapter Four, 2.6).

Also, young learner studies also support the fact that a careful selection of authentic materials and appropriate scaffolding assist learners in the meaning-making process (Jones Mourao, 2006; Kierepka, 2006; Linse, 2006; Williams, 1995), and therefore they can cope with authentic children's stories. Our findings are similar in this respect. At the end of the first year, all the four teachers involved in the study claimed that the children had no problems in understanding the books. They also provided evidence that the children acquired a lot of new words and structures from the books through repeated interactive reading in the classroom and home reading.

7.3.2 Acquiring new language

Teachers' diaries and the stories they tell in the interviews bring examples of how easily children pick up new language embedded in a meaningful context, without any additional explanation. Such was the case, for instance, when dealing with a counting book (*One Moose, Twenty Mice*), T3 *"did not intend to start teaching the plural, but slowly the children began to realize that something had happened to the words and started using the –s for the plural."* Although she makes no further comments to this episode in her diary, the quoted passage implies that the teacher is aware that acquisition has occurred without direct teaching, as a result of exposure to the target language in a motivating context.

Teachers' diaries present evidence for what teachers articulate in the interviews: namely, that unanalyzed wholes and chunks are not only easily acquired, but also they are remembered for a long time. All children remembered *Can You Spot the Spotty Dog?* although the text is full of words that are not among the most commonly taught ones. When T2 decided to revise the book after a while, she found that *"most of them remembered the whole book after one or two revisions. Robi could recall all the difficult expressions at once, like "slippery snake," "prickly hedgehog," "furry mole."* Others would only remember the easier ones, such as "jet black cat," and of course: "cheeky monkey." While one would be tempted to believe that more words make a text more complicated and difficult to remember, the rhythmic patterns and unanalyzed chunks accompanied by visual support proved to be easily acquired and recalled. As pointed out above, this makes sense in the light of recent theories set forth by Wray (2002), who draws attention to the crucial importance of formulaic speech units in storing, remembering, recalling and producing language.

Some books appeared to be particularly apt for helping learners retain and reconstruct formulaic utterances. This was the case with *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Rosen & Oxenbury, 1989), which is written in a powerfully rhythmic language and displays formulas of colloquial speech, such as: "We're going to catch a big one," "What a beautiful day," and "We're not scared." T3 and T4 reported that children shared, chanted, acted out and read this book with enormous pleasure. A teacher who was not involved in the project, but had been using this particular rhyme in its oral form for years, mentioned that some children preferred above all the line *"We're gonna catch a big one,"* which they would always shout out. This teacher also added that the children liked to say in English whatever they sensed to be colloquial. This makes sense if we consider children's preference for subversive forms of language (Whitehead, 1995), as shown in Chapter Four (3.2).

When I repeatedly shared this book with my daughters (then aged five and seven), they also found the line *"We're going to catch a big one"* particularly appealing because of the way it sounded. My five-year-old daughter remarked: *"Úgy csattan, mint mikor tényleg elkapják"* [It claps like when they really catch him]. Also, they could easily recall the language together with the accompanying movements later on. This relates to Rubin's (1995) idea about the multiple patternings of oral poetry. In his *Memory in Oral Traditions* (1995), David Rubin suggests that epic, folk ballads, counting-out rhymes and other pieces of oral poetry are memorable and easy to reconstruct due to their multiple layers of patterning in terms of rhythm, sound, meaning imagery, and emotion, working together. *Going on a Bear Hunt* is a good example for how these different layers of the book work together and create opportunities to remember and reconstruct language.

Teachers' diaries bring further examples which show that due to the memorable linguistic and visual context children not only recall the new words and phrases, but are able to use them spontaneously in new situations. During one of the activities when the task was collecting names of animals T1 was pleasantly surprised to hear that children did not simply talk about cats and hedgehogs, but they talked about the "jet black cat " and the "prickly hedgehog," expressions they had repeatedly encountered a few lessons earlier in one of the books they had been exposed to. The same was found with *Cats Sleep Anywhere*, the classical poem with pictures, which the children knew by heart ("kívülről fújták") even after a long time. When they encountered the line "*Cats Sleep Anywhere,*" meant as an as an intertextual joke in another book (*I wish I Were a Dog),* children immediately started adding all the words and phrases they remembered from last year's reading, changing cats into dogs, to match the new pictures:*"[Dogs sleep] on the table, on the window ledge, in the cupboard, fitted in a cardboard box."*

Finally, not only young learners, but teachers also claim to have enriched their vocabulary by using authentic picture books. T2 mentioned, for example, that she had learned quite a few words from *Coral Goes Swimming*. However, while reading out the book, she found that, although having checked it up the day before, she still did not know the meaning of "manatee." Luckily, a child did.

7.3.3 Accountability

Along the obvious gains it terms of language development, it is also interesting to consider teachers' ideas linked to these results. There is one specific point which I want to comment on, namely accountability. Two teachers noted that children remembered the words from the books, even without the threat of an eventual vocabulary test. This should come as no surprise, given the fact that the books were intrinsically motivating, the activities were meaningful and exposure to the books was repeated.

However, the fact that teachers bring up the issue, indicates that tests are seen as important strategies to promote learning. As discussed in Chapter Five, in Hungary, there is a noticeable negative washback effect of language exams on the teaching-learning process, and success is measured by students' performance on tests. The fact that teachers socialised into normative ways of schooling perceive the value of pleasure reading for language development and articulate their findings, may be a first step towards changing their underlying beliefs about the potential of reading real books for language development, and towards integrating them in their curricula.

7.4 Group dynamics

7.4.1 Teacher-student rapport

Teachers mentioned that they had developed a more open rapport with their pupils and also got to know them better through working with the books. T1 claimed: *"I feel closer to the children if I tell them a story at the end of the lesson. And they are a lot more open towards me."* The teacher from the socially disadvantaged area talked about her worries in connection with lending the books to children whom she had previously considered unreliable: *"I am worried about one of the books because I gave it to a girl who… well, whom I wasn't quite sure if she would return it. … but I didn't really want to say no, I simply couldn't refuse to lend her the book."* In the second interview the teacher related that the book was brought back unharmed and that she thought this was one of the steps she as a teacher made in getting to know and trust her pupils.

7.4.2 Cooperation

Another advantage in terms of group dynamics was apparent mostly in the village school, where Gypsy children are usually accepted with great difficulty by their peers. It is common experience in Hungarian classrooms that pupils dislike and often refuse to work with Gypsy children in pair and group work. Much to the teacher's surprise, both story telling in itself (listening to stories and looking at the pictures together) and the follow-up activities have enhanced cooperation in the classroom. In *Whose Hat is That?* the main protagonist, a cat, has to repeatedly find his way through the labyrinth and get to the different owners of different hats. In School 2 children helped each other in "finding the way," that is identifying the hat's owner. Also, the poorest student in English turned out to be the fastest at finding the way. This confirms what the teachers claim that even those pupils who were considered less able by their peers perform well in the activities related to story-telling and enjoy reading the books at home. This has increased peers' and also the teacher's appreciation for the pupils in question.

The borrowing process also reinforced peer cooperation. At the beginning of the project some of the teachers devised a rota system to give each child the opportunity to take the books home, (or else, occasionally they counted out who could take the "new book"). In a short time children in School 2 took over the organization and kept track of who was taking which book for how long. T2 mentioned that after reading the very first book in class she lent it to a child. In the next lesson it turned out that the children did not wait for the teacher to organize the lending, but the book had already been going round and the children themselves kept track of who the last one was to take it home. Findings indicate that by borrowing the books, children had the chance to cooperate, and thus became more autonomous in handling the new situation.

7.5 Peers, siblings, parents and other teachers

7.5.1 Peers and siblings

It is worth pointing out that the positive influence of real books goes beyond the participants of the project. In the first interview T2 recalled:

> *One of the great experiences I had with the books was when I had to substitute my German teacher colleague, so the whole class, that is both my group [i.e. children learning English] and the children learning German as a foreign language were there. And even the German group enjoyed the book we looked at. They still talk about it and would want to see more of these books.*

Also, the brothers and sisters of the pupils participating in the project have access to the books at home. Therefore, they often stop the teachers on the corridor saying *"I love the book you read out in my brother's / sister's class"* (T1).

The interest manifested by siblings reinforces the findings of a 1999 survey conducted in Great Britain, investigating children's reading choices (Hall & Coles, 1999), where a significant positive relationship was identified between the amount of reading done by children and living with siblings who read a lot. The same survey also pointed out peers' influence on children's reading choices and habits. In a research into the differences in boys' and girls' experiences of reading and writing, Millard (1997) also identifies the family, the friendship groups in the local community, and the peer group in school as the three most important spheres that influence pupils' attitudes towards reading. Therefore, involving children into reading authentic children's literature at school and at home is likely to present benefits not only for the participant students, but also for other children who are in touch with them, at home or at school.

7.5.2 Parents

Unlike children, parents from Schools 1 and 3 do not typically stop the teachers to talk about the project. When asked, however, in informal conversation they did give positive feedback. The situation is different in the village school, where the teacher often meets some of the

parents in the street and *"they always comment on the books and are pleased that their children have got that lucky to participate in the project"* (T2). Similarly, the teacher's diary reveals that children often tell her that parents also like the books.

From what the teachers report, it seems that parents in the rural school are more responsive to the teacher' efforts and somewhat more supportive of the Real Books Project. This makes sense if we consider the evidence on pupils' and teachers' relationship in small vs. large schools. Burstall (1980) draws attention to the fact that in small schools pupils tend to form closer relationships with their teachers and subsequently develop positive attitudes towards further learning. In our case it is the relationship between parents and teachers that can be compared in the two schools, with parents in the village school being closer to the teacher and therefore more explicitly responsive than parents in the popular school, who only meet the teacher on formal occasions and scarcely give any feedback at all.

I pointed out that in School 4 the parents are known to be supportive of any innovations and projects that teachers undertake and the also sound very proud of the work that is going on in the school. This is partly due to the fact that this school is also relatively small, and also to the conscious efforts on the part of the management to cooperate with parents and involve them in decision-making concerning their children's education.

Therefore, we expected that, as children were supposed to borrow the books for home reading, there would be networking between the participant teacher and parents, and parents would give feedback on the experience. Jones-Mourao (2006) describes a similar project in an underprivileged area in Portugal, where parents got involved to the extent that children's home readings of the picture books and their retelling of the story-script became a "whole family thing" where parents and siblings would crowd around to listen (Jones-Mourao, 2006).

This, however, did not happen in the case of School 4. As it turned out, despite repeated requests, the teacher would not lend the books to the children. Out of what is revealed by the final interview, she was worried, lest children might damage the books. However, on the basis of repeated classroom observations, informal discussions, feedback from parents and children, as well as the interview, T4 appeared as someone who avoided putting too much effort into her teaching, and therefore, it may also well be that she simply did not want to take the trouble to organize the borrowing process, and thus lost the opportunity to experience success.

It is of interest to note that on my occasional informal encounters with some of the parents, they expressed their repeated disappointment with the teacher (T4). In their opinion, the teacher was not really motivated to bring about change in her teaching, and she missed the

opportunities that the project offered, whereas they had hoped that it would finally bring about more involvement and linguistic benefits for their children. One of the parents said: *"She [i.e. the teacher] could have reinforced the children in their belief that it is by reading that you find out things. You find out about language and everything those books were about: relationships, nature, whatever. This is what we try to make them realize at home…"* What is noteworthy, though, in this incident, is parents' concern for education. In this informal feedback the mission of foreign language education is defined as involving more than language teaching and learning: it is expected to transmit the cultural value attached to reading, to inculcate literacy and to convey disciplinary content.

7.5.3 Colleagues

To my inquiry about colleagues' reaction (if any) T1, T2 and T3 remarked that they occasionally borrow the books. Two of the English teachers in School 1 and other two in School 2 sometimes use them in their classes to supplement the course book. In School 1 the headmaster, who is a Chemistry teacher, also takes them home regularly for her son who studies English in another school. In School 2, where T2 is the only English teacher, the Arts teacher seemed to be the only one interested in picture books. She borrowed *One Moose, Twenty Mice,* and used the techniques applied in the book in the Arts lesson. In School 4 teachers probably did not know about T4's endeavours.

Taking into account the potential of authentic picture books for children's cognitive, affective, social and literacy development (Bettelheim, 1975; Bialystok, 2001; Deacon & Murphy, 2005; Donaldson, 1987; Heath, 1982, 1994; Rosen, 1998), it is interesting to consider that only few other teachers wanted to use them in their lessons. However, it is perhaps even more striking that primary school teachers did not show interest in these books, although they had cross-curricular implications, or treated topics of human importance (e.g., friendship, family relationship, loneliness, physical handicap). After dealing with *All Kinds of People*, lift-the-flap book depicting people from various species and with various characteristics (e.g., "Some people have freckles…") T2 noted in her diary: *"I wish they included something similar in young learners' coursebooks for environmental studies. For example skin colour seems to be quite an ambiguous issue for Hungarian children."*

It seems that teachers of other subjects did not feel the urge to integrate these books and the topics they brought into their teaching, and nor did primary-school teachers. The

following story was reported by an in-service teacher who, although not involved in this particular project, regularly integrates real books in her teaching. She also thought that picture books had potential cross-curricular links to certain school subjects, and that they raised issues that would be of general interest to children. Therefore she showed some of the books she worked with to the Biology and Geography teachers and to one of the lower primary-school teachers. All teachers seemed pleased with the books; the Biology teacher even added that she "wished she had had access to such books when she was a child." However, when the English teacher-in-question suggested that they might give them a try in their lessons, they either found them "too childish" for their primary-school learners, and all three remarked that there was no time for them, as they had to "get on with their teaching materials" ("haladni kell az anyaggal").

This narrative about how teachers tend to stick to their routines and resist innovation reveals the traditional perception of teaching as a lonely endeavour, where it is safer to avoid cooperation, challenge and change. One of the explanations these teachers give as to why they do not choose to integrate authentic books in their teaching refers to the curricular pressure: they have more important things to do than to browse through picture books. What they apparently do not realise is that what they perceive as the need to strictly keep the schedule, goes back to a lack of initiation and autonomy in decision making.

While lack of time seems to be a most frequently quoted reason for not using supplementary materials in the lessons (see Chapter Five, 7.1) the most conspicuous reaction of these three teachers was that picture books were predicted to be too "childish" for young learners' interests. That teachers do not always have a realistic picture of their learners' interests and of the age-appropriate materials is well illustrated by a survey conducted with 80 German primary school EFL teachers (Kierepka, 2006). The results of the investigation indicate that teachers often underestimate their pupils' interests as well as their reading habits and abilities. This is also supported by the strikingly different answers gained to the question what kind of books learners liked. While the teachers in the investigation thought that their pupils liked animal stories, adventure stories and picture books, 250 learners' choices indicated far more differentiated categories (for a detailed discussion see Kierepka, 2006).

8 Discussion

In the following section I will develop some of the issues which, although not originally focused on in the research questions, emerged in the course of the project, and indicate areas for further research. Such is the case with the potential of picture books to provide equal opportunities for culturally deprived children and their power to involve boys in cases when other teaching materials do not. Finally, I discuss some unexpected turns in the project.

8.1 Providing equal opportunities with picture books

Studies (Cummins, 1991, 1994) document that literacy-related skills transfer across languages. This implies that those students who perform better on academic tasks in the L1 will most probably perform better on similar tasks in the L2. More importantly for us, the interdependence hypothesis also suggest that in the long run, developing reading skills in English may have a positive effect on reading in the mother tongue. This emerges as an issue of particular importance in contexts where children come from socio-economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, and therefore are at a disadvantage regarding access to print and books.

I have already presented the motivational, linguistic and social benefits of reading real books for the participants in all four schools. I need to add, though, that while the books were greeted with enthusiasm in all four schools, the project has had particular relevance in School 2, where learners come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and in terms of access to books are at a disadvantage compared with children from other schools. Thus, story-reading in the English class provided opportunities for learners who have no or limited access to such learning experiences in their L1. In this sense, both the frequent read-aloud sessions and the opportunities to borrow the books were beneficial from the point of view of providing equal opportunities for children.

Heath (1983) shows that in families where children are socialized into sharing books with adults, as well as into the routines and discourse of story-telling and story-reading, are likely to be more successful in literacy-related activities at school. In cases where the home environment cannot create appropriate conditions for literacy development, which is seen as the key to academic success (Bialystok, 2001) and a means of helping children live a full life (Bettelheim, 1991), we have every reason to expect schools to be in charge. One of the ways

to compensate for the lack of books at home is to encourage the children to use the library. School 2 presents an interesting example of the value attached to reading, as it implicitly comes out from the treatment of the school library.

8.1.1 The school library

Out of what I experienced during my visits to School 2, it seemed the library is not perceived as something that might be of crucial importance in children's development. While visiting a lesson, I had the opportunity to visit the library: as classrooms were few, some of the lessons were usually held in this "spare room." To my surprise, the teacher added that the library was not much use anyway, and also that teachers disliked having their lessons there due to the "irregular" arrangement (consisting of a number of desks arranged in a horseshoe pattern), so it was usually left to her to teach her lessons there.

This incident reveals that teachers in the school do not like the "unusual" classroom arrangements, but prefer more traditional and controllable structures both in seating arrangement and, presumably, in the interaction patterns this arrangement promotes. According to an analysis of classroom observation and teacher interviews carried out by Tőkés (2005), primary and secondary school teachers avoid group-work for fear the students may turn out to be noisy, and therefore they prefer more teacher-controlled activities instead. The English teacher also seemed to have reservations about this room: *"Gondolták, nekünk jó lesz itt is…"* [*They thought this would suit us…*]*,* she says. Her remark implies what she believes to be her colleagues' view about the importance of her subject, namely that foreign languages are of lesser importance than subjects such as Mathematics, History or Hungarian Language and Literature, and therefore can be held in a room which they believe to be less advantageous. It needs to be added that at the time of the study it was questionable whether the teaching of English would be sustained at all in the school, due to the lack of financial resources. It was only through parental pressure that the school administration agreed to carry on with the programme.

Also, there seemed to be no encouragement from the school management to turn the library into an appealing place, so that the children would feel eager to use it. The books displayed on the shelves consisted of (1) compulsory readings for primary school students, (2) thick and visibly unused volumes by great, mostly Russian classics (e.g., Tolstoy and Chekhov), as well as (3) books on social and political topics, which no child would ever read,

such as *A baranyai munkásmozgalom 40 éve* [*The 40 Years of the Working-Class Movement in Baranya County*] in two volumes and several copies. These two latter categories, i.e. the Russian classics and the books on political topics indicate that the library was equipped with books largely during the old regime, where reading books on working-class and Russian-related topics was strongly encouraged. It is not that the value of Russian classics could ever be questioned. It is rather a matter of the inappropriacy of context that I want to point at, saying that it is not likely that this kind of books make much human sense to young learners.

However, the school administrators fail to find the adequate financial resources to equip the library with more popular and accessible books for children. This is to say that the students attending this school (which is by no means unique in this sense) are deprived in terms of access to print both at home and at school, whereas the aim would be for the school to try to compensate for what these homes cannot offer: proper conditions promoting literacy development. This includes both a print-rich environment and activities which present reading as a pleasurable activity.

The importance of a positive image about libraries, books and reading is crucial in helping children become good readers, as suggested by research made by Krashen (1993, 1997-8), as well as of the findings of an inquiry conducted by Hall and Coles (1999) in Great Britain. The same study points out the apparently paradoxical correlation between the amount of books children have at home and the amount of books they borrow from libraries. Whereas one would expect that the fewer books they have, the more they resort to the library, research documents that the more books children have, the more they tend to frequent libraries, while those who come from families of a low economic status and who do not own books tend to frequent library to a lesser degree. Hall and Coles (1999) refer to this phenomenon as the *Matthew Principle* after the parable of the talents in St. Matthew's Gospel, according to which "to those that have shall be given; from those that have not shall be taken away even that which they have." Thus, children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and in addition, attend a school where the library is poorly equipped need more encouragement and motivation on the part of their teachers to want to read. It is to be feared that in the case of the children from School 2, this encouragement lags behind. This is in tune with Csapó's (2002) findings which indicate that in Hungarian education schools enhance initial differences instead of reducing them.

8.1.2 Benefits of authentic children's books for culturally deprived students

Assuming that the conditions presented above are not unique, and that in several cases both encouragement to read and library facilities are scarce, integrating authentic children's books in their EFL program is more than welcome from the point of view of increasing the opportunities for academic success in the case of culturally deprived children.

First, authentic children's books may create motivation to read in the first and in the foreign language, and, as teachers' accounts suggest, promote literacy development in general. While sharing the books with their students in enjoyable and understandable ways, teachers mediate the experience of reading for children (Baghban, 1984; Bruner, 1986; Freemantle, 1993; Walsh, 1993), and present it as a worthwhile activity. During my visit to School 4, where the teacher read out *I Wish I Were a Dog,* I overheard a ten year-old saying to her friend: *"Olyan jó volt ez a kutyás. Asszem anyuéktól mégis a Lassie-t kérem a szülinapomra."* [*I loved this one with the dog. I think I'll ask my parents to get Lassie for my birthday*]. Also, by encouraging the children to borrow the books, teachers shape the library experience for children who have little contact with libraries otherwise. This has also been supported by a study conducted by Bors (1999), in which upper-primary learners in Pécs were involved into extensive reading in English. Among motivational and linguistic gains, participants and their teachers appeared to develop positive attitudes towards using the library.

Besides motivational and attitudinal gains, using English picture books present cognitive gains as well. Exposing children to narratives and to the visual input of fine art picture books expands their background knowledge of a variety of topics, and they learn to problematize issues of interest. One of the examples is a comment that came from an eight year-old, who after reading *Noah Built an Ark One Day*, said: *"Nem is tudtam, hogy Noé minden fajtából kettőt vitt be..."* [*I didn't know Noah took two from each species…*].

Understandably, much of the commenting that occurs related to these books happens in the first language (see Chapter Seven, 1.2 for a detailed discussion), and it takes appropriate scaffolding on the part of the teacher to turn children's comments into opportunities for learning both facts and the target language. On the other hand, comments in the mother tongue can be looked at as proofs of the thinking process that underlies the shared reading activity. In their schemata theory, Schank and Abelson (1995) talk about narratives as crucial in organising and making sense of experience, and therefore in fostering cognitive

development. Thus, extensive experience of hearing and reading stories provides children with opportunities to develop more abstract ways of thinking.

8.2 Involving boys

Another positive outcome which is worth giving a somewhat lengthier treatment is the involvement of boys. While talking about the power of picture books to generate and sustain motivation and learner participation, T1 mentioned that these books involved "even the boys". This remark may suggest both that boys regularly do not show great interest in literacy-related activities, and that they are more difficult to keep interested in the English lesson than girls. Upon further questioning, all teachers claimed that it was difficult to maintain boys' interest as they easily lost patience during activities. However, whenever it came to the reading-sessions during the lessons, boys appeared to be equally interested and were able to focus on the books. The only difference was that *"they added their comments to the pictures more loudly than the girls"* (T1) during story-reading. This was perceived by all participant teachers as a sign indicating interest and motivation rather than misbehaviour.

Teachers' observations bring into focus some of the fundamental differences between boys' and girls' participation in the teaching-learning process. In the following I will analyze some of these differences that emerged in the empirical data, while I will also discuss relevant research dealing with gender differences in language and literacy development.

8.2.1 Educational experiences across genders

Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s education policy emphasised the need to give equal learning opportunities for both girls and boys (Dunn, 2006), since the 1990s, interest has shifted towards acknowledging gender differences, and the need to cater for fundamental gender-related differences in terms of interests and learning skills. Research shows that gender differences have considerable influence on children's educational experiences. For example, in mixed group settings boys occasion more discipline problems for their teachers (Swann & Graddol, 1988). Also, boys have been shown to claim more teacher-time than girls and they are more difficult to keep interested and involved, in spite of their teachers' conscious efforts to be even-handed.

Another conspicuous difference in this sense relates to boys' attitudes to reading and literacy-related processes in general. According to a study investigating children's reading habits (Hall & Coles, 1999), boys (1) read less than girls, (2) read less fiction than girls, and (3) have a less positive image of themselves as readers. While developmental differences certainly account for some of the differences in educational experiences across genders, in the case of literacy development, the social environment of learning has a crucial role (Heath, 1982, 1994). Hall and Coles (1999) identify the predominantly feminine culture of the primary class and language lessons, as well as the kind of literacy practices this milieu engenders as one of the main causes for which boys tend to fall more frequently in the reluctant readers category. Due to the lack of male role models with respect to reading, boys appear to identify reading and literacy-related activities as a primarily female occupation, with which they find hard to identify, especially in the years of puberty.

Millard (1997) also presents convincing evidence for the difference in girls' and boys' experiences of reading and writing, and shows that the social practices of school and those of the wider community work together to create a context in which the separation of the sexes takes place. Most importantly, the study suggests that school promotes versions of literacy that can be shown to hold more appeal for girls than for boys. Similar problems are outlined in the teaching and learning of mathematics in school: Walkerdine (1998) shows that, contrary to common beliefs, girls can perform just as well, or indeed better than boys in mathematics, provided that they are offered 'girl friendly' programmes of study.

The fact that educational practices present a range of literacy models that mostly attract girls results in boys' not being sufficiently engaged in the reading process. This is identified by Millard (1997) as the main reason for which boys tend to fall behind, particularly in the language curriculum. Therefore, taken the importance of literacy development for academic achievement in general, and for language study in particular, it seems necessary to consider ways to redress imbalances in this sense. Millard (1997) suggests that one of the ways to do this is to make sure that both boys' and girls' reading interests are equally provided for. This can be achieved by using intrinsically motivating and cognitively engaging reading materials, as well as a balanced programme of activities for both genders.

8.2.2 Negotiating books

What I have said about the female dominance of primary teaching, applies to the status quo of language study as well. The majority of foreign-language teachers are women, and therefore present female models of competent speakers of the foreign language, whereas male role-models are scarce in this respect. Teachers also tend to naturally rely on materials and strategies that they have found useful in their language learning and this may lead to ignoring interests and learning styles other from what they have experienced. To this one needs to add the fact that the study of language builds strongly on literacy skills, and therefore incorporates attitudes linked to literacy. Therefore, as boys tend to perceive both reading and language study as feminine activities (Adonieu, 2004 cited by Dunn, 2006, p. 115; Hall & Coles, 1999), when it comes to foreign language study, they often appear reluctant to cooperate in these activities. This was also pointed out by all the interviewed teachers.

On the other hand, teachers emphasised that while reading authentic picture books, boys were also involved and appeared to be equally interested, unlike in other activities. T3 mentions *Can You Spot the Spotty Dog?* as one of the books that *"boys and girls enjoyed equally,"* and which *"thrilled even the boys who are otherwise regularly bored."* The 'updated' version of *Old Macdonald* was also mentioned as a favourite, with everybody looking forward to the appearance of the Martian as the last and most unpredictable character after a list of animals, and *"all boys producing funny sounds"* when they finally reached that page.

On the basis of what the interviewed teachers say it appears that while there are common favourites, boys and girls tend to make different choices as to what they would like to read, provided they are given the opportunity to choose. Both T1 and T2 regularly involve students into negotiating the next book to read, and both of them claim that while most books *"don't make a difference genderwise,"* there are some which are specific favourites either for boys or for girls. Such was the case with the *Big Red Bus*, which girls claimed to be the last on their list in School 4, and with *The Big Blue Sea,* a meditative book about the fond relationship between a mother and her daughter, which was preferred mostly by girls. Boys found the book *"too girlie,"* *"uninteresting,"* and with *"nothing to laugh at,"* and therefore *"definitely indicated that they would rather stay out of it for once… some of them they turned a little aside"* (T2). Being aware of and taking into consideration children's reading choices proves to be an important step in teachers' conceptualization of literacy. From an interactionist perspective literacy development appears as a socially constructed process where new meanings emerge for learners and teachers alike. In this sense, learners' choices

and comments about the books they read scaffold teacher cognition, while at the same time they allow teachers to build on them, and thus, scaffold learners' literacy development.

8.3 Developing critical attitudes through using real books

It is interesting to consider how children indicate their likes and dislikes of the books. As it turned out from T2, boys "turned a little aside" to indicate that they found the book less interesting. Upon my question whether boys comment on the books they dislike, T2 said: *"Not very loudly, anyway… they never make negative comments. This can also make things difficult, because they never tell me what they don't like; they only talk about what they like."*

The teacher attributed students' avoidance to give negative feedback to children's specific background, saying that *"the children in this area were brought up like this: they have learned to appreciate the little they get."* While T2's observations suggest that the children coming from a disadvantaged socio-economic and cultural background greeted the new learning opportunities with enthusiasm, the fact that they *"only talked about the things they liked"* and avoided negative feedback is not only due to their specific context, but rather needs to be seen is a wider cultural and educational context. Hungarian students, even when asked, are not very keen on making suggestions or offering open criticism to their teachers. This has to do with an educational culture that has favoured more traditional perceptions of teacher and learner roles in the classroom, across all age-groups.

On the other hand, it seems that the children in all schools clearly indicated their likes, even if they did not always verbalise their dislikes, or at least "not very loudly." This sounds like a good start for developing a more critical perception in students, which is necessary if we want to educate autonomous learners. In a longitudinal study research on negotiated classroom work with children, Nikolov (2000) presents the long-term advantages of involving children into decision making in the primary English class. One of the benefits of ongoing negotiation is that students gradually learn to develop a critical attitude, and become able and willing to make choices and suggestions concerning their own learning. Paradoxically, as pointed out in the study, this also turns out to be a disadvantage, in case other teachers may not be open to negotiation, and perceive students' willingness to initiate as irritating (Nikolov, 2000).

In our project two teachers (T1 and T2) out of the four regularly asked students which book they wanted to read, and three teachers (T1, T2, T3) gave them the choice to borrow whichever book they wanted. There is, however, only one documented account of a teacher's inquiring why boys did not like one particular book (*The Big Blue Sea*). By this question, the students were made to think about why they did not like the book in question, and also the teacher elicited valuable information as to the kind of books boys disliked (the ones they perceived to be lacking adventure and humour). However, systematic inquiry about why students preferred certain books to others leaves us with more than the factual knowledge of what they like or do not like in terms of reading. Asking learners to approach texts (i.e. words and pictures) critically, mediates their growth into literacy, defined by Heath (1994) as not only the ability to read and write, but also the ability to talk about reading and writing. This is even more important if we consider that due to the authority-based models of education, developing critical thinking is not a priority in Hungarian schools.

If learners are given the opportunity to make choices in their learning, even if this involves only choosing which book to read, and challenged to explain their choices, the chances increase that they become lifelong learners. This is yet another area where a sensible EFL programme might compensate for what is lacking in first language education.

8.4 Unexpected findings

Besides the positive results and processes presented so far, there are also other episodes that need to be described briefly in order to get a fuller picture of our project. One of these relates to T4, who in spite of our encouragement, did not keep up with the original plans in terms of lending the books. In the interviews she would express the same worries as T2, the other former Russian teacher, namely that *"something might happen to the books".* Interestingly, the two younger members of the team did not need any particular encouragement when it came to lending the books.

The explanation to this may be that, as I have already pointed out, in Hungary picture books of this kind are hardly known and available, and certainly not in English. The two middle-aged teachers seem to value these books more in the sense of perceiving them as something rare and expensive that they would be unable to replace. Although they were reassured in the preliminary discussions that I understood if some of the books eventually got torn or even lost, they still feared that should this happen, I might think they were not in

control of the processes. This is made explicit in the first interview with T2 (Phase 1), and hinted at in all the interviews with T4. This worry expresses underlying beliefs about teacher roles, but it also relates to a traditional cultural assumption in Central-Eastern Europe: face saving. Compared with their older peers, the two younger teachers appear to be more flexible and pragmatic, they tend to trust their students more, and focus on providing children with varied learning opportunities rather than saving the books from any potential harm.

Another problem was that, in spite of the encouragement she received, T4 did not read the books regularly, and when she did, she did so in the traditional frontal arrangement (which is still typical of Hungarian classrooms). Thus, children did not have that many opportunities to use the books in an interactive fashion, as most of them were meant to be. The teacher claimed that keeping the original seating arrangement saved her time for other activities and also that it was easier to work with the children in familiar arrangements. Apparently the efforts to motivate this teacher have been less than successful, but at least the participating pupils have seen a wealth of sources of English other than the text book and they still enjoyed stress-free story reading every now and then.

A more encouraging example of teachers' sustained motivation and work with authentic reading materials is T1. She regularly enlarges her own collection of picture books and reads them in all of her groups. This is a sign of real commitment, if we take into consideration the financial status of language teachers, the prices of art picture books and the difficulties with which these can be provided in Hungary.

Among the pleasant surprises that the project has saved us is the news that several more teachers started work with the same picture books (either borrowing them from their colleagues who had been involved in the project or from the English Teachers' Resource Centre, where we have also placed copies of the picture books in use). When I asked one of these unexpected joiners about what made her start using picture books in her lessons she confessed that she had long realized that neither her or her students had much in common with the textbooks they were using and she wanted to make everyone's life better, including her own. This links well with Stevick's concept of teachers' alienation from teaching materials (Stevick, 1996), and at the same time indicates a remedy that has worked for many: authentic reading materials.

Conclusion

In this chapter I reported on the effect of in-class and home reading of authentic English picture books on children, their teachers and their close communities in four Hungarian primary schools. The project was special in that it involved books that pass for curiosities for Hungarian children, who seldom see any print in English except for their coursebooks, and also because after sharing them in class, they could borrow the books for a few days. By means of classroom observation, teachers' diaries, and interviews made with teachers, I hoped to gain insights into how authentic picture books at school and at home influence children's and teachers' motivation, linguistic development, and cooperation in the classroom. I was also interested in the effects of the project on colleagues, children's siblings and peers.

Shared reading in class

Collected data reveal that the students participating in the project have become more motivated to learn English, more open towards one another in the English lesson and show signs of language development. Teachers appear to have developed a more open and friendlier rapport with their students, and they seem to have grown more conscious about their teaching. Further positive outcomes relates to the issues of involving boys and providing equal opportunities through using authentic picture books.

Borrowing

The borrowing part of the project has been successful in all cases but one: T4 did not lend the books to the students, either because, as she claims, they may get damaged, or because she believed it too time- and effort-consuming. However, in the other three cases, where children could take the books home, their families and friends were happy to share the picture books. In the case of the small school from the disadvantaged rural this reinforced cooperation between parents and the teacher.

Teachers' motivation and reflective practice

Three of the participating teachers (T1, T2 and T3) have shown signs of professional development in terms of motivation, reflective practice and autonomy. Teachers have become

more aware of their learners' needs (this is salient in the case of T2), and of their own potential to experiment with new materials and techniques. Although apparently enthusiastic at the beginning of the project, T4 resisted the opportunity to get involved into sustained work with the picture books. This is partly due to personality factors, and partly to her lack of interest in her profession. On the other hand, it needs to be added that positive outcomes in terms of teacher development were identified also with teachers who were not initially involved in the project, but when seeing the books, they decided to integrate them in their syllabus on a routine basis.

Further research and implications

The study also generated questions that require further research, such as literacy-related experiences across genders, in particular the issue of motivating boys to read and participate in activities related to reading. Also, a subject prone to further investigation is how reading in L1 and L2 interact. Observations support the fact that after reading certain books in English, children became eager to read similar books in Hungarian. However, it remains to be seen how sustained reading of children's literature has a lasting impact on motivation to read in the first language. These issues require longitudinal investigations.

Finally, a few words about the research design applied in this project. Longitudinal data has offered information which could not have been gained over shorter periods of time. Also, involving an emic perspective, that is participants' interpretation of processes allowed triangulation of the findings. Thus, we have gained insights into teachers' reflection processes and the changes occurring in their understanding of professional practice. Unlike the in-service teachers who carried out self-observation over a period of four months (see Chapter Five), and although convinced of short-term benefits of implementing narratives in their teaching, they ended their projects before seeing long-term results, three of the four teachers involved in the present project were found to integrate new practice in a lasting way. Ecosocial theory and research conducted in this tradition points out that persistent change in attitudes and habits of reasoning can only be brought about by reinforcement over longer timescales (Lemke, 2002, p. 75).

At the time of writing this dissertation contact is still maintained with three teachers, one of whom occasionally calls and reports on what she finds interesting and encouraging in her sustained work with authentic picture books. The other two teachers are regularly visited by university students who observe their lessons and interview them in order to complete

requirements set for their university courses in applied linguistics, or in order to collect data for their final theses. As teachers claim, these regular visits contribute to their motivation. These broad implications of what started out as classroom research reinforce our understanding of learning as a complex, relational process, in which components interact in a dynamic system over time.

Constructing meaning in interaction through picture books

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore work with picture books from an aspect which generates learner participation, and therefore has the power to transform the transactional teaching-learning paradigm into a process in which meaning is created in interaction. This perspective relates to the potential of picture books as mediating artefacts to elicit spontaneous comments from the audience.

In what follows I will attempt a definition of comments and explain their role in foreign language education. Then, I present the participants, data collection processes, procedures and materials of the descriptive study. This is followed by results and discussion, where I analyze samples of classroom interaction in which students were found to comment on the input they received from teachers and peers while working with authentic picture books. The discussion also involves teachers' reactions to these comments, it explores reasons why teachers may choose to ignore them, and finally it looks at the benefits of integrating students' vernacular (in this case their L1 comments) in the institutional discourse.

In terms of research methodology, this study is similar to the other two empirical studies presented in my dissertation in that it is based on data collected and analyzed in the qualitative tradition. This implies that research has primarily aimed to observe and describe

participants' development along time, and explain their language learning the processes. Also, foreign language acquisition is seen in interaction with linguistic, affective and sociocultural factors.

1 Background to research

1.1 The role of comments

David Nunan (1996) claims that "a great deal of research in our field is conducted in contexts where classroom noise either is unheard of or is considered irrelevant" (pp. 41-42). Nunan's remark is significant in that it draws attention to processes which may pass for side-effects of the traditional IRF pattern of classroom interaction, and therefore often remain unexploited by research. The present study aims to highlight the potential of student talk which may at times rightly fall into the category of "classroom noise." The data presented in this chapter reveal that children spontaneously comment on what they hear and see while sharing picture books in English. These comments are most often in the mother tongue. They may be on- or off-task, and teachers may find them funny, useful, or enervating. However, comments indicate not only learners' willingness to interact, but also what students understand from the linguistic and visual input they receive.

Nikolov (2002) identifies commenting as a strategy often applied by children in making meaning of stories. In Oxford's terminology, commenting is a "combination of guessing intelligently on the basis of linguistic and other clues and translating" (Oxford, 1990, p. 176). Through this strategy young learners contribute to the lesson by commenting most often in their mother tongue whatever they comprehend of the teacher's or one another's discourse. While most mental processes through which children make sense of the language are only partly reflected by interaction patterns, commenting in the mother tongue is also useful from the point of view of research, because it may provide insights into how young learners make meaning of stories told or read in a foreign language.

Thus, comments present opportunities for teachers to gain access to students' zone of proximal development, and mediate learning experiences for them. As discussed in Chapter One (1.2), Vygotskian social interactionism offers a strong theoretical basis for learning as a social activity, where people in classroom situations become "environments and … resources

for one another" (van Dam, 2002, p. 238). From an ecological perspective then, children's comments can be seen as resources which teachers can use to scaffold learning.

1.2 Commenting in the L1

However, the collected data show that teachers may choose to ignore students' spontaneous comments in the L1, instead of reacting to them. This may be due to the acknowledged status of the mother tongue in the EFL lesson. The role of the mother tongue in the English lesson has been differently perceived across various English Language Teaching (ELT) methods, extremes involving constant appeal to the L1 by the Grammar-Translation Method, as well as its total dismissal, as in the case of the Direct Way. Although it often becomes a requirement that classroom participants should only use English, classroom interaction studies reveal that both teachers and pupils resort extensively to the L1 for a variety of reasons (Nikolov, 1997). Observations also suggest that as soon as teachers become aware of the focus of observation (i.e. language choice), they tend to avoid situations where they should appeal to the mother tongue, or if they do use it, they feel the need to explain their motives after the lesson (Fekete, 1994).

One of the reasons that seems to have contributed to teachers often perceiving reliance on the mother tongue as a methodological blunder and finding excuses for its use is to be partly looked for in the policy of authenticity proclaimed by the Communicative Approach. According to the communicative orthodoxy, the main requirement of ELT lessons is to produce authentic interaction by creating opportunities for the genuine use of the target language. Although beneficial for promoting students' exposure to the target language, the authenticity principle appears to be somewhat controversial. Seedhouse (1996) argues that the requirements imposed on genuine communication in terms of turn-taking and participation rights, as well as participants' negotiation of topics cannot be realized in an institutional setting. The inherent paradox in regarding classroom discourse as natural communication would be that as soon as the conversation is imposed, it invokes the institutional purpose (that is: teaching English as a foreign language), and it ceases to be authentic as such. Therefore, classroom discourse should be regarded as a sociolinguistic variety of institutional discourse (Seedhouse, 1996, p. 23) with a certain underlying pedagogical purpose. Thus, the often

dismissed features of typical ELT discourse, such as the IRF cycle, as well as reliance on students' mother tongue come to be validated by the definition of teaching as an activity primarily meant to promote learning (Tomlinson, 1995). From this perspective, using the L1 cannot be regarded as good or bad in itself, but it is defined by the aim towards which it is used in the classroom.

The crucial question to be asked in evaluating the role of the mother tongue in the English lesson is therefore whether it brings about learning or not. In the case of students' spontaneous contribution while sharing picture books, their comments in the L1 appear to bring not only new content in the lesson, but new language as well, provided that the teacher chooses to integrate these comments in the lesson frame.

2 Research questions

In what follows, I will present an exploratory qualitative study which aimed to observe, describe, and analyze learners' spontaneous comments while sharing picture books in the EFL sessions. On the other hand, the research also intended to explore teachers' responses to learners' comments. As discussed in Chapter One (2), qualitative studies are discovery, rather than verification oriented. Also, they work intensively with a small number of participants, rather than large samples. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to all contexts.

I expected to find answers to the following research questions:

- What do learners' comments indicate about their attitudes towards sharing picture books in English?
- What do comments reveal about learners' meaning making processes?
- How do teachers respond to learners' comments?
- What do teachers' responses reveal about their underlying beliefs about teaching and learning?

3 Participants

In this study I rely on data collected with young Hungarian learners aged 5-12. Part of the data were collected in five classrooms where picture books were used with children between the ages 7-12, during their EFL lessons at school. At the time of the study five of the six teachers involved (T1, T3, T4, T5 and T6) were participating in post-graduate training courses for in-service teachers, where one of the tasks was to experiment with narratives in their lessons. While T2, who was a native speaker of English, had had previous experience in this sense, it was for the first time that the four Hungarian teachers tried to use authentic picture books.

The pupils came from a variety of contexts, including socioculturally disadvantaged areas from the neighbourhood of Pécs, as well as schools situated in well-established neighbourhoods in Pécs or in the surrounding towns (Kaposvár and Szekszárd). Table 1 illustrates how teachers, pupils and picture books used by the six teachers are distributed.

Table 1: Distribution of teachers, pupils and books

Teachers	*Age-groups taught (years)*	*Picture books shared*
T1	(Ages) 8, 10, 12	A Dark, Dark Tale; Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig;
T2	(Age) 10	Where the Wild Things Are;
T3	(Age) 10	The Tiger Who Came to Tea;
4	(Age) 12	The Tiger Who Came to Tea;
T5	(Age) 9	I Think My Mum's a Witch;
T6	(Age) 12	The Tiger Who Came to Tea.

Data were also gained from four young children (aged 5-8) with whom I shared picture books in their home environment. Anna (7) and Orsi (6) are children of close friends, while Kati (7-8) and Zsuzsi (5-6) are my own children. All four participants come from privileged backgrounds in terms of exposure to print and literate talk. Their story-sessions in English were primarily meant to develop language awareness and positive attitudes towards the target language and culture. Longitudinal observation was first carried out between 1997-1998 with Anna and Orsi, and then with my own children between 2005-2007.

4 Data collection instruments

In collecting data I relied on qualitative processes, including direct observation, teachers' diaries, and informal discussions with teachers and learners, as well as self-observation. I observed three of the five teachers in one or two lessons each. In the case of two teachers I relied on their self-observation and teaching diaries, which they were all required to conduct and keep during the semester in which they attended a seminar in advanced methodology, and which eventually presented important sources of information. Besides observation and teachers' diaries I relied on open follow up discussions with the teachers, either right after their teaching, or after reading their diaries. As these discussions occurred in Hungarian, the teachers got involved spontaneously and naturally, and thus provided valuable data referring to their beliefs. As for the four young learners (aged 5-8) I taught, their longitudinal observation during the shared reading sessions and during other activities in their home environment, provided me not only with examples of comments they made during reading, but also with insights into their literacy development.

Data were collected in instances where teachers shared authentic picture books with their pupils. In Chapters Four and Six I discussed in detail the contribution of authentic picture books for developing children's literacy, critical thinking, visual literacy, and also the lasting benefits they provide in terms of foreign language development. The chosen picture books provided good examples of authentic colloquial English, in visual and linguistic contexts which made human sense to children. The five teachers chose books which they thought best suited their learners' interest and linguistic level (see Table 1). These included *A Dark Dark tale* (Brown, 1992), *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas & Oxenbury, 1993), *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963/1992) and *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* (Kerr, 1998).

On the other hand, the four very young learners, who had the opportunity to choose the books themselves, opted for stories they expected to be interesting, or they identified as

subversive versions of stories they knew. I will present *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas & Oxenbury, 1993), *Little Wolf and the Giant* (Porter, 1989), *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch & Martchenko, 1980), and *Snow White in New York* (French, 1986) in more detail when I discuss how the four children explored these texts.

All the books contained appealing pictures, which were also integral to meaning making (Marriott, 1998). This was considered important, knowing that children's understanding of language is situationally linked (Donaldson, 1987). In this sense, the pictures, the story-sharing frame and children's schemata of narratives were expected to make up for the eventual language they could not cope with.

5 Procedures

Data were collected between 1995-2007. In the first phase I observed and tape-recorded lessons, and transcribed the recordings. In the case of the five teachers, I also read their story-teaching diaries, and carried on discussions with them related to their experiences with using authentic picture books.

In the second phase I re-read the collected data consisting of lesson transcripts, teachers' diaries, and my notes on the discussions with the teachers and on the interactive sessions with the four young children. Out of the rich corpus of samples of classroom interaction related to narratives in the young learner classroom, students' comments in the L1 emerged as a potential area for analysis. Therefore, in the next phase I selected samples of interaction depicting students' comments and teachers' reactions to these comments, as well as teachers' opinions related to this point. Finally, I analyzed data.

6 Results and discussion

The data give insights into how children construct knowledge in the foreign language, while relying on their mother tongue. A great amount of the comments were elicited by the pictures: children commented what they liked in the pictures, as the most obvious and tangible facet of the story. Another category of comments revealed children's' reliance on pictures and on their schemata as basic meaning making strategies. In this sense, the comments they made also revealed their attempts to explore the subtext in terms of intertextual references, stereotypical

representations and literary conventions. Finally, pupils appeared to make some of their comments in order appear funny, and thus come up to peers' expectations.

Another aspect from which the collected data can be examined refers to teachers' responsiveness to children's comments. There are examples which suggest that teachers prefer to ignore students' spontaneous contributions, while other samples of interaction show that teachers build on these comments, and support the construction of knowledge in interaction.

I will first look at what comments reveal about children's thinking and learning, and then consider teachers' attitudes to children's comments, and explore underlying beliefs. In transcribing the interaction patterns the following coding has been adopted: S: student, T: teacher, A: Anna, O: Orsi, K: Kati, Zs: Zsuzsi, R: Réka.

6.1 Comments indicating intrinsic motive

As discussed in Chapter Four (4), picture books invite instant personal engagement by their physical presence. This is even more the case with the so-called "novelty books," (Dunn, 2002) which offer opportunities for interaction in terms of direct handling: children can lift flaps, look into mirrors, touch and smell various parts of the book. On the other hand, the pictures are in themselves suggestive, and as they need no translation, they scaffold understanding of the text.

Involved in reading *Can You Spot the Spotty Dog?* (Rowe, 1998), twelve-year-olds were thrilled by the mirror on the last page where they can see their own reflection, as an answer to the question "Can you see the cheeky monkey?" Their involvement came through in spontaneous Hungarian utterances, such as: *Megfoghatom?* [May I touch it?], *Milyen trükkös!* [How tricky!], and: *Öcsém, de király…* [approx.: How cool…] After taking their time with the tactile and visual experience, students asked to share the book again, and took great delight in discovering many more details that they missed during the first reading.

Children expressed their spontaneous interest in the books in the mother tongue also in the case of more traditional books, such as in the following extract, where T1 wants to start telling the story, while the eight-year-olds sitting around her in a circle are visibly more interested in labelling the pictures in Hungarian.

Extract 1

1 T: Once upon a time...

2 S1: Sas! [Eagle!]

3 S2: Sas! [Eagle!]

4 S3: Bagoly! [Owl!]

5 T: Yes, it's an owl.

6 S3: Owl?

7 T: Yes, owl. It's an owl. Once upon…

8 S4: Rabbit!

9 T: OK, it's a rabbit. What else is there in the picture?

The interaction above occurred when the teacher started telling *A Dark, Dark Tale* (Brown, 1992) to eight-year-olds. As it turned out from the follow-up discussion with the teacher, she thought that pupils would be mostly interested in the story-line. On the one hand, this was due to the fact that she was used to slightly older learners, who were willing and able to get on with the story faster. On the other hand, she had based her assumption on previous story-reading experience with the same young learners, where she felt she had insisted too much on describing certain pictures, and the pupils lost interest in the story. However, in this case they were obviously pleased to linger on with the picture and enjoyed discovering the details. It appears from the tape that the teacher's "OK" in turn 9 is not so much a positive reinforcement of the observation made by S4, but much rather her consent to change the plan, and allow students to go on with the self-initiated labelling activity.

Another example which supports children's fondness for visual details is exemplified by the comments in the following example, where the children identify details which are originally not in the teacher's focus. The sample was recorded with the same group and the same teacher as above (Ex. 1), where T1 intended to tell the story of *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas & Oxenbury, 1993), an untraditional version of the original *Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf*. T1 picked this book in spite of the demanding language, and she decided to retell it on the basis of the pictures. She had assumed that her pupils would easily make sense of the story, as they were familiar with the original version. She also believed that the children would find the new version funny because of the previous expectations related to their schemata of pigs-and-wolves.

The following extract presents the scene when, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to build a lasting house which would keep them safe from the vicious pig, the wolves end up in a house made of flowers. As the pig has so far produced various unexpected items to destroy

the wolves' houses (e.g., pneumatic drill, sledge hammer, dynamite,), expectations should be focused on what is going to happen when the pig emerges next to the flower-house. However, it appears that at first reading eight-year-olds took more interest in the minute details, such as a little wolf escaping with the tea-pot, rather than the humorous aspects of the inverted story:

Ex. 2

1 T: And he sniffed (sniffs)...the flowers. And the smell was so good that the pig became a good pig. ...

2 S1: A teás, itt is itt van. [Here's the teapot again.] (points at a tiny teapot in the corner of the picture)

3 S2: Tényleg, a teás… [Really, the teapot...]

4 T: He was a bad pig, but now he is a good pig.

5 S3: Ez nem ugyanaz a teás. [This is not the same teapot.]

6 S1: De az. [It is.]

8 T: Yes, it's the same teapot.

The remark in turn 2 and the small dispute it elicits are clear indications of young learners' interest in the concrete aspects of stories and consequently of their remarkable eye for detail. By repeatedly noticing the tea-pot which is usually half-hidden by one of the characters, the children quickly identified a recurring pattern of the story. In terms of its implications for teaching, this extract also suggests the importance of offering hands-on experience with the story while reading or telling the story to them. This strategy both focuses their attention by involving their interest for the tangible aspects, and it takes into consideration the typical way in which children explore pictures: starting with a tiny detail and gradually getting an overall view of the whole. This passage also reminds us that what adults may find hilarious in terms of story development is not necessarily appreciated by children, who identify humour and suspense in other aspects of the story, which on the other hand, may go unnoticed by adult readers.

A final example for the way children express their appreciation for the pictures is given by seven-year-old Anna, who upon finishing *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad pig*, remarked:

Ex. 3

1 A: Milyen szépen tudott rajzolni az, aki ezt rajzolta... És ez angolul van írva? [The one who did the pictures could surely draw beautifully... And is this written in English?]

2 R: Igen. [Yes.]

3 A: Akkor én még nem tudom elolvasni. Milyen kár... Szerinted jövőre már igen? [Then I can't read it yet. What a pity... Do you think I can read it this time next year?]

This sample reveals not only that children like the pictures in picture books, but it also illustrates how interest in the pictures may nurture interest and develop positive attitudes to language and literacy.

6.2 Meaning making through comments

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, commenting in the L1 emerges as a crucial strategy in children's foreign language development (Nikolov, 1994). The collected data indicate that a significant part of the comments in the L1 contributed to students' making sense of the story read or told to them in English, and also revealed learners' reliance on pictures, and based on their schemata of stories and background knowledge of the world in the meaning making process.

I will first look at how children relied on commenting as a meaning making strategy in the EFL classes seen at school, where language development was the main aim. Then I will analyze data from the four young learners I taught, and discuss the relevance of their comments in terms of exploring the subtext of the stories.

6.2.1 Relying on pictures

As it appears from the following sample of interaction, illustrations may become a basic and most tangible source of information and may compensate for what learners cannot understand from the teacher's story-telling. Extract 4 was recorded when T1 was telling the story of the *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* to a group of ten-year-olds. As even for this group, the language was assumed to be too difficult, T1 again decided to tell the story based

on the pictures from the book. The following extract depicts how knowledge is constructed in interaction, with peers playing a major role in the scaffolding process:

Ex. 4

1 T: And the little wolves said: Kangaroo, please give us some bricks.

2 S1: Nyam, nyam. [Yum, yum.] (munching)

3 S2: Nem! Tégla! Téglát kér a talicskából! [No! Bricks. He wants bricks from the wheelbarrow.]

4 T: Yes, bricks. Because we want to build a house.

The wrong guess (turn 2) based on the S1's limited comprehension of the teacher's discourse, elicits spontaneous feedback: S2 corrects the guess made by S1 on the basis of the pictures. The comment in the L1 clarifies eventual misunderstandings for S1, while it also gives the teacher the opportunity to provide more input in English.

In the next passage, students involved in prediction try to sort out what happened, in particular the feelings of a character in the story based on the picture, much rather than the teachers' discourse. The extract was recorded while T2 was supporting ten-year-olds make sense of the passage when Max encounters the monsters in *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963).

Ex. 5

1 T: He is scared. Scared?...

2 S1: ... biztos megijedt ... nézd, milyen arcot vág. [...he's probably scared, look at the face he's making.] (points to the picture)

3 T: Yes, what happened?

4 S1: ... he ... (addresses peer:) Mi az a megijedni? Félni, megijedni? [What's the English for being scared? Being afraid, scared?]

5 T: Attila, show me, show me.

6 S1: (mimes)

7 T: Afraid.

8 S: Afraid, afraid of the boy.

9 T: If you don't know the word (points to his head) show me. Say: (gesture). And I'll tell you. Or you can say: Help me. Help me. Good.

In turn 2 S1 explores the picture to make meaning of the story. Apparently, he lacks the English term for "being scared/afraid," which explains why he did not make sense of the teacher's explanation and question in turn 1. In turn 4 the same pupil uses the L1 as a compensation strategy, and also in order to ask for assistance. This extract is also interesting in that the teacher provides explicit strategy training, encouraging students to rely on communication strategies such as body language ("Show me"), and asking for assistance in English. Wood (1988) points out the importance of scaffolding children's learning how to learn, as mere exposure to strategies will not lead to their adoption and generalisation. Without highlighting the eventual possibilities of transfer, strategies may remain at the level of "tips to cope with the system" (Ellis, 1995, p. 196) instead of fulfilling their role as vehicles that help to regulate the process of learning.

6.2.2 Relying on previous knowledge

Examples of classroom interaction also suggest that children processed new information while relating it to previous assumptions. Therefore, awareness of the story frame in general (Fox, 1993, pp. 74-76), and familiarity with the pre-text in the case of subversive versions of classical stories appeared to scaffold children's understanding and thus supported linguistic recognition. Examples are provided in Extracts 6, 7 and 8.

The following interaction occurred while T1 was reading *A Dark, Dark Tale* (Brown, 1992), a story which invites readers in a sequence of dark spaces (wood, house, stairs, corridor, room, cupboard and box) which open up one after the other, and reinforce a feeling of suspense. The eight-year-olds' guesses referring to what they would find in the dark, dark house are based on previous knowledge of stories defined by the nocturnal imagery (Durand, 1969):

Ex 6

1 T: Open the door and go in. Who is in the house?... Ki lesz a házban? [Who is going to be in the house?]

2 S1: Szörny, szörny! [Monster, monster!]

3 S2: Monster.

4 S3: Mint a másik könyvben. [Like in the other book.]

5 S4: A bagoly. [The owl.]

The predictions made by the children reveal that they are already trained in frequently employed literary conventions such as the negative connotations carried by the images of the black cat and the dark, labyrinthic house, and they also betray an awareness of the morphology of stories (Propp, 1970): a mysterious place will usually ask for an unusual character, or at least one which carries ill omens.

Turn 4 (*"Like in the other book"*) makes it explicit that children rely on previous literacy experience, in this case on the previously shared *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963). In another instance, the ten-year-olds taught by T1 also made successful predictions while listening to *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig.* The dialogue between the pig and the wolves was the first one of its kind in the story, which shows that the learners relied on what they had already known from the classical version:

Ex. 7

1 T: The pig knocked at the door.

2 S1: "Who is it?"

3 T: "Who is it?" "It's the big bad pig. Little wolves, little wolves, let me come in." The wolves said...

4 SS: "No!"

5 S2: Azt hiszi a farkasok nem ismerik a mesét. [He thinks the wolves don't know the story.]

6 S3: Ezt a mesét már ismerjük, disznó! [We've heard this tale before, pig!] (in a deep voice)

It appears that ten-year-olds not only relied on their schemata of pigs and wolves in interaction, but were also aware of the ironical tone in the story. They themselves made ironical remarks in turns 5-6, where they explicitly refer to the original pre-text, and imply that the pig is silly enough not to take into consideration what seems to be common knowledge about pigs and wolves. It is also worth noting that while reading the original story children show a certain fondness for the little pigs, as soon as the roles are reversed, and the

pig is depicted as an aggressor, children no longer perceive him as the cute little animal it used to be. The learner's word choice in turn 6 reinforces this: instead of the word *"malac"* [pig], which refers to a young animal, and which appears in the original story of the *Three Little Pigs*, S3 prefers to use the word *"disznó"* [pig], which has harsher connotations. That children no longer take sides with the aggressor pig was also obvious when teaching two of the very young learners (Anna and Orsi): whenever it came to acting out the story, they all wanted to be the white wolf, while I was invariably requested to play the part of the big bad pig.

Children's reliance on story schemata is further reinforced by their comments in the following example, where T3 is reading *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* (Kerr, 1998) to twelve-year-olds whom she later described as fairly open and motivated pupils. The extract depicts the beginning of the story, when Sophie and her mum are having tea, and do not even suspect that a tiger will soon join them.

Ex. 8

1 T: Suddenly, there was a ring at the door. Who's that?

2 S1: Grandmother.

3 S2: Uncle.

4 S3: Aunt.

5 S4: Megvan! A szomszéd! [I've got it! It's the neighbour!]

6 T: No.

7 S5: A detective.

8 T: OK, I'll help. It was an animal.

9 S6: A cat.

10 S4: Te hülye, hogy kopoghatna egy macska? [How could a cat knock on a door, silly.]

11 S7: Miért ne? [Why not?]

12 S6: A dog.

Again, this extract depicts learners in trying to predict what comes next on the basis of their background knowledge. Although there are no explicit references to the books in the background, children betray traces of previous experiences of stories where cats and dogs knock and come in. It is worth noting that although this suggestion is turned down ("How could cats knock on doors, silly."), there is instantly someone who legitimizes reliance on knowledge gained from stories (turn 11), and undaunted, S6 tries "a dog."

The extracts above also draw attention to code-switching as a compensation strategy in instances when language learners are not familiar with vernacular forms in the target language. In order to make spontaneous and colloquial remarks, they resort to the vernacular, which in context of the foreign language class turns out to be the L1 (e.g., "Te hülye…").

6.2.3 Exploring the subtext

A significant amount of comments made by the four young children (aged 5-7) reveal their attempts to explore the multiple layers of meaning inherent in the picture books we read. Due to the limited language proficiency of the children involved, and the informal rapport between us, children felt free to ask and comment on in Hungarian whatever they felt important. This also explains why these sessions provided more opportunities to track down children's ideas about the stories we shared, than the more formal EFL lessons, where carrying on the interaction in the target language was a priority.

Whenever children's comments related to attempts to explore the subtext, or referred to their attitudes to literacy, I also chose to respond in the L1. I did this partly in order to maintain a natural atmosphere and elicit more comments on their attitudes to the book and the story-reading sessions in general. On the other hand, these remarks revealed profound intuitions about the meaning of stories, and I felt it important to support children in articulating these attempts to interpret the stories more clearly. Thus, these brief interactions presented good opportunities to work within children's zones of proximal development, and encourage further thinking in terms of concepts related to the culture of literacy.

The discussions carried on with the four children support the points made by Perkins (1994 cited by Arizpe, 2006, p. 41) with reference to works of art. As I have shown in Chapter Four (4.1), looking at picture books involves wide-spectrum cognition, that is visual processing, analytical thinking, posing questions and verbal reasoning. As such, picture books develop cognitive abilities including the use of language, and, as shown below, they also encourage multiconnectedness, by allowing us to relate to other contexts of human experience.

The books which proved to be most provocative in this sense are subversive versions of classical tales: *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas & Oxenbury, 1993),

Little Wolf and the Giant (Porter, 1989), *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch & Martchenko, 1980), and *Snow White in New York* (French, 1986). By developing contrary to cultural expectations, these stories encourage re-thinking some of the ideologies (i.e. personal and cultural assumptions) attached to traditional fairy tales. Elizabeth in *The Paper Bag Princess* inverts all classical paradigms when she rescues her prince, and finally decides not to marry him. Equally provocative, *Little Wolf and the Giant* tells the story of Little Wolf who, while fretting before his visit to his grandmother in the middle of the forest, is reassured by his mother that there are no giants in the wood. Still a little scared, he sets off and can soon hear the giant's footsteps behind him. Little Wolf does not slow down at all. He sails right over the obstacles, but is finally grabbed by a huge pair of hands: the giant has been trying to catch up with him and return him the cupcake he lost at the edge of the forest. They decide to go and have tea together. Little Wolf, although no longer afraid of giants, can't help wondering whether there might be any witches in the wood. "Of course not, silly," says the giant. The last picture shows a witch picking up the bag that the giant has dropped.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the "counter-cultural" versions of fairy tales (Zipes, 1983, p. 179) interrogate stereotypes related to gender roles or representatives of authority, and by doing so, they encourage approaching traditional fairy-tale discourse in a creative way. Children's ongoing remarks and queries support this point. The examples presented below show that these unorthodox versions of classical fairy tales challenged the children's previous experience related to character functions and the structure of the story, and thus stimulate children's imaginative and critical faculties. Thus, as "we read our lives into" fairy tales (Zipes, 1997, p. 1) and sort out our lives on the basis of these models, literature becomes a source of questioning the world.

In what follows, I will focus on three aspects related to the potential of picture books to develop critical thinking skills: (1) challenging cultural stereotypes, (2) encouraging literate behaviour including learning to talk about reading and writing, and (3) training in visual literacy.

6.2.3.1 Challenging cultural assumptions

Little Wolf and the Giant seemed to challenge children's previous experience related to both character functions and the structure of the story. Contrary to all expectations, the giant proves to be extremely friendly, and there is a strong hint that the witch might turn out to be

harmless as well. However, the question whether the witch is good or bad is left open, thus contradicting Western conventions related to story closure and inviting reader response. Looking at the last picture, where the witch picks up the bag that the giant lost, Anna (7) and Orsi (6) engaged in a interpretation of the possible final move, and implicitly, about the witch's character. Orsi was influenced by shared cultural assumptions about witches in general, while Anna obviously relied on bottom-up processing of the text as well:

Extract 9

1 O: Szerintem nem adja oda neki a táskáját. [I don't think she will give him the bag.]

2 A: Szerintem igen. [I think she will.]

3 O: A boszorkány, á, soha. Nem olyanok. [The witch, no, never. They're not like that.]

4 A: De az óriás is jó volt. [But the giant also turned out to be good.]

The dialogue above sounds ironical in the sense that Orsi tends to behave like Little Wolf himself, when she has to unlearn the shared cultural assumptions about witches, by rethinking fairy tales and some of their teachings. It seems, however, that at least one of the morals promoted by the story was scored: one of the audience questioned the validity of cultural teachings and allowed the possibility for some other truths to emerge about witches and giants.

Acting out *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* turned out to create difficulties in that out of the black, the grey and the white wolves, both children wanted to be the white one. While all little wolves figured as equally positive characters in the story, the children explained their preference for the white wolf claiming that it was the nicest, followed by the grey one and finally by the black one on their list. After repeated rows over the cast, at Orsi's suggestion a light blue wolf was included, thus making room for two 'super positive' heroes. I was invariably requested to play the part of the big bad pig.

The creativity shown by the children in including a new character may have been stimulated by the surprising new version they were exposed to. However, the main impulse seems to have been given by the power of previous experience (in terms of cultural stereotypes) according to which white is associated with innocent, while black invariably stands for wicked. Bettleheim's point (1991) about the polarized character of children's thinking is worth considering in this respect: children liked all little wolves, and they were

happy about the conversion of the big bad pig; still, neither of them was ever willing to identify with any other wolf but the white one, to say nothing of the pig.

Another example of how unorthodox narratives support children in re-thinking what has so far been taken for granted is shown by the way Kati (8) and Zsuzsi (6) received *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch & Martchenko, 1980). Socialized from previous exposure to fairy tales into the idea that princes are bound to save princesses and marry them, both are slightly taken aback by the reversed pattern in which Elizabeth sets off to save prince Ronald from the dragon, the prince is rude, and finally she decides not to marry him:

Ex. 10

1 Zs: És akkor kihez megy férjhez? [And then who does she marry?]

2 R: Úgy néz ki, hogy ebben a mesében nem megy férjhez. [It seems that she doesn't marry in this story.]

3 Zs: És nem szomorú, hogy nem megy férjhez a királyfihoz? [And isn't she sad that she doesn't marry the prince?]

4 K: Lehet, hogy nem is igazi királyfi. [Maybe he isn't a real prince at all.]

5 R: Honnan gondolod? [Why do you think so?]

6 K: Ők nem így szoktak viselkedni. [They don't usually behave like this.]

7 Zs: Igen, ők mentik meg. [Yes, they save them.]

8 K: Meg szépen beszélnek a királylánnyal. Azt nézik, milyen a szíve, nem hogy milyen ruhában van. [And they talk nicely to princesses. They look at their heart, not at the clothes they wear.]

Turns 1 and 3 show the impact of previous experience with fairy tales in which heroes get happily married, and become masters of their existence as kings and queens (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 8). In turns 4, 6 and 8 Kati constructs an understanding of the new story based on a comparison with previous narratives, and gives evidence of deeper insights when she indirectly evaluates Ronald's behaviour. In the following dialogue, which occurred right after sharing the story, she also shows awareness of the two markedly different patterns in this genre: the "strange" kind and the "right" kind, and she appears open to accommodate both:

Extract 11

1 K: Azért furcsa mese, nem? Jó, hogy van ilyen, de az is jó, amikor rendesen van. [But it's still a strange story, isn't it? It's good to have one like this, but it's also good to have the right kind.]

2 Zs: Nekem ez jobban tetszik. Én is ilyen papírzacskót viselnék. Hát, igaz, hogy egy kicsit csúnya… de azért szép. [I like this one better. I would also wear a paper bag like this. Well, it is a little ugly… but it's nice.]

This extract also indicates how reading picture books may support children in shaping and articulating their ideas. Zsuzsi usually likes opposing her family, in particular her sister, and in this dialogue she finds a good opportunity to indicate her taste for the subversive (turn 2), while she also displays the thinking that underlies original choices. Turn 2 also comes in support of Zipes' (1997) claim that children's literature, in particular fairy tale discourse which develops contrary to cultural expectations, encourages original thinking, and thus offers an alternative to consumerism in society (see Chapter Four, 3.2). This is also shown in the following dialogue, which occurred a few days after reading the *The Paper Bag Princess*, when Zsuzsi brought up the issue again on the way home from kindergarten:

Ex. 12

1 Zs: De szerinted kihez megy férjhez? [But who do you think she will marry?]

2 R: Ki? [Who?]

3 Zs: Hogy is hívták? [What was her name?]

4 K: Elizabeth.

5 Zs: Igen, kihez megy férjhez Elizabeth? [Yes, who will Elizabeth marry?]

6 R: Nem tudom, Zsuzsi… Szerinted? [I don't know, Zsuzsi. What do you think?]

7 K: Olyan királyfihoz, akinek az tetszik benne, hogy… különleges. [A prince who likes her because she is… special.]

8 Zs: Igen, és én se mennék hozzá. És nekem se fehér ruhám lesz. Nem szeretem azokat a fehér drótos ruhákat. [Yes, and I would not marry him either. And I won't have a white dress either. I don't like those white wired dresses.)

Turn 1 suggests that Zsuzsi is still a little bothered by the unexpected turn in the story, and therefore she creates opportunities to talk about it. Her concern with the ideas in the book is also suggestive of the deep impact that reading can make, as shown by Deacon and Murphey (2001). While in turn 6 I left the choices open in order to encourage the children to articulate

their understanding, Kati's response in turn 7 shows that she has perceived the princess as different from conventionally depicted princesses, and labels her "special," in tune with the story pattern perceived as "strange" (Extract 11, turn 1).

Finally, in turn 8, just like in Extract 11, turn 2, Zsuzsi again expresses her sympathy for the subversive moves of the princess. Her identification with Elizabeth seems to help her articulate her own ideas which go against cultural expectations related to wedding dresses (turn 8), and is a good example of how young learners may learn to question shared assumptions, construct new understandings and thus develop critical thinking through reading picture books.

6.2.3.2 Talking about reading and writing

Drawing the suggested ending engaged the children's narrative faculties as well. As Anna (7) was drawing the picture of the witch knocking on the door while all the other characters were having tea, she went on developing the story:

Ex. 13
1 R: Is that the witch?
2 A: Pszt... nem szabad megtudják, hogy ki az. [Hush... they mustn't guess who it is.]
3 R: Miért nem? [Why not?]
4 A: Mert az úgy olyan vicces. A könyvben is az benne a vicces. [Because it's so funny like this. This is what makes it funny in the book as well.]

Anna's response to the story reveals the perception of the element of irony as the main narrative device applied in the story, that is, a shared understanding between the narrator and the implied reader concerning something hidden from the characters. In this sense it seems that children are able to perceive and critically reflect upon conventions of writing and to rely upon them in the process of building up their own stories. Similarly, when asked why she preferred the scenes she decided to draw above all the rest, Anna was able to articulate the meaning of events in the story:

Ex. 14
1 R: Miért pont ezeket a képeket rajzoltad le? [Why did you choose to draw these pictures?]

2 A: Mert itt visszahozza, amit elvesztett, és a másikon is valami jót tett, aki először félelmetes volt. [Because here she brings back what he has lost, and in the other picture too, someone who has been frightening before does something good.]

It appears that besides stimulating creativity and supporting children in the process of thinking about the world (e.g., considering cause and effect relationships, reconsidering previous assumptions) using authentic picture books promotes not only literacy skills, but also literate skills (Heath, 1992): learning to talk about reading and writing.

6.2.3.3 Visual literacy

As discussed earlier, learning to read the pictures involves learning the *conventions* of representing the actual world, such as stylized forms or the connotations of colours. In Chapter Four (3.3, 3.4 and 3.5) I claimed that viewers have to learn how to interpret or 'read' a picture just as much as a verbal text, and that learning is part of acculturation (Stephens, 1992). The following examples support this claim, and suggest that when making sense of visual representations, one relies on cultural assumptions.

The following dialogues occurred when my two children and I were reading *Snow White in New York*, which sets the classical story in the 1920s, with period ingredients (e.g., seven jazz-men instead of the dwarfs, and cruising off on a glorious honeymoon at the end). At the sight the stepmother painted in suggestive Art Deco style and harsh dark colours, five-year-old Zsuzsi remarked:

Ex. 15
1 Zs: Látszik, hogy gonosz. [You can tell she's wicked.]
2 R: Honnan? [How?]
3 Zs: A színeiből. [By the colours.]
4 R: Miért [Why?]
5 Zs: Csupa fekete és vérszínű. [She's all black and blood-coloured.]
6 R: Ha jó lenne, milyen lenne? [What would she look like if she was good?]

7 Zs: Ilyen rózsaszín, meg pasztell. [Pink, like this one here, and pastel.] (points at the picture of Snow White in pink, white and golden) Én is ilyen színekben járok, ugye? [These are the kind of colours I like wearing, too.]

8 R: Ez azt jelenti, hogy te is jó vagy? [Does this mean you are also good?]

9 Zs: Szerintem… [I guess so…]

In the extract above Zsuzsi discusses the characters based on the connotations of colours. While anthropological literature (Durand, 1966) suggests that our understanding of symbols (including colours) has to do with a deep, polarized and archetypical level of representation, according to which the world is organized in terms of the symbols of the day and the symbols of the night, it is also true that she has already grown into certain cultural conventions of representing the world. Her correct and natural use of the term "pastel" also suggests that she is used to attending discussions on such topics. Thus, both her previous knowledge of the Grimm's' *Snow White*, and her understanding and experience of the use of colours in books, suggested this interpretation. It is worth noting that Anna and Orsi also appear to have been socialized into what colours mean in the Western code, when they refuse to identify with two of the three little good wolves, as long as they are black and grey and both want to play the part of the white wolf.

In turn 7, Zsuzsi makes a hint at her identification with the positive character, which reinforces Bettleheim's (1991, pp. 9-10) point that children identify with certain heroes because they find them attractive, not because they necessarily want to be virtuous. However, it appears that this identification makes them start operate on the level of language with abstract ethical concepts such as good and evil, and promote an understanding of these concepts through social interaction. Finally, Zsuzsi concludes the conversation with the implicit idea that in her case too, wearing light colours can leave no doubt as to her being a good girl.

Another example for the potential of picture books to nurture visual literacy was provided in the same context by Kati (7). When asked about their favourite pictures in the book, Kati chose to comment on a double page depicting only the hand of the wicked stepmother, wearing a skull ring and handing a cocktail to Snow White, whose hand is also shown.

Ex. 16

1 K: Én ezt szeretem, mert csak a kezük látszik, és mégis lehet tudni, hogy ki kicsoda. És a mostoha kezén látszik a gyűrű. És onnan is látszik, hogy milyen gonosz. [I like this one, because you can only see their hands and still you know who is who. And on the stepmother's hand you can see the ring. And that too tells you how wicked she is.]

2 R: A gyűrűről? [The ring?]

3 K: … a kalóz zászlón is ilyesmi van, és ők is gonoszok. Ezt használják a képeken, amikor azt akarják, hogy tudjuk, hogy valaki gonosz? [There is a similar one on pirates' flags, and they are wicked too. Is this used when they want to let us know that somebody is evil?]

These comments are significant in that they illustrate the process of growing into the conventions of suggesting and representing ideas through pictures. The discussion reveals that Kati makes sense of the representation by applying her knowledge gained from previous literacy experience in a new context. This flexibility in the way she applies her knowledge of representations in other contexts, and the fact that she verbalizes her discovery, seem to be necessary steps in the process of developing expertise in reading pictures and talking about literacy.

6.3 "Funny" comments: coming up to peers' expectations

A significant amount of comments made by the students in the L1 suggest that twelve-year-olds tended to make their comments also because they wanted to appear cool in front of their peers. This relates to Nikolov's (1994) observations referring to the changes in the teacher's role across age-groups. Nikolov claims that while young children tend to accept the teacher as a model, around the age of 10-11 they want to come up to peers' expectations rather than that of the teacher. Therefore, even when they have the necessary knowledge in the target language, they tend to add their comments in the mother tongue, which functions as the vernacular style in the classroom context.

The brief extract that follows shows that while students are able to express t ideas in English, they also wants to make his statement funny by adding the vernacular term in Hungarian. While T1 was presenting the *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* to a group of twelve-year-olds, one of the pupils likened the lurking pig to Santa Claus. At this point, T1 promptly asked pupils to compare the two characters. S1's comment comes in response to the teacher's question:

Ex. 17

1 T: What else has Santa Claus that the pig doesn't have?

2 S1: Santa Claus has ... false teeth. Protkó. (Vernacular form for:) [False teeth.] (looks at peers and grins)

3 T: How do you know?

4 S1: He's old.

S1's addition of the Hungarian vernacular form for 'false teeth,' although he knows the correct answer in English, is a good example of learners' tendency to make comments for the sake of appearing funny in front of their peers and coming up to their expectations. In this sense it is important that teachers build on students' off-lesson talk, that is comments which do not strictly relate to the task-in-question, but explore their social and linguistic potential. Ignoring them implies not only letting go of communicative possibilities other than those inherent in the lesson material, but may also contribute to developing a discourse which is "counterproductive for classroom learning" (Pennington, 1998,   p. 7). Making student comments part of the institutional discourse is certainly not the policy promoted by Hungarian education in general, where, as I will show later, teachers tend to ignore off-task comments, often for the sake of imposing teacher authority.

The wish to affirm their identities in front of their peers may also explain the preference of twelve-year-olds to work in groups, ask peers for assistance rather than the teacher (Nikolov, 2002), and also to direct comments to one another, without involving the teacher. This was mostly the case with twelve-year-olds who made abundant comments in the L1, which they then refused to repeat when T4 asked them to do so. Ex. 18, with the teacher retelling *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*, depicts twelve-year-old learners reinforcing group solidarity by making rather subversive comments:

Ex. 18

1 T: And Sophie's mum said: Sophie dear, go and open the door.

2 S1: (whispering to peer) Kis hülye kinyitja. [She'll open, the little twit.]

3 S2: (in a loud whisper meant to be heard by peers:) Jaj, ne nyisd ki Zsófi, mer' a cukros bácsi lesz! [Don't open, Sophie, 'cause it's the (approx.:) bogey-man…]

4 T: What?

5 S2: Semmi. [Nothing.]

In Chapter Four (3.2) I referred to Whitehead's (1995) treatment of subversion as an instinctive deep play with a therapeutic role. In this sense, children produce subversive versions of traditional rhymes, games or behaviour patterns in order to discharge anxiety and to challenge adult power (Whitehead, 1995, p. 54-55). In the extract above the pupils challenge the social norms of the school environment on multiple levels. First, they interrupt the teacher's discourse, which, in the Hungarian school context goes against expected student behaviour. Second, they make their comments in the mother tongue during the English lesson, when they are supposed to use the target language. Third, they refuse to cooperate with the teacher (turns 2 and 5). Finally, they refer to concepts and use words which are considered taboo in an educational context. This is the case with the word *"hülye"* [twit], and also with *"cukros bácsi,"* which approximately translates as bogey-man, but also includes pedophile connotations.

The data collected in classrooms suggest that boys tend to adopt a more provocative and sometimes rougher humorous style than girls. This is well exemplified by the extract above, where comments in turns 2 and 3 were made by boys. It has also been noticed that while all students appear interested and involved when sharing picture books, boys tend to express their involvement loudly, and with more vigour than girls. The following extract is the continuation of Ex. 18, when T3 is sharing *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* with twelve-year-olds.

Ex. 19

1 T: Sophie opened the door, and saw a huge tiger. What did the tiger say?

2 Ss: Hello!

3 S1: Bejöhetek? [May I come in?]

4 T: Yes, may I come in?

4 S2: Itthon van anyukád? [Is your mummy home?]

5 T: In English, Tomi. Is …

6 S2: Is mother … home?

7 T: Is mother, or: Is your mummy home? Well, the tiger said to Sophie…

8 S3: (shouting) Csókolj meg, vagy megeszlek! [Kiss me or I'll eat you up!] (peers and teacher laugh)

While S1 and S2 try to predict the tiger's opening remark based on their schemata of "someone knocking at the door," S3 suggests an unexpected "Kiss me, or I'll eat you up!" Probably rooted in S3's memories of stories where wild animals threaten to devour little girls, the remark in turn 8 sounds funny not only because it touches upon a taboo topic of the twelve-year-olds, but also because it is a combination of a common motif in classical cautionary tales, with something which seems out of place in the context of this children's story.

I need to add here that when I quoted this extract to university students participating in a course on how to apply children's literature, they found the comment in turn 8 hilarious. As to why this was so, one of the explanations they gave was that while these words may sound acceptable from wolves (!), or other common animals in European folk and fairy tales, tigers (especially the tiger depicted in the book), are not expected to play this role. They also agreed that the comment sounded like a passionate line from an old movie, and this again did not match one's expectations about children's books.

6.4 Teacher's perceived attitudes to students' comments and underlying beliefs

The collected data show that teachers' attitudes to comments vary: while some teachers consequently build on students' comments, others tend to ignore them. In what follows, I will present examples for both strategies. First, I provide examples of teachers' ignoring students' spontaneous contribution, and explore their possible reasons for doing so. Then, I present situations where teachers choose to react to children's comments, and thus create opportunities to scaffold their language learning.

6.4.1 Ignoring comments

Some of the teachers were observed or claimed to have found students' comments enervating, and therefore rejected them, or simply ignored them. As shown above, the reasons for this reside partly in the status attributed to the mother tongue in the EFL lesson. Although appealing to the L1 may go against teachers' explicit beliefs about teaching, classroom interaction studies reveal that both teachers and pupils resort extensively to the L1 for a variety of reasons (Nikolov, 1997). Observations also suggest that while teachers tolerate their own use of Hungarian in the classroom and are sometimes not even aware of it, they tend to adopt a far more prescriptive attitude when learners are concerned, and focus on what

language learners use much rather than on what the learners say in the L1 and what this reveals about their meaning making process.

One of the examples in this sense occurred when T5 was reading *I Think my Mum's a Witch* to a group of nine-year-olds. After brainstorming on animals associated with witches, the children received the book with visible excitement. The first page already, with the picture of the witch wearing a pair of blue clogs, elicited a spontaneous comment, which was instantly turned down by the teacher.

Ex. 20

1 T: (reading the story) I think my mum's a witch. She has a white cat, but…

2 S1: Pont ilyen fapapucsot szeretnék! [This is exactly the kind of clogs I'd like to have…]

3 T: Most ne a fapapucsot nézd, hanem arra figyelj, amit olvasok! [Stop looking at the clogs now, and listen to what I am reading!]

Although apparently off-task, the comment in turn 2 is a sign of the speaker's spontaneous interest, which is otherwise seldom expressed in the framework of a lesson. It would be, as such a rare opportunity for the teacher pick up the topic nominated by the student, and thus both indicate interest and offer input in the target language, which is memorable because it was required by the students. Instead, the teacher's reaction sounds firm and prescriptive, and redirects students' attention to the only authority which has the right to nominate topics in the lesson.

As it turned out from the follow-up discussion with the teacher, this was indeed one of the underlying reasons that made her discourage students' comments: she believed that if they kept on "chipping in Hungarian," she would never get anywhere with her plans *("Ha megengedném, hogy mindenki mondja ami eszébe jut, soha nem jutnánk egyről a kettőre.")* On the other hand, she also admitted that she was unfamiliar with the word "clogs" in English, and felt that without knowing the vocabulary item she could not react in any way to the comment. The next example will reveal some more about teachers' compensation strategies when they lack terms in the target language. As shown in turn 7 of Extract 21, the teacher spontaneously resorts to Hungarian when it comes to what she senses to be a discipline problem. This suggests that teachers may also resort to the L1 when they feel they do not have the appropriate language, or that they may lack the vernacular style in it.

In Extract 21 the teacher deliberately misses the opportunity to build on students' comments, because of the underlying beliefs she has about the lesson frame and about the role

of the learners. When reading the story of the tiger who came to tea and then turned out to eat and drink everything from the tea table, the cooker, the fridge and the cupboard, T6 asked the children to predict where the tiger went next. As it turned out from the follow-up discussion with the teacher, in all the three groups where she read the book, she got the same response as to where the tiger went next. She also acknowledged that she got angrier each time she heard the repeated comment. Extract 21 was recorded with twelve-year-old pupils:

Ex. 21
1 T: Where did the tiger go next?
2 SS: Vécére. [To the toilet.]
3 T: No….Where did the tiger go?
4 SS: A vécére. [To the toilet.]
5 T: No! No!

6 S1: Szerintem is a vécére. [I also think he went to the toilet.]
7 T: Elég. [Stop it.] The tiger went away. (turns the page) He said: "Good bye."

Although the children's suggestion sounds logical, with the tiger having eaten so much, and although it seems like a brilliant opportunity to teach vocabulary which is usually not presented in textbooks (e.g., go to the bathroom, flush the loo), the teacher avoids to react to it. After her teaching she confessed that the remark made her angry, as she thought it was an inappropriate comment to be made in the lesson. To her misfortune, however, the more she tried to ignore it, the more children insisted on it, and the more it distracted children's attention. By ignoring the vernacular discourse, the teacher let go of valuable communicative possibilities, and missed the potential cross-curricular implications of the story in terms of biology. Also, she unwillingly contributed to developing a discourse which is "counterproductive for classroom learning" (Pennington, 1998, p. 7).

While proponents of socioconstructivist theories suggest that effective learning and motivation are always socially embedded, Lantolf and Genung (2002) note that ineffective learning is also socially imbedded, as "it is not imbedding that makes learning effective; it is the quality of the social framework and the activity carried out within that framework that determine the learning outcomes" (Lantolf & Genung, 2002, p. 176). The extract above depicts an interaction between the teacher and her students which has not achieved the results it could have produced, due to the quality of the social interaction. Decentering on the part of

the teacher, and perceiving students' needs conveyed through their spontaneous comments, would have allowed the teacher to work within their zone of proximal development. In turns 2-7 this has not occurred.

6.4.2 Allowing for teacher scaffolding

The examples presented above suggest that by the spontaneous comments they make, children indicate their main points of interest related to the story, while also showing what they can make out from the teachers' discourse, and the gaps in their foreign language competence. As such, students' comments allow teachers to provide comprehensible input in the target language, on topics nominated by learners.

It appears then that building on students' comments is a mediating action which makes sense in the Vygotskian framework, where learning is seen as an essentially social activity. An ecological perspective on education also acknowledges "the extent to which people in classroom situations become environments and … resources for one another" (van Dam, 2002, p. 238), and thus generate new content and language. In this sense, teachers' responsiveness to students' contribution is an essential support in their development.

The emphasis on the interactive nature of learning has particular relevance to the "inherently social world of the primary classroom" (Jarvis & Robinson, 1997, p. 213). The following examples show how, instead of being seen as a nuisance, students' spontaneous contribution is seen as an opportunity for negotiating meaning and mediate learning. Extract 22 provides a good example for the way the teacher scaffolds students' language learning, by responding to the comments which were only meant to be funny. The following interaction occurred after sharing *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, and T1 tried to involve twelve-year-olds into predicting what the pig would do in the house of the three little wolves:

Ex. 22

1 T: And what did they do in the house?

2 S1: Watched TV.

3 T: Maybe they watched TV. What else did they do?

4 S2: Megették a malacot. [They ate the pig.]

5 T: Oh no! They didn't eat the pig. They were friends; you don't eat your friend, do you. Who's your friend? Is Tamás your friend?

6 S2: Yes.

7 T: And do you eat him for dinner?

8 S2: No. Csupa csont és bőr. [He's only skin and bones anyway.]

9 T: Oh, is this why? Because he's only skin and bones?

10 Ss: (laugh)

11 T: Let me see you, Tamás. Why, he isn't just skin and bones, look at his muscles.

12 S2: He eats spenót. Mint Popeye. [He eats spinach. Like Popeye.]

13 T: Spinach is healthy. What did the little wolves and the pig eat?

By linking S2's vernacular to the institutional discourse (turns 5, 9 and 12), the teacher maintains interest, and avoids the development of a counter-discourse which may hinder learning. But more importantly, she indirectly indicates to students her willingness to involve them in the construction of knowledge, and by this, she invites further interaction. Thus, the teacher creates conditions for the emergence of language in interaction, which, according to research, is more valuable than environmental language, that is mere exposure to language for the following reasons: it focuses attention more than environmental language, it compels the speaker to make the input comprehensible, and it elicits immediate feedback and invites listeners to use the language (Blok, 1999). This is reinforced by turn 12, where S3 spontaneously responds to the apparently off-task comment made by the teacher, and thus, not only that he gives evidence of understanding teacher talk, but also potentially initiates a new turn in the conversation.

The extract above also supports Kramsch's claim (2002, p. 2) that mediated action leaves space for newness and transformation. Unlike in the examples where teachers repressed all initiatives on the part of students to strike up a sensible conversation, the teacher in Extract 22 appears to be responsive to students' humour and relies on their comments in order to support their learning.

Conclusion

The analyzed data suggest that children spontaneously comment in their mother tongue while sharing picture books in English. Some of the comments included in the data express children's enthusiasm for the pictures and the stories read to them. Another category of comments reflects students' spontaneous attempts to make meaning of the story told or read

in English, as well as of the subtext of the multi-layered picture books. The comments gained indicate that participants made sense of stories based on the pictures, on their schemata of stories and on the teachers' discourse. Findings which emerged from the study of the four very young learners also suggest that the children commented in order to sort out things related to the story, and to literacy in general. Their comments allow insights into the thinking processes that underlie the comprehension of narratives, such as making sense of the cultural conventions of writing and visual representation. Finally, a significant part of comments were made for the sake of being funny, and point to students' desire to come up to peers' expectations. It appears therefore, that besides their importance in creating a stress-free atmosphere which facilitates acquisition, funny comments are crucial in children's socialisation process, which occurs through language.

Teachers' responsiveness to students' comments turned out to be a key issue in creating opportunities for the emergence of meaning in interaction. In the cases when students' vernacular was integrated in the institutional discourse, comments turned out to be important resources for meaning making and maintaining interest. Building on students' remarks in English offered opportunities for teachers to scaffold learning, and involve students in creating meaning.

On the other hand, the reasons why some of the participant teachers discouraged students' reliance on comments in the L1 reflected their beliefs about teaching and learning and about the role of teachers and students in the teaching-learning process. By ignoring or turning down students' comments, the teachers missed on opportunities which would otherwise have provided them access to the zone "where minds meet" (Cummins, 1994) and where meaning is constructed in interaction.

CONCLUSIONS

My dissertation aimed to provide a framework for understanding literacy and second language proficiency development as well as teacher development as integrated processes which inform each other in complex ways. The epistemological paradigm underlying the framework I proposed is one of situated cognition, taking into account the role of social relationships in organizing thinking (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) and in constructing meaning. Thus, both literacy development and teacher development are conceptualized as complex, relational activities which are indissociable from the social context, and from participants' personal, professional and cultural history (Kramsch, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Dam, 2002).

In this interactionist paradigm, teacher learning is seen as constructed in a dialogic process, involving teachers' community of practice, learners, close communities, and the cultural artefacts which mediate learning (Lantolf, 2000). Unlike in previous models for conceptualizing teacher cognition, in this reflective model theory and practice are not treated separately (Wallace, 1991, p. 10), but they appear to continuously inform each other in order to create a coherent rationale underlying teaching. Thus, classrooms become legitimate spaces for lifelong teacher learning (Johnson, 2006, p. 237).

The other main focus of this dissertation, literacy development, including L2, is also conceptualized as emerging from the layered interaction of learners and their environment, and thus, integrates linguistic processes with cognitive, affective and social perspectives.

As in this framework higher cognitive development is seen to be achieved in collaboration with someone more expert (Vygotsky, 1978), or with the help of cultural artefacts (Lantolf, 2000), the role of educators in scaffolding literacy development is crucial. While linear models of learning predicted a cause-and-effect relationship between teaching-input and learning-output, and therefore they perceived literacy development as a result of direct instruction, an interactionist perspective emphasises the need for teachers to understand and model reading as an act in which meaning is constructed in interaction. This implies, for

example, that teachers are aware of and build on the uses and value attached to literacy at home and in the community, and that they integrate learners' reading choices and ideas in their teaching (Heath, 1982, 1994; Nikolov, 2000). However, this understanding of learning and literacy as a dynamic process emerges from constant reflections on teachers' practices, and from their effort to bring into alignment implicit and explicit theories on learning. Unless teachers make sense of teaching and learning in an interactionist model, where learners' development appears indissociable from teacher cognition, they are not likely to develop contextually appropriate ways to scaffold learners' literacy. The dialogic patterning of literacy construction also implies that in this process new meanings emerge for learners and teachers alike. In this sense, teacher development is not only a prerequisite for learners' literacy development, but also, by supporting their students' literacy development, teachers enrich their understanding of language and literacy: thus, developing learners' literacy becomes a means to scaffold teachers' development over time.

In this model (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002), narratives have emerged as powerful media to integrate teachers' and students' literacy development over time. Narratives were discussed from two perspectives in my dissertation. First, I suggested that by their potential to construct meaning and build identity and relationships (Bruner, 1987, 1996; Horsdal, 2006; László, 1999; Ricoeur, 1981, 1984; Schank & Abelson, 1977, 1995), authentic narratives scaffold the process of growing into literate behaviour and promote an understanding of learning as a layered, dynamic and relational process. From the other perspective, narratives were discussed as methods of introspection: teachers' accounts of teaching and learning experiences revealed their perceptions of educational processes embedded in a broad social-historical and cultural context. In this sense, teachers' narratives appeared to be both created by culture, and by their potential to shape teachers' practice, they created culture (Bruner, 1987).

In my empirical research I applied the interactionist model (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002) in order to explore second language and literacy development and teacher development in a framework which brings together cognitive, affective, social and cultural aspects of learning. On the one hand, I examined how Hungarian children and teachers develop intrinsic motivation to read while sharing picture books in English, and how they negotiate meaning in interaction and build their understandings of books, cultures and language. On the other hand, I explored how narratives, both as authentic teaching materials and as genuine accounts of teaching experience interact with teachers' development. I relied on teachers' narratives to gain insights into how teachers make sense of their teaching and the

underlying assumptions, and thus, construct their identities as teachers in interaction with the community of practice.

The results of my research underpin the interconnectedness of language and literacy development with teacher development, and emphasise the need to see them both embedded in the social and cultural context. The studies support, for example, that teachers' decisions and the classroom processes they engender are influenced by the shared cultural assumptions about what promotes learning. This is the case with teachers' beliefs about the role of narratives in their lessons. Thus, despite the fact that teachers are aware of the benefits of narratives boosting proficiency in language and literacy and their own professional development, there is a tendency to identify narratives as a potential threat in that they may take away time from direct instruction, which teachers have been socialized into believing to be a more efficient way of teaching. This belief partly originates in the dichotomic perception of facts and fiction (Bruner, 1996; Wells, 1986), typical in the Western epistemological tradition, according to which imaginative and affective responses to experience are seen to be in competition with analytic lines of thought, and the former is considered of less value than the latter (Egan, 1989; Wells, 1986). Thus, providing a meaningful and imaginative context for learning seems to offer fewer and less convincing opportunities to teachers than direct instruction, which has been traditionally assumed as the right way to teach, as it promotes a more bottom up, step by step approach where teachers seem to be in charge of what happens and how learners develop.

Another reason underlying teachers' reluctance to integrate narratives and a more holistic approach in their syllabus on a regular basis relates to the absence of a coherent rationale in the way they conceptualize their own and their learners' learning. The study exploring teachers' underlying theories supports that although teachers show an understanding of the theory related to the dynamic roles of narratives in linguistic and literacy development, and that they explicitly emphasise the importance of communication and communicativeness in their EFL classes, they fail to integrate their theoretical knowledge into their daily practice and therefore, they feel guilty about using stories. Conceptualizing EFL development as part of an organic model would also mean that teachers transfer experience gained in other contexts to the classroom. This would be the case with using stories, which are seen as natural resources in the L1 in early child development, but, paradoxically, they are considered useless, or even illegitimate in foreign language learning. It appears therefore that teachers' beliefs about learning as occurring in a linear, step by step manner applies both to learners' and to their own development: they tend to think in terms of isolated techniques

rooted in the behaviourist and comparative linguistic tradition which do not integrate in a set of overarching principles underlying teaching. This also explains teachers' dependence on course books, which they perceive as unquestionable and safe guides for their teaching, while they ignore opportunities offered by authentic materials for learners' and teachers' development. In other words, they do not conceptualize their own role in their learners' and their own professional development as agents, and thus, fail to take responsibility.

The fact that teachers do not conceptualize learning as constructed in interaction but rather as a linear, instruction-based process also explains their fear that learners may not understand narratives, in particular authentic ones. It is interesting to note, though that teachers always refer to the potential linguistic difficulty of texts, while they ignore conceptual difficulties which may make understanding problematic. This belief suggests that understanding a text only depends on the words and structures that students have learned, and is not influenced by strategies one would naturally use while reading (e.g., relying on the context and on background knowledge, and asking for assistance). Furthermore, this belief also conveys the message that learners are not ready to read authentic narratives before they were taught the appropriate language, and therefore there is no way for them to develop autonomy in learning. These points are in sheer contrast with the construct of communicative competence, the achievement of which is among the main goals of foreign language study.

The benefits of integration of language and literacy with cognitive, affective and social perspectives also appears from the way in which the longitudinal application of authentic picture books brought about changes in the lives of children, teachers and their close communities. Chapters Six and Seven support that authentic narratives provide cognitively, affectively and culturally engaging contexts for developing language and literacy in interaction. This appeared to be particularly important in the case of learners coming from socially and culturally deprived settings (Chapter Six), where exposure to print was minimal, and therefore, access to books in the EFL class compensated for the lack of opportunities for literacy development in L1. The long-term reading project provided children with equal opportunities not only in terms of socialising them into the culture of books, but also in their relationships with one another and with their teachers. For example, Gypsy children coming from an unprivileged socio-cultural background became more accepted both by their teacher and their peers, due to the frequent opportunities that picture books offered for cooperation both during class and throughout the borrowing process. Importantly, in the same school peers, parents and siblings frequently indicated their interest in the picture books that the children borrowed, mostly because these books were otherwise hardly available in Hungary.

A further area of the interconnectedness of language and literacy development with affective and social aspects of learning was apparent in the way meaning was constructed in the interaction of learners, books and teachers. Examples in Chapters Six and Seven support the claim that authentic picture books as complex, ideologically patterned narratives invite interpretation and develop not only reading but also critical thinking. Thus, they scaffold the process of growing into literate behaviour (Arizpe, 2006; Heath, 1992), which is considered to be the gateway to academic proficiency (Bialystok, 2001). The studies also document how children's contributions in the L1 can become sources for comprehensible input in English, depending on whether teachers build on them or not. Teachers' willingness to respond to students' comments also needs to be seen in relation with their underlying model of learning: whenever teachers decided to integrate learners' spontaneous contribution in their discourse, they created opportunities to scaffold language learning and cognitive development. By this, they indicated that they perceived language and literacy development as a dynamic and dialogic process where meaning is negotiated in context. In cases when teachers ignored students' contributions, the reasons were predominantly related to teachers' beliefs about learning as a transactional process much rather than a process in which participants construct an understanding of language, culture and books.

The empirical studies presented in this dissertation have implications for teacher development. First, it appears that teacher education should convey a coherent picture of teaching as a process in which theory and practice inform one another. This implies the need to provide both pre- and in-service trainees with relevant linguistic, psychological and socio-educational frameworks which help them make sense of isolated bits of practice in an interactionist paradigm. The empirical studies document that teachers are often unable to apply the theories they learnt in lectures and seminars, or to integrate their practice in a conceptual framework which captures language development in its interconnectedness with affective and social aspects of learning and encourages reflective practice. Rather, they tend to teach the way they were taught, without being aware of the rationale behind their teaching techniques. Therefore, an implication for both pre- and in-service teacher education relates to the importance of scaffolding teachers' understanding of theories of learning as means to make sense of their teaching in context and to enhance their professional autonomy. For example, maintaining personal contact with teachers involved in a longitudinal project on using picture books (Chapter Six) encouraged them to maintain regular use of narratives in their teaching, and also gave more opportunities for reflection on practices and beliefs over time. Thus, they became more responsible for their teaching and professional development.

As, apparently, neither a purely theoretical, nor a craft-based approach to teaching is enough to help teachers develop expertise (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Wallace, 1991), it is crucial that teacher education programmes support trainees in creating a commitment towards reflection, as a means for teacher development. This may happen by encouraging student teachers and in-service teachers to reflect on someone else's and their own practice, and thus focus on experiential knowledge as an opportunity for ongoing teacher learning (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2003). The reflective approach emerges as an important paradigm for teacher education in particular in contexts with a prescriptive tradition, where teacher cognition proceeds from theory to practice, and where the potential of practice to inform theory has been largely ignored. In this sense, a further point which needs to be addressed in teacher education refers to the importance of the local context and to understanding the broader social and political frameworks and the cultural traditions which affect education. As these will, by definition, change over time, teachers need to be confident that they are able to adjust their practices to changing needs.

Due to the fact that focus of the studies has been on dynamic processes that emerged from the interaction between learners, teachers and their environment, the conclusions are also open-ended; thus, they open up new perspectives and questions for research. An area for future research which has emerged in this sense refers to the hiatus between theory and practice. Further research may investigate whether it is typical that EFL teachers do not integrate theory and practice and, in particular, whether it is typical for teachers to ignore narratives as natural learning opportunities in the young learner classroom. It would also be interesting to find out whether this is the case with other school subjects as well.

The qualitative research methodology adopted in the empirical studies has generated both benefits and limitations in terms of findings. One of the limitations arises from the fact that qualitative studies do not aim to test specific hypotheses with a view to gaining measurable outcomes and clear-cut answers (Creswell, 1998; Mackey & Gass, 2005): rather, they describe, explore and analyze how cognitive, linguistic, affective and social processes interact in specific EFL educational contexts. This implies that the conclusions of my studies are open-ended; however, as I have shown, they generate new questions for further research.

Also, as it is usual in the qualitative tradition, the studies involved few participants. While this may appear a limitation from the point of view of generalizing findings, it has been an advantage in that it has helped me gain a deeper understanding and a more complex picture of human behaviours and the underlying socio-cultural phenomena. Thus, unlike quantitative research, which tends to look for generalizable outcomes and frequently overlooks the value

of experience in context, qualitative research, in particular narrative inquiry, allows researchers to develop an understanding of that experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 5). In this sense, working with few participants intensively has produced layered data which lend themselves to interpretation from cognitive, linguistic, affective, social and cultural perspectives, thus allowing for triangulation.

Finally, a main point that has emerged in terms of research methodology relates to the importance of a longitudinal perspective in understanding teacher learning. Longitudinal data collection has provided me with information about teachers' reflection processes and the slow changes occurring in their understanding of professional practice which could not have been gained over shorter periods of time. A significant example in this area is the case of the four teachers involved in using authentic picture books with their learners over a period of four years, and whose change in terms of professional practice could be documented over a longer timescale. In comparison, teachers who were required to implement a story-based project for a semester as part of their course requirements (Chapter Five) did not give evidence of changing their beliefs about teaching and learning. Although they appeared enthusiastic about using stories in their classrooms and reported positive results, this was probably also due to the Hawthorne effect, as well as to the fact that they wanted to please their tutor and get a good grade. In their research papers and in the follow-up discussions these teachers also expressed their doubts as to whether using stories would maintain motivation and promote learning, and suggested that direct instruction was more effective in the long run. This finding supports that the shift in teachers' understanding does not occur through imposing new external resources, but by bringing into alignment teachers' underlying beliefs about teaching and learning with their explicit theories (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2003).

While writing the conclusions of my dissertation, I had the opportunity to visit a primary EFL class. The teacher used as many as three authentic picture books in a 45-minute lesson. She did not read any of them, but she used them to illustrate the few words she had previously taught eleven nine-year-olds out of context. When using *One Moose, Twenty Mice* (Beaton, 2000), a counting book depicting animals from one to twenty, the teacher did not count the animals in English, nor did she ask the children to find the cat hiding among other animals. The easily understandable "One moose, but where's the cat? Two crabs, but where's the cat? Three ladybirds, but where's the cat?" was not read out in the lesson, probably because the teacher felt that the learners were not yet able to deal with language in context. Instead, she pointed to the pictures and asked questions in Hungarian in order to elicit numbers in English. Thus, the Hungarian question "*Hány katicabogár van a képen?*" (How

many ladybirds are there in the picture?) was supposed to elicit the response in English *"Three."* The children did not have the opportunity to hear the target language in context, not to mention the fact that some of them did not even get a chance to see the pictures, as they were sitting behind the teacher's back when she was showing round the book.

This lesson was hardly meant to convince an observer of the power of books in EFL education. The children appeared thrilled by the eventual "story-reading," but their enthusiasm dried up as they realized that what was happening had nothing to do with their previous literacy experiences. Most of all, because the teacher decided to stop half way through the book, as the children had learned the numbers in English only up to ten. She must have considered the numbers from ten to twenty, pictures and all, too great a challenge for nine-year-olds. This particular teacher, who was not a participant in the empirical studies, would need opportunities to reflect on her own practice and understand how scaffolding learners' development may offer better opportunities both for her and her pupils. This final example underpins all the claims of my dissertation. There is still plenty of room for teacher development.

REFERENCES

Abbott, H. P. (2002). *Cambridge introduction to narrative*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Allwright, D., & Bailey, K. M. (1991). *Focus on the language classroom: An introduction to classroom research for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Alphonso, C. (2005). *Study questions path to literacy: Does reading to toddlers help them read?* Retrieved on 4 January 2006 from: http://sdkrashen.com/mailman/listinfo/krashen_sdkrashen.com

Arizpe, E. (2006). Young interpreters: children's response to pictures. In: J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 35-48). München: Langenscheidt.

Arnold, J., & Brown, H. D. (1999). A map of the terrain. In: J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Atherton, J. S. (2002). *Tools: Frames of reference*. Retrieved on 01 August 2007 from: http://www.doceo.co.uk/tools/frame.htm

Atkinson, R. C,. & Schiffrin, R. M. (1968). Human memory: A proposed system and its control processes. In: K. W. Spence, & J. T. Spence (Eds.), *The psychology of learning and motivation Volume 2*, London: Academic Press.

Baddeley, P., & Eddershaw, C. (1994). *Not-so-simple picture books: Developing responses to literature with 4-12 year olds.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Baddeley, P., & Eddershaw, C. (1998). Linking books to develop older children's response to literature. In: J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 58-78). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Baghban, M. (1984). *Our daughter learns to read and write*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Bailey, K.M., & Nunan, D. (1996). *Voices from the language classroom: Qualitative research in second language education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, J. (1989). *Where the forest meets the sea*. London: Walker Books Ltd.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination.* Trans. by Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and his world*. Trans. by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Barthes, R. (1982). Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives. In S. Sontag (Ed.), *A Barthes Reader* (pp. 251-295). New York: Hill and Wang.

Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Bartlett, L. (1990). Teacher development through reflective teaching. In J. Richards J., & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 202-214). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beard, R. (1995). Rhyme and repetition. In R. Beard (Ed.), *Rhyme, reading and writing* (pp. 7-22). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Beaton, C. (2000). *One moose, twenty mice*. Bristol: Barefoot Books.

Bettelheim, B. (1991). *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales.* Fourth edition. London: Penguin.

Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy and cognition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Blok, H. (1999). Reading to young children in educational settings: A meta-analysis of recent research. *Language Learning, 49,*(2), 343-371.

Bors, L. (1999). *An investigation of Hungarian primary school teachers' and pupils' views of the Baranya Reading Project and suggestions for improving the design of the project.* Unpublished MEd Dissertation. University of Leeds.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *In other words.* Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing.

Bózsa, B. (2006). *Using stories in developing vocabulary with young learners*. Unpublished MA thesis. University of Pécs.

Boyle, A., & Woolford, S. (1998). *Whose hat is that*. London: Walker Books Ltd.

Breen, M. P. (1985). Authenticity in the language classroom. *Applied Linguistics, 6*, 60-70.

Breen, M., & Candlin, C. (1980) The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics 1*, 89-112.

Briggs, R. (1978) *The Snowman*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Brown, R. (1992). *A dark, dark tale*. London: Random House.

Browne, A. (1986). *Piggybook.* London: Julia MacRae Books.

Browne, A. (1992). *Zoo*. London: Julia MacRae Books.

Bruner, J. (1966). *Towards a theory of instruction.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, *71*(3), 691-711.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Bryant, P., & Bradley, L. (1985). *Children's reading problems*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Burstall, C. (1980). Primary French in the balance. In S. Holden (Ed.), *Teaching children* (pp. 86-90), London: Modern English Publications.

Bus, A., Van Ijzendoorn, M., & Pellegrini, A. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research, 65,* 1-21.

Cameron, L. (1994). Organizing the world: children's concepts and categories, and implications for the teaching of English. *ELT Journal, 48*(1), 28-39.

Carroll, L. (1992). *Alice in Wonderland & Through the looking glass*. New York: Norton and Company, Inc.

Carter, R., & McRae, J. (1996.) Language, literature and the learner. London: Longman.

Cheung, A., & Slavin, R. E. (2005). Effective reading programs for English language learners and other language minority students. *Bilingual Research Journal, 29*(2), 241-267.

Chavez, M. (1998). Learners' perspective on authenticity. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *36*(4), 277-306.

Clay, M. (1982). *Observing young readers*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Cobley, P. (2001). *Narrative*. London: Routledge.

Cole, M., & Cole, S. R. (1996). *The development of children.* New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Cortazzi, M. (1994). Narrative analysis. *Language teaching*, *27*, 157-170.

Cott, J. (1983). *Pipers at the gates of dawn: The wisdom of children's literature.* New York: Random House.

Coulthard, K. (2003). The words to say it: young bilingual learners responding to visual texts. In E. Arizpe, & M. Styles (Eds.), *Children reading pictures: Interpreting visual texts* (pp. 164-189). London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions. London: Sage Publications.

Csapó, B. (2002). *Az iskolai mûveltség* [School literacy]. Budapest: Osiris.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow*. New York: HarperCollins.

Cullen, R. (1998). Teacher talk and the classroom context. *ELT Journal, 52*(3), 179-187.

Cummins, J. (1991). Interdependence of first- and second-language proficiency in bilingual children. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), *Language processing in bilingual children* (pp.70-90). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (1994). Knowledge, power, and identity in teaching English as a second language. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp. 33-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Curtain, H., & Pesola, C.A.B. (1994). *Languages and children: Making the match.* White Plains, N.Y.: Longman.

Dahl, R. (1984). *Revolting rhymes*. Harmondsworth: Puffin Books.

Damon, E. (1995). *All kinds of people*. London: Sadie Fields Productions Ltd.

Davidson, D. (1991). The role of schemata in children's memory. *Advances in Child Development & Behaviour*, *26*, 35-58.

Deacon, B., & Murphey, T. (2005). Deep impact storytelling. *English Language Teaching Forum, 39*(4), 10-15.

Dickinson, D. K., & Tabors P. O. (1991). Early literacy: Linkages between home, school and literacy achievement at age five. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *6*, 30-46.

Donaldson, M. (1987). *Children's minds*. London: Fontana Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition. Lawrence Erlbaum Pub.

Dubin, F., & Kuhlman, N. A. (1992). The dimensions of cross-cultural literacy. In: F. Dubin, & N. A. Kuhlman (Eds.), *Cross-cultural literacy: Global perspectives on reading and writing* (pp. v-x). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Regents/Prentice Hall.

Dunn, O. (1997). *Realbook News*, *2*, 1.

Dunn, O. (1999). Developing visual literacy. *Realbook News*, *6*, 3.

Dunn, O. (2002). Novelty books-a 3D communicative game. *Realbook News, 12,* 3.

Dunn, O. (2006). Do boys as young learners of English need different language learning opportunities from girls? Can authentic picture books help? In J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 115-122). München: Langenscheidt.

Durand, G. (1969). *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Bordas.

Durgunoglu, A.Y. (1997). Bilingual reading: Its components, development, and other issues. In A.M.B. de Groot, & J.F. Kroll (Eds.), *Tutorials in bilingualism: Psycholinguistic perspectives* (pp. 255-276). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Edmondson, W. (1995/6). The role of literature in foreing language learning and teaching: some valid assumptions and invalid arguments. *AILA Review, 12*, Applied Linguistics Across Disciplines, 42-55.

Egan, K. (1989). *Teaching as story telling: An alternative approach to teaching and curriculum in the elementary school*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ehmann, B. (2002). *A szöveg mélyén*. Budapest: Uj Mandátum Könyvkiadó.

Ehrman, M. & Dörnyei, Z. (1998). *Interpersonal dynamics in second language education: the visible and invisible classroom.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Elley, W. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly, 24*(2), 174-189.

Ellis, G. (1995). Learning to learn. In C. Brumfit , J. Moon, & R. Tongue (Eds.), *Teaching English to children* (pp.191-200). London: Longman.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Enever, J. (2006). The use of picture books in the development of critical visual and written literacy in English as a foreign language. In J. Enever, & G. Schmid- Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 59-70). München: Langenscheidt.

Erickson, F. & G. Mohatt. (1982). Cultural organization of participation structures in two classrooms of Indian students. In G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action* (pp. 136-171). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Evans, J. (1998). Responding to illustrations in picture books. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. xiii-xviii). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Eysenck, M. W., & Keane, M. T. (1995). *Cognitive psychology.* London: Psychology Press.

Farjeon, E., & Mortimer, A. (1996). *Cats sleep anywhere*. London: Frances Lincoln Ltd.

Fekete, G. (1994). *The use of the students' native language in the language learning class.* Unpublished seminar paper. Janus Pannonius University.

Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y., Hoffman, M., & Miller, R. (1980). *Instrumental enrichment.* Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman.

Firth, A. & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *Modern Language Journal, 81*, 285-300.

Fox, C. (1993). *At the very edge of the forest: The influence of literature on storytelling by children.* London: Cassell.

Freeman, D. (1992). Language teacher education, emerging discourse, and change in classroom practice. In J. Flowerdew, M. Brock, & S. Hsia (Eds.), *Perspectives on second language teacher education* (pp. 1-21). Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Freemantle, S. (1993). "Once upon a time:" A study of children's responses to fairytale. In P. Pinsent (Ed.), *The power of the page* (pp. 55-66). London: David Fulton Publishers.

French, F. (1986). *Snow White in New York.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frye, N. (1964). *The educated imagination.* Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences.* New York: Basic books.

Gardner, H. (2000). *The disciplined mind.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

Gebhard, J.G., & Duncan, B. (1992). EFL teacher education curriculum development as inquiry: the Orosz szakos tanárok átképzési programja. In J. Flowerdew, M. Brock, & S. Hsia (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 319-335). Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Gebhard, J.G., & Oprandy, R. (1999) *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Genessee, F. (1994). Introduction. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp. 1-12). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gopnik, A., & Meltzoff, A.N. (1998). *Words, thoughts, and theories.* London: The MIT Press.

Ghosn, I. K. (2003/4). Four good reasons to use literature in primary school ELT. In G. Ellis, & Ch. Morrow (Eds.), *ELTJ year of the young learner special collection* (pp. 56-64). Oxford: Oxford Universtity Press.

Goswami, U. (1995). Rhyme in children's early reading. In R. Beard (Ed.), *Rhyme, reading and writing* (pp. 62-79). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Gould, S.J. (1991). *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Graham, J. (1990). *Pictures on the page.* Sheffield: The National Association for the Teaching of English.

Graham, J. (1998). Turning the visual into the verbal: children reading wordless books. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 25-43). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Guariento, W., & Morley, J. (2001). Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal, 55*(4), 347-353.

Hall, N. (1994). The emergence of literacy. In B. Stierer, & J. Maybin (Ed.), *Language literacy and learning in educational practice* (pp. 15-29). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Hall, C., & Coles, M. (1999). *Children's reading choices*. London: Routledge.

Hardy, B. (1977). Narrative as a primary act of mind. In Meek, M., A. Warlow, & G. Barton (Eds.), *The cool web: The pattern of children's reading* (pp. 12-23). London: The Bodley Head.

Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching: new edition*. London: Longman.

Heath, S. B. (1982). Questioning at home and at school: A comparative study. In: G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action* (pp. 102-131). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Heath, S. B. (1992). Literacy skills or literate skills? Considerations for ESL/EFL learners. In D. Nunan (Ed.), *Collaborative language learning and teaching* (pp. 40-57). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, S. B. (1994). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. In J. Maybin (Ed.), *Language and literacy in social practice* (pp. 73-95). Clevedon, Aron: Multilingual Matters.

Hiebert, E. H. (1991). Introduction. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 1-6). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hindley, J., & Benedict, W. (1995). *The big red bus*. London: Walker Books Ltd.

Holdaway, D. (1979). *The foundations of literacy*. Gosford, N. S. W.: Ashton Scholastic.

Horsdal, M. (2005, December). *Életút-történetek elemzése és értelmezése*. [Analysing and understanding life-story narratives] Retrieved on 8 June 2006 from: http://civil. nepfoiskola.hu3/ 3.1.3htm

Horsdal, M. (2006, August). Life-story narratives in voluntary organisations. Retrieved on 9 August 2006 from: www.lua.it./esrea/papers/Horsdal.doc

Hudelson, S. (1994). Literacy development of second language children. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp.129-158). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, P. (1998). Exploring visual literacy across the curriculum. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 115-131). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Huss, R. L. (1995). Young children becoming literate in English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, *29*(4), 767-774.

Jarvis, J., & Robinson, M. (1997). Analysing educational discourse: An exploratory study of teacher response and support to pupils' learning. *Applied Linguistics, 18*(2), 212-228.

Jones Mourao, S. (2006). Understanding and sharing: English storybook borrowing in Portuguese pre-schools. In J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 49-58). München: Langenscheidt.

Johnson, K. E. (1995). *Understanding communication in second language classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 235-257.

Johnson, K.E., & Golombek, P. (2003). "Seeing" teacher learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(4), 729-737.

Keen, S. (2003). *Narrative form*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kerr, J. (1998). *The tiger who came to tea.* London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Kierepka, A. (2006). Children's approaches to authentic picture books in the primary EFL classroom. In J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 123-130). München: Langenscheidt.

King, N. (1993). *Storymaking and drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

King, N. (2005). *Dancing with wonder: Self-discovery through stories.* Champion Press Ltd.: Belgium, Wisconsin.

King, N., & Nikolov, M. (1992). Storymaking and drama with two groups of Hungarian children. *Modern English Teacher*, *1*, 1-8.

Kiss, Cs. (2000). "Words are but wind, but seeing is believing": Do the expressed attitudes of primary EFL teachers reflect their classroom practice? In J. Moon, & M. Nikolov (Eds.), *Research into teaching English to young learners: International perspectives* (pp. 171-189). Pécs: University Press Pécs.

Klippel, F. (2006). Literacy through picture books. In: J. Enever & G. Schmid- Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 81-90). München: Langenscheidt.

Kolsawalla, H. (1999). Teaching vocabulary through rhythmic refrains in stories. In S. Rixon (Ed.), *Young learners of English: Some research perspectives* (pp. 18-32). London: Longman.

Korky, P., & Thomas, V. (1997) *Winnie the witch.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (2002). Introduction: "How can we tell the dancer from the dance?" In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization* (pp. 1-30). London: Continuum**.**

Krashen, S. (1985). *The Input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.

Krashen, S. (1989.) *Language acquisition and language education*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.

Krashen, S. (1993). *The power or reading*. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.

Krashen, S. (1997-8.) „Bridging inequity with books." *Educational Leadership, 55*(4), 18-22.

Krashen, S. (2005a). Children's reading habits and preferences. Stephen Krashen's mailing list.http://sdkrashen.com/mailman/listinfo/krashen_sdkrashen.com

Krashen, S. (2005b). Read-Alouds are Good for Literacy Development: A Comment on Freakonomics. Stephen Krashen's Mailing List. http://sdkrashen.com/mailman/listinfo/krashen_sdkrashen.com

Krashen, S. (2005c). The value of read-alouds. Stephen Krashen's Mailing List. http://sdkrashen.com/mailman/listinfo/krashen_sdkrashen.com

Lakoff, G., & Robinson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Langer, J. A. (1991). Literacy and schooling: A sociocognitive perspective. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 9-27). New York: Teachers College Press.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1–26). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J.P., & Appel, G. (1996.) Theoretical framework: an introduction to Vygotskian approaches to second language research. In J.P. Lantolf, & G.Appel (Ed.)m *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 1-32). New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Lantolf, J. P., & Genung, P. B. (2002). "I'd rather switch than fight:" An activity-theoretic study of power, success, and failure in a foreign language classroom. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 175-196). London: Continuum.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. P. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). Second language acquisition and applied linguistics. In: W. Grabe (Ed.), *Applied linguistics as an emerging discipline, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *20*, 165-181.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2002). Language acquisition and language use from a chaos/complexity theory perspective. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 33-46). London: Continuum.

László, J. (1999). *Társas tudás, elbeszélés, identitás*. Budapest: Scientia Humana/ Kairosz.

László, J. (2003). A második kognitív forradalom: A narratív pszichológia és a kognitív pszichológia viszonya. In J. László, J. Kállai, & T. Bereckei (Eds.), *A reprezentáció szintjei* (pp. 66-87). Budapest: Gondolat-Osiris.

László J. (2005a). *A történetek tudománya*. Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó.

László J. (2005b). A mai pszichológia emberképe. *Magyar Tudomány*, 11, 1366.

Leather, J. (2002). Modeling the acquisition of speech in a "multilingual" society: An ecological approach. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 47-67). London: Continuum.

Lemke, J. L. (2002). Language development and identity: Multiple timescales in the social ecology of learning. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 68-87). London: Continuum.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lugossy, R. (1999). *Talking and meaning making: Using picture books with young EFL learners.* Unpublished MEd dissertation. University of Leeds.

Lugossy, R. (2006). Shaping teachers' beliefs through narratives. In: Nikolov M., Horváth J. (Eds.), *UPRT 2006: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics* (pp. 313-336). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.

Lurie, A. (1990). *"Don't tell the grown-ups:"Subversive children's literature.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research, methodology and design.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Malderez, A. (1997/1998.) What is pre-service teacher education? *Together*, *3*, 4.

Manifold, M. C. (1997). Picture books as a social studies resource in the elementary school classroom. Retrieved on 1 June 2004 from: www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed412168.htm1

Maranda, E. K., & Maranda, P. (1971). *Structural models in folklore and transformational essays.* The Hague: Mouton.

Marriott, S. (1998). Picture books and the moral imperative. In Evans, J. (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 1-24). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Masurel, C., & Paparone, P. (1997). *Ten dogs in the window*. Zürich: Gossau Nord-Süd Verlag AG.

McCabe, A. (1998). Sentences combined: text and discourse. In J. B. Gleason, & N. B. Ratner (Eds.), *Psycholinguistics* (pp. 275-308). London: Thomson Learning.

McKee, D. (1990). *Not now, Bernard.* London: Red Fox.

McKeon, D. (1994). Language, culture, and schooling. In In Genesee, F. (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp. 15-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McRae, J. (1991). *Literature with a small 'l'.* London: Macmillan.

Meek, M. (1988). *How texts teach what readers learn.* South Woodchester: Thimble Press.

Mercer, N. (1994). Neo-Vygotskian theory and classroom education. In B. Stierer, & J. Maybin (Eds.), *Language, literacy and learning in educational practice* (pp. 92-110). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Mikes, G. (1984). *How to be a Brit*. London: Penguin.

Millard, E. (1997.) *Differently literate: Boys, girls and the schooling of literacy.* London: Routledge Falmer Press.

Monks, L. (1999). *I wish I were a dog*. London: Mammoth.

Morrow, K. (1977). Authentic texts in ESP. In S. Holden (Ed.), *English for specific purposes* (pp. 13-17). London: Modern English Publications.

Munsch, R. N., & Martchenko, M. (1980). *The paper bag princess*. Toronto: Annick Press Ltd.

Nikolov, M. (1999a). "Natural born speakers of English": Code switching in pair- and group-work in Hungarian primary classrooms. In S. Rixon (Ed.), *Young learners of English: Some research perspectives* (pp. 72-89). London: Longman.

Nikolov, M. (1999b). The socio-educational and sociolinguistic context of the examination reform. In H. Fekete, É. Major, & M. Nikolov (Eds.), *English language education in Hungary: A baseline study* (pp. 7-20). Budapest: British Council.

Nikolov, M. (2000). 'We do what we like': negotiated classroom work with Hungarian children. In M. Breen, & A. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Classroom decision-making: Negotiation and process syllabuses in practice* (pp. 83-93).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nikolov, M. (2002). *Issues in English language education.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Nikolov, M. (2003). Angolul és németül tanuló diákok nyelvtanulási attitűdje és motivációja. *Iskolakultúra XIII*(8), 61-73.

Nunan, D. (1996). Hidden voices: insiders' perspectives on classroom interaction. In K.M. Bailey, & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom* (pp. 41-56). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. (2002). Becoming a speaker of culture. In C. Kramsch (Ed.)*, Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 99-120). London: Continuum.

Oxford, R. 1990. *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* NY: Newbury House.

Parkes, B. (1998). Nursery children using illustrations in shared readings and rereadings. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 44-57). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Pennington, M. C. (1998, March). *Classroom discourse frames.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Seattle.

Philips, S. (1983.) *The invisible culture: Communication in the classroom and community on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation*: White Plains, NY: Longman.

Phillips, L. (2006, December). *The role of storytelling in early literacy development.* Retrieved on 10 December 2006 from. www.australianstorytelling.org.au/txt/childhood.php.

Piaget, J. (1966). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International Universities Press.

Piaget, J. (1972). *The principles of genetic epistemology*. New York: Basic Books.

Pléh, Cs. (2007). Pléh Csaba válaszai 2007/8-as körkérdésünkre. Retrieved from on 9 September 2007 from http://www.vega2000.eu/iskolakultura/index.php?option=com_content&task=view

Porter, S. (1989). *Little wolf and the giant*. Hove: Wayland Publishers Ltd.

Propp, V. (1970). *Morphologie du conte*. Paris: Seuil.

Puttock, S., & Lambert, S. (2000). *Coral goes swimming*. London: Hodder Children's Books.

Read, C. (2006). Supporting teachers in supporting learners. In J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 11-21). München: Langenscheidt.

Rees, A. L. W. (1997). A closer look at classroom observation: An indictment. In I. McGrath (Ed.), *Learning to train: Perspectives on the development of language teacher trainers.* (pp. 154-172). Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Réger, Z. 1990. *Utak a nyelvhez* [Ways to language]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Richards, J. C. (2001.) *Curriculum development in language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richardson, K. (1998). *Models of cognitive development*. Hove: Psychology Press Ltd.

Ricoeur, P. (1981). Narrative time. In W. J. T. Mitchell (Ed.), *On narrative* (pp. 165-186). London: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative*. Vols. 1, 2, 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, D. N. (1981). *An intellectual history of psychology.* New York: Macmillan.

Rosen, B. (1988). *And none of it was nonsense: The power of storytelling in school.* London: Mary Glasgow Publications.

Rosen, H. (1988). Stories of stories: A postscript by Harold Rosen. In B. Rosen, *And none of it was nonsense: The power of storytelling in school* (pp. 163-172). London: Mary Glasgow Publications.

Rosen, M. (2005). Are books for children worth reading? *Books for Keeps*, *154*, 4-5.

Rosen, M., & Oxenbury, H. (1989). *We're going on a bear hunt.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Rosenblatt, L . (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work.* Carbondale, IL: Southern IllinoisUniversity Press.

Rowe, J. (1998). *Can you spot the spotty dog?* London: Random House Children's Books.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rubin, D. C. (1995). *Memory in oral traditions: The cognitive psychology of epic, ballads, and counting-out rhymes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rudduck, J. (1992). Practitioner research and programs of initial teacher education. In T. Russel, & H. Munty (Eds.), *Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection* (pp. 87-98). London: The Falmer Press.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1977). Understanding and summarizing brief stories. In D. La Berget (Ed.), *Basic processes in reading.* Hillsdale, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.

Scarcella, R.C., & Oxford, R. (1992). *The tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Schank, R.C., & Abelson, R.P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding: An inquiry into human knowledge structures.* New Jersey: LEA Publishers.

Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1995). Knowledge and memory: The real story. In R. S. Jr. Wyer (Ed.), *Advances in social cognition. Volume VIII* (pp. 1-85). Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schieffelin, B.B., & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language socialization across cultures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schön, A. D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action.* London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd.

Scollon, R. (2002). Cross-cultural learning and other catastrophes. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 121-139). London: Continuum.

Seedhouse, P. (1996). Classroom interaction: Possibilities and impossibilities. *ELT Journal 50*, 17-24.

Sendak, M. (1963). *Where the wild things are.* London: HarperCollins Ltd.

Sendak, M. (1981). *Outside over there.* London: The Bodley Head.

Serrano-Sampedro, I. (2000). Refining negotiated classroom work in a Spanish secondary school. In M. Breen, & A. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Classroom decision-making: Negotiation and process syllabuses in practice* (pp. 108-132). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Seuss. (1996). *There's a wacket in my pocket.* New York: Random House.

Dr. Seuss. (1997). *The foot book.* London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Smith, F. (1985a). *Reading.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, F. (1985b). A metaphor for literacy: creating worlds or shunting information? In D. R. Olson, N. Torrance, & A. Hildyard (Eds.), *Literacy, language and learning: The nature and consequences of reading and writing* (pp. 195-213). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, F. (1988). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into education.* Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann.

Smith, L. (1989). Changing perspectives in developmental psychology. In C. Desforges (Ed.), *Early Childhoold Education* (British Journal of Educational Psychology Monograph Series: No. 4). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Snow, C., & Tabors, P, (1993). Language skills that relate to literacy development. In B. Spodek, & O.N. Saracho (Eds.), *Yearbook in early childhood education*, Vol. 4: *Language and literacy in early childhood education* (pp. 1-20). New York: Teachers College Press.

Souhami, J. (1996.) *Old McDonald.* London: Frances Lincoln Ltd.

Spada, N., & Massey, M. (1992). The role of prior pedagogical knowledge in determining the practice of novice ESL teachers. In J. Flowerdew, M. Brock, & S. Hsia (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 23-37). Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction.* London: Longman.

Stevick, E. W. (1996). *Memory, meaning and method.* Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Stevick, E. W. (1998). *Working with teaching methods: What's at stake?* Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Styles, M. (1996). Inside the tunnel: a radical kind of reading picture books, pupils and post-modernism. In V. Watson, & M. Styles (Eds.), *Talking pictures: Pictorial texts and young readers*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Rudduck, J. (1992.) Practitioner research and programs of initial teacher education. In T. Russel, & H. Munby (Eds.), *Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection* (pp. 375-386). London: The Falmer Press.

Tatar, M. (1992). *Off with their heads: Fairy tales and the culture of childhood.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, D. (1994). Inauthentic authenticity or authentic inauthenticity? – The pseudo-problem of authenticity in the language classroom. *TESL-EJ. 1* (2), Retrieved on 24 January 2006 from: www.writing.berkeley.edu/ TESL-EJ.

Teale, W., & Sulzby, E. (1986). *Emergent literacy: writing and reading*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Thorndyke, P.W. (1984). Applications of schema theory in cognitive research. In J.R. Anderson, & S. M. Kosslyn (Eds.), *Tutorials in learning and memory* (pp. 167-192). San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Trelease, J. (2001). *The read-aloud handbook*. Fifth Edition. New York: Penguin.

Trivizas, E., & Oxenbury, H. (1995). *The three little wolves and the big bad pig*. London: Mammoth.

Ur, P.(1992.) Teacher learning. *ELT Journal*, *46* (1), 56-61.

van Lier, L. (2002). An ecological-semiotic perspective on language and linguistics. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 140-164). London: Continuum.

van Dam, J. (2002). Ritual, dance, and play in a first English lesson: Bootstrapping a classroom culture. In C. Kramsch (Ed.)*, Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 237-265). London: Continuum.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981a). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144-188). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981b). The development of higher forms of attention in childhood. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 189-239). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp.

Waddell, M., & Eachus, J. (1994). *The big blue sea*. London: Walker Books Ltd.

Walkerdine, V. (1998.) *Counting girls out*. London: RoutledgeFalmer Press.

Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walsh, M. (1993). Story and the development of children's language and literacy. In P. Pinsent (Ed.), *The power of the page* (pp. 126-137). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Walsh, S. (1993). The multi-layered picture book. In: P. Pinsent (Ed.), *The power of the page* (pp. 15-22). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching. Routledge and Taylor & Frances Group: London

Wells, G. (1985a). Preschool literacy-related activities and success in school. In D. R. Olson, N. Torrance, & A. Hildyard (Eds.), *Literacy, language and learning* (pp. 229-255). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, G. (1985b). *Language, learning and education.* London: NFER, Nelson.

Wells, G. (1986). *The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

West, C. (1997). *Buzz, buzz, buzz, went the bumble-bee*. London: Walker.

Whitehead, M. (1995). Nonsense, rhyme and word play in young children. In R. Beard (Ed.), *Rhyme, reading and writing* (pp. 42-61). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Widdowson, H. G. (1979). *Explorations in applied linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1985.) The teaching, learning and study of literature. In R. Quirk, & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world* (pp. 181-199). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, L. (1995). Literature-based activities in a foreign-language nursery school. In R. D. Sell (Ed.), *Literature throughout foreign language education: The implications of pragmatics* (pp. 21-35). London: Modern English Publications.

Williams, M. (1989). A developmental view of classroom observation. *ELT Journal*, *43*(2), 85-91.

Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willinsky, J. (1994). Introducing the New Literacy. In B. Stierer, & J. Maybin (Eds.), *Language literacy and learning in educational practice* (pp. 1-14). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Wood, D. (1988). *How children think and learn: The social contexts of cognitive development.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Wood, D. J., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *17*(2), 89-100.

Woodward, T. (1991). *Models and metaphors in language teacher training: Loop input and other strategies.* Cambridge: CUP.

Wray, A. (2002). *Formulaic language and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zion, G., & Bloy Graham, M. (1996). *Harry the dirty dog*. London: Random House.

Zipes, J. (1983). *Fairy tales and the art of subversion: The classical genre for children and the process of civilization.* New York: Routledge.

Zipes, J. (1997). *Happily ever after: Fairy tales, children, and the culture industry.* New York: Routledge.

Zuengler, J., & Miller, E. (2006). Cognitive and sociocultural perspectives: Two parallel SLA worlds? *TESOL Quarterly 40*(1), 35-58.

Appendix A

Methodology syllabus for in-service teachers

Advanced methodology

Code: ANTK 010401-2

Time: Friday. 14-15.30; 16-17.30.

Room: G412.

Tutor: Lugossy Réka

Topics for discussion

Teachers' beliefs (about teaching and learning, about learners and themselves)

Using stories: cognitive, affective and linguistic perspectives

Using pictures

Using songs and music

Teaching vocabulary: ideas and underlying principles

Teaching grammar: ideas and underlying principles

Developing the four skills: listening and speaking, reading and writing

Young learners

Classroom discourse (code switching, students' comments, teachers' questions)

Requirements

In order to complete this course you are required to:

- participate in seminar activities and follow-up discussions;
- read the assigned articles and books, and be able to talk about them;
- write a test;
- experiment with stories in your teaching, and present your findings in oral and written form (length: 1000-1500 words). Deadline: last session.

Grades will be given according to oral and written participation.

Recommended readings

Brown, D. (1994). *Teaching by principles. An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* Prentice Hall: London.

Celce-Murcia, M. & Hilles, Sh. (1995) *Grammar teaching techniques*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman: London.

Krashen, S. (1993). *The power or reading*. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.

Medgyes, P. (1994). *The non-native teacher*. Macmillan: London.

Nikolov, M. (2002). *Issues in English language education.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Lugossy Réka

Teachers' questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

Please answer the following six questions. You do not have to put down your name. Your personality rights will be guaranteed and your answers will be used only for feedback and for research purposes. Thank you.

1. Do you use stories in your English lessons? If yes, why? If no, why not?

2. Do you use authentic texts in your lessons? If yes, why? If no, why not?

3. Do you consider yourself a good reader? For what reasons?

4. In what languages do you read for pleasure?

5. Does it ever happen that while reading for pleasure in English you come across texts that you later use in your teaching? Can you give an example for this?

6. What do you expect to gain from this course?

Appendix C

Sample from teachers' research projects

Sample from T3's teaching diary

REALBOOKS

Title: One Moose, Twenty Mice	Author: Clare Beaton

Class: 2.A	Date: December 2002	Teacher: Nora Foti

Purpose:
- to extend vocabulary of animals
- learn numbers up to 20
- have fun

Children's comments:
They kept wondering about what animals were on the next page.
In their mother tongue, they kept saying "How adorable".

Evaluation:
Everybody wanted to take home the book. They learned the names of new animals very quickly, and what is more important, they not only enjoyed the book, but learned the numbers.

Comments:
I did not intend to start teaching the plurals, but slowly, they began to realise that something happened to the words, and started using the –s for the plural.
One of my colleagues would like to make something similar from felt for her first graders.

Samples from the interviews carried out with teachers

First interview with T1 (June, 2001)

Réka: Hogy döntötted el, hogy részt veszel a projektben?

Tanár (T1): Hát, ez több oldalú volt, mert meg is győztek, és amikor láttam a könyveket, akkor úgy döntöttem, hogy érdemes ezt csinálni, mert a gyerekek is profitálnak belőle meg én is, mert nagyon szeretem az ilyen könyveket. És a másik dolog meg, hogy már vittem be korábban is sztorikat az órára, mondjuk az nem volt autentikus, és nem volt ennyire esztétikus, de szóval volt mar gyakorlatom.

R: És mik voltak az ellenérvek?

T1: Hát az,hogy félek az ilyen nagy projektektől, és attól féltem hogy ki tudja milyen nagy eredményt kell produkálni a végére.

R: És bánod, hogy meggyőztek?

T1: Nem, abszolút nem bánom. A gyerekek nagyon élvezik, teljesen feloldja az óra hangulatát, teljesen… nem tanulás hangulata van, hanem mesélés, és nagyon szeretik. A képeket nagyon szeretik, és megjegyzik őket.

R: Példaul mi tetszett nekik?

T1: Hát a *Washing line* végén az elefánt elpirul az alsógatyájában. És akkor mondják, hogy „Jaj de aranyos, hogy elpirult…" Szóval a képeket nagyon-nagyon szeretik, mert szépek, színesek. Minden részletet észrevesznek. Arra figyelnek leginkább, nem a szövegre.

R: Emlékszem, amikor bent voltam, a gyerekek kórusban mondták a szöveget

T1: Igen, pedig akkor azt először vittem be. Az *I think my mum's a witch*. De olyan a szöveg, hogy hozza magával, a gyererkek felismerik a mintát… nagyon jó. És az a másik jó dolog, hogy teljesen megindítja a fantáziájukat.

R: Ezt honnan tudod?

T1: Hát a sok találgatásból. Lapozgatás közben hagyok nekik időt, hogy rájöjjenek, mi rejtőzik mögötte. Meg rajzolnak is. Például a marslakót először lerajzoltuk, és azóta is mondják, hogy „A martiant, a martiant, azt olvassuk!"

R: Vannak kedvencek?

T1: Vannak. Például, az első osztályban nagyon szeretik az *Old Macdolanlds*-t…

R: Több osztályba is bevitted?

T1: Igen. Hát, úgy lett volna jó, ha az egészet egy csoportban tudom megcsinálni, de a negyedikben túl könnyű lett volna néhány könyv Ott is élvezték például az *Old Macdolanlds*-t, de ott már tudták. De azért elénekeltük De azt szeretem, ha a könyv egy kihívás, ha valami többletet ad. A negyedikesek kedvence a *Spotty dog*, azt nagyon szerették ott keresgélni…

R: Azon ott voltam.

T1: Igen, akkor az egy ismétlés volt, összekapcsoltuk az állatneveket a jelzőkkel, és nagyon emlékeztek rá, pedig azelőtt egy hónappal vettük, szóval tényleg, eszméletlen hogy mennyire emlékeztek, hogy melyik jelző melyik állattal kapcsolható össze…nagyon jó volt. Szóval ez volt az egyik kedvencük, a *Spotty dog*, a másik meg az *I think my mum's a witch*.

R: Mi ragadja meg őket inkább, a történet vagy a képek, vagy egyéb?

T1: Ha izgalmas a történet, ha szépek a képek, de leginkább az mozgatja meg őket, ha gondolkodniuk kell, vagy ha meg kell valamit keresni, ha van hozzá feladat.

R: Miben látod a gyerekek fejlődését?

T1: Hát, úgy látom, hogy folyékonyabban beszélnek, meg elsajátítják a szószerkezeteket is például, és használják. Előfordult már az is, hogy óra közben beszéltünk így állatokról, és akkor hozták így jelzővel együtt, hogy: „az a jet-black cat."

R: És ha nem csak a nyelvi fejlődesükre gondolsz?

T1: Hát, szerintem a motivációjuk az olvasás irant növekedett, és szeretnek gyönyörködni, meg így olvasgatni. Szokták mondani, mikor egy unalmasabb nyelvtani részhez érünk, hogy mikor olvasunk már olyan szép könyveket? Szóval frissíti is őket.

R: Csoportdinamikailag volt jelentősége? Margitnál például segítette némelyik gyerrek beilleszkedését.

T1: Hát, annyira nem volt nyilvanvaló. Olyan volt mondjuk, hogy volt egy-két problémás gyerek, akiket nehezen lehet lekötni, és meséles alatt teljesen rá voltak tapadva a könyvekre, szóval teljesen lenyűgözte őket.

R: És az előfordult, hogy összehasonlították a könyveket a saját könyveikkel, vagy olyasmivel amit már olvastak?

T1: Hát, rögtön nem reagáltak, de olyan volt, hogy hoztak be könyveket, hogy ezt is nézzük meg, meg azt is nézzük meg.

R: Milyen könyveket?

T1: Angolt is, magyart is, kinek mi volt.

R: Hogy cserélik a könyveket?

T1: A negyedikeseknél betettünk egy dobozt, és onnan lehet mindig kivenni, és hazavinni, de mindig tudnom kell, hogy kinél van. A másodikiosoknak én adom oda, és mindig felírom.

R: És viszik őket?

T1: Jaj, persze. Tapossák le egymást, hogy elvihessék

R: A szülőktől jött valami visszajelzés?

T1: Hát a szülők nem jeleztek vissza, de testvérek felsőbb osztályokból, hogy „Jaj de jó az a könyv, amit bevittél a tesómékhoz!"

R: És a kollégák?

T1: Hát a kollégák közül Ildikó vitte el, meg Niki, tudod Ildikó, az igazgató-helyettes, elvitte a gimnazista fiának. Erikának is mutattam, de ő nem… nem az a fajta.

R: De irigykedést nem váltott ki?

T1: Nem, nagyon szeretik az ilyen új dolgokat, ha valami segíti a fejlődést. Tehát nincs az, hogy né, ez milyen buzgómócsing…

R: Te fejlődtél, több lettél valamilyen szempontból?

T1: Hát mindenképpen több lettem; sokkal közelebb érzem magamhoz a gyerekeket, hogyha így óra végén mesélek nekik. Meg ők is sokkal közvetlenebbek hozzám, és az mindenképpen jó, hogy sztorikat viszünk be órára, mert akkor kényszeríti az embert, hogy kihozzon belőle valamit, tehát ne csak úgy elmesélni… Meg nekem is jó.

R: Van kedvenc könyved?

T1: Kedvencem? *I think my mum's a witch.*

R: Miért

T1: Azert, mert meg lehet állni részeknél, és lehet kérdéseket feltenni, és fejleszti a gyerekek fantáziáját is.

R: És volt olyan, ami nem tetszett?

T: Ami nem tetszett? …. Talán a *One moose, twenty mice*. Azt nem sokszor vittem be, meg nem is nagyon kérték, mert olyan … hát szép, meg minden, de nem volt visszhangja a gyerekekben. Leginkább azok a könyvek jók, amikből ki lehet hozni valamit, amiben vannak information gap-ek.

R: Több munkát jelentenek a könyvek, vagy könnyítést?

T1: Csak abból a szempontból több, hogy az ember gondolkozik, hogy mit lehetne kihozni belőle, mit lehetne meg hozzá kapcsolni

R: Sok feladatot kapcsolsz hozzájuk?

T1: Nem, nem úgy van, hogy megállok egy oldal után, és onnan valami feladatot kell megoldani, hanem elmesélem, és ahhoz kapcsolni majd kesőbb, vagy ahogy adódik, ahogy adja magát…

R: Ha meg kellene fogalmaznod ennek a projektnek a célját, mit mondanál?

T1: Hat szeretném, ha a gyerekek megszeretnék az olvasást, meg ha a fluency-n javitana. Ha folyékonyabban beszélnének. Meg hogy ezek a szerkezetek beépüljenek

R: Köszönöm szépen.

First interview with T2 (June, 2001)

Reka: Hogy döntötted el, hogy részt veszel a projektben?

T2: Lídia kérdezte, hogy szeretnék-e. Mesélt a könyvekről, én meg szerettem volna, ha a gyerekek olvasnak. Úgyhogy gondolkoztam rajta.

R: Gondolkoztál rajta?

T2: Hat, amikor megláttam a könyveket, akkor nem.(nevet)

R: Hogy fogadták a gyerekek?

T2: Hát a gyerekeknek nagyon tetszett.

R: Előre megmutattad nekik a könyveket?

T2: Hát nem, mindig csak azt, amit éppen vettünk, illetve, amikor befejeztük, akkor, hogy melyik legyen a következő. Tehát mindig adtam nekik választási lehetőséget, hogy melyiket vegyük. Legalább kettőt, hogy a kovetkező órán melyiket vegyük.

R: És tart meg a lelkesedés?

T2: Igen. Most év végén kiadtam nekik nyárra. És el akarták vinni, volt aki kettőt is vitt, hogy ő azt most nyáron nézegeti

R: Nem okozott neked nehézséget, hogy megszervezd a kölcsönzést?

T2: Nem, azt nem. Az okozott nehézséget, hogy eldöntsem, hogy ki kapja meg először (nevet), mert mindenki akarta.

R: És épen mindegyik visszakerült…

T2: Igen, egyiknek sincs baja; na most egyért aggódom, mert olyan kislánynak adtam, akin sokat gondoldodtam, hogy … hát szóval visszakapom-e, egynél előfordulhat….

R: Hogy nem hozza vissza?

T2: Igen. Nem… nem akartam, de hát nem volt szívem azt mondani, hogy ő nem… nem akarom most kimondani, hogy…

T2: Cigány kislány? Igen, (zavartan nevet) így van. És nem mindenki vitt, meg kell hogy mondjam, volt olyan aki nem akart vinni, pedig jól megy neki, és hát ugye én szerettem volna, de nem erőltettem rá, mert hogyha ő igy döntött, hogy nem, akkor nem, de mondjuk magamban nagyon sajnáltam, hogy…

R: Másképp álltak hozzá a jobbak es a gyengébbek?

T2: Nem okvetlenül… nem is mindig az szerette a legjobban, aki a legjobb. Van egy fiú, és ennek a fiúnak minden jól megy, leírva is, szóban is, és nem vitte a könyvet. Mondjuk ez egy kicsit így fájó pontom volt, de hát nem lehet erőltetni.

R: Ez különben a gyengébbeknek egy nagy kiugrási lehetőség lehet, nem?

T2: Hát igen, és egyébként sok olyan gyerek van, aki életében ilyen minőségű könyvet nem fogott a kezében, és talán nem is lesz lehetősége, mert nincs otthon. És mondom, ez a másik, amit te is mondtál, hogy sértetlenül, tehát úgy hozzák vissza, ahogy viszik, nagyon vigyáznak rá.

R: Vannak kedvenceik?

T2: Igen, igen, igen. Hát a *Buzz, buzz...*, aztán a cicások…

R: És mit csináltok ezzel a könyvvel? Mikor ott jártam, akkor a *Buzz, buzzt, buzz*-t már kívülről tudták…

T2: Igen, hát kívulről mondják őket. Szinte az összeset. Na most egy van, az a nehezebb, mi is a címe, az a tengeres… *Big... Big Sea*? Hát azt vettük legutoljára, Más szintű, de azért próbáltam, mert Lídiával is beszélgettünk, hogy esetleg nem is való... Harmadikosokról van szó, és hogy esetleg nem való… de tetszett az is nekik.

R: És mi tetszik nekik sokszor, a rajzok, vagy a történet? Vagy más?

T2: Na most nem tudom, ezt az utolsót, ezt még csak egyszer vettük, és ez nem tetszett mindenkinek, de a zömének, főleg a lányoknak tetszett. A fiúknak nem. Ők érezttették is, hogy most ők ebből kimaradnának

R: Ez hogy történik?

T2: Akkor igy félreülnek… hát nem félre, mert nem így látványosan félreülnek, de úgy elfordultak. Ők kimaradtak ebből.

R: És ilyenkor megjegyzéseket is tesznek?

T: Hát nem hangosan, ők nagyon jólneveltek egyébkent, tehat ők nem … néha az is a baj, hogy nem mondják őszintén, ahogy kellene, én meg nem akarom úgy annyira mondani, csak ami maguktól jön. De ők ilyenek, hogy ami nem jó, azt nem szívesen mondják meg.

R: Ez lehet, hogy egy kulturális dolog, nem?

T2: Igen, így vannak nevelve.

R: És akkor bekiabálni sem szoktak, hogy jaj, tanár neni, a szarvast meg kellett foltozni?

T2: Nem, nem. Egy-kettő van köztük, aki ilyen cserfesebb, főleg egy kislány van, aki mondja, tehát onnan jönnek azért visszajelzések.

R: És azt sem mondják meg, hogy mi tetszik nekik?

T2: Azt igen, azt igen, tehát a jót igen. Csak a rosszat nem; most erről beszéltünk, hogy mért maradnak ebből ki, ezt nem, ezt nem.

R: S olyankor azt leírod?

T2: Igen, óra után. Hát, szó szerint nem marad meg minden, de próbálom.

R: Milyen kedvencek voltak még?

T2: Mi is van még? (thinking)

R: Például a *Can you do it?*

T2: Na igen, azt szeretik. Na, azt például el is szoktuk játszani. És a testrészeket is előkészitettük vele. És elég jól megmaradnak a szavak. Ők például tudják meg az ablakpárkányt is

R: A *Cats sleep*-ből?

T: Igen, igen (laughs) „window-ledge."

R: Akartam is kérdezni, hogy miben látod a gyerekek fejlődesét …. Szavak, szerkezetek, egyéb?

T2: Igen. Hát, a szavak azok megmaradnak, esetleg szószerkezetek is, igen…

R: És másban? Mondjuk az önbizalmuk?

T2: Igen, nyitottabbak. Volt egy szótlan kislány, aki, hát nem igazán vett részt, most már bátrabb. Beilleszdedett hozzánk az a kislány is, akit akkor láttál, hogy érkezett; most már teljesen befogadták, ott ül közöttünk

R: Ilyenkor másképp ültök?

T2: Van amikor, például … van az a könyv, az a kutyás…. *Can you spot the spotty dog?...* ott körbeültünk, hogy keressék, meg hogy rámutassanak, hogy hol van, na hát ott volt aztán, hogy mindenki odaférjen, bújtak, mar a lábamon voltak, már mindenhol. Na és akkor olyan élményem volt még, hogy helyettesítentem kellett a németes csoportban, tehát összevontak bennünket, és ők is emlegetik a mai napig ezeket a könyveket, anélkül hogy ők angolt tanulnának

R: És az előfordul, hogy behoznak otthoni könyveket hogy megmutassák?

T2: Nem. Pedig elég jó társaság, én tudom, hogy a zömének van otthon könyve.

R: Csak azért gondoltam, mert előfordulhatna, hogy eszébe jut az egyik könyvről a sajátja, es akkor azt rögtön el kell mondani, megmutatni…

T2: Nem, ez könyvekről nem, viszont állatokról, hogy ugye a macskám, ez meg fiúknál is, meg a mi kutyánk… tehát személyes lesz.

R: És szoktál valamilyen feladatot kapcsolni a könyvekhez, vagy inkább csak olvasgatjátok, nézegetitek őket?

T2: Rajzolni szoktak, ez például a *Buzz* buzz-nál nagyon bevált; ott lerajzolták, hogy melyik állatnak a mijére szállt, nagyon működött a fantáziájuk. De hát nem mindenki szeret rajzolni, aki nem tud, az nyilván nem nagyon szeret.

R: Jónak tartod, hogy van egy tankönyv, és ez csak kiegészítő anyag?

T2: Igen, mert a tankönyvet, akármennyire is szeretik, egy idő után megunják, meg akarmilyen jó az a tankönyv, a *You and Me*-t tanulják, azt nagyon szeretik a gyerekek, én is nagyon szeretek vele dolgozni, mert matrica, meg színes kép, meg énekek, szóval tényleg abban minden van, de mégis egy idő után megunják, és vágynak valami újra. Viszont azt is észrevettem, mert máshol is csináltam már ilyen olvasást, és utána már megint örulnek, hogy akkor most ezt félretesszük, és akkor a tankönyv megint. Szóval, fontos a változatosság.

R: Volt valami visszhang a szülőktől, vagy előfordult, hogy a gyerekek megmutatták otthon a könyveket a szülőknek, testvéreknek?

T2: Igen, hát testvéreket is tanítok, és ők szokták mondani némelyik osztályban, hogy hát ezt lattuk a testvéreknél, ezt mi is elolvastuk…

R: És a szülők nem jeleztek vissza?

T2: Hát igen, a szülők is örulnek, szóval emiatt nem keresnek meg, de akivel találkozom, az mondja.

R: A kollégáknak mi volt a reakciója? Van, aki érdeklődik?

T2: Igen, van az a *One moose, twenty mice*, ezt az egyik kolléganő elkérte, és ilyen tűpárnakat varrtak technika órán.

R: De semmifele rossz reakció nem volt, irigység…

T2: Nem, nem.

R: Hogy látod, te miben változtál amióta ezt csinálod? Esetleg valamit fontosnak tartasz azóta, vagy másképp látsz… Fejlődtél szakmailag?

T2: Hát mindenképpen, mert én ezt önállóan nem mertem volna csinálni, hogy… hogy ilyen szintű könyveket… még akkor sem, ha lett volna lehetősegem, hogy Angliából hozzak egy-két könyvet. Ilyen szintűt biztos nem vittem volna be, mert hát csak a rövidített változatra gondoltam volna, csak ami nekik való… Szóval ehhez kellett a bátoritás. Aztán ötleteket is ad, hogy hogy tanítsunk ezt-azt. Na meg nyelvileg is…. Az az igazság, hogy én arra jöttem rá,

hogy az ember akármennyi ideig tanul, van, amikor ilyen gyerekkönyvekből tanul meg szavakat.

R: És neked van kedvenced?

T2: Hát én mindegyiket szereetem. Nem tudok választani.

R: Miben látod ennek az értelmét?

T2: Hát az értelmét abban látom, hogy nagyon motiválja őket. Említettem, hogy sok szót tanulnak.

R: Gondolod, hogy több kedvük lesz az olvasáshoz is?

T2: Hát, ezt még nem lehet lemérni ennyi idő után, de az biztos, hogy az is meg fog változni

R: Plusszmunka ez, vagy könnyíti a munkádat?

T2: Nem érzem plusszak, mert ha az ember látja, hogy szeretik, akkor megcsinálja. Na és erre különösebben nem kell készülni. Jó, egy-két szót ki kell nézni, a kiejtést, ha nem ismerem, de egyébként nem nagyon.

R: Köszönöm szépen.

Az értekezés tézisei

We really like your stories, but we think we
ought to be doing the topics for the final exam.

Constructing knowledge through experiences with narratives in natural and instructed settings

Teachers and learners of English as a Foreign Language

Lugossy Réka

Consultant: Dr. Nikolov Marianne

Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics
University of Pécs
2007

Az értekezés témája és célja

A disszertációmban javasolt modellben a diákok műveltségének és idegen nyelvi kompetenciájának megszerzése, valamint a tanári tudás kialakulása integráltan, egymáshoz sokrétűen kapcsolódó folyamatokként jelennek meg. Ez az interakcionista, kontextusfüggő paradigma (Johnson, 2006; Johnson és Golombek, 2003) a szocio-konstruktivizmus episztemológiai hagyományába helyezkedik bele, és ennek megfelelően, a tanulást dialógusban létrehozott folyamatként értelmezi (Lemke, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). Igy, a tanárok tudása, a nyelvtudáshoz és a műveltséghez hasonlóan, szociális kapcsolatrendszerben épülnek (Lantolf és Thorne, 2006), és elválaszthatatlanok a résztvevők személyes, szakmai és kulturális hátterétől (Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Lemke, 2002; van Dam, 2002).

Disszertációm egyrészt a tanári tudás kialakulását vizsgálja. Az előző, tranzaktív tanárképzési modellektől eltérően, az interakcionista modellben a tanári tudás kialakítása nem merül ki a releváns elméletek, módszerek és technikák elsajátításában. Ezeken túlmenően, elsődleges szerepet kap az, hogy a tanárok reflektáljanak a saját praktikumukra, és azt azon kulturális tradíciók kontextusában értelmezzék, amelyek a tanítási-tanulási felfogásmódukat befolyásolják (Johnson, 2006, Johnson és Golombek, 2003). Magyarországon végzett kutatások alátámasztják, hogy az angoltanárok tanításról vallott elképzelései nincsenek összhangban az osztálytermi gyakorlatukkal (Nikolov, 2002): annak ellenére, hogy ismerik a nyelvelsajátítással kapcsolatos kurrens teóriákat, gyakorlatukat olyan, a nevelési kultúra által közvetített elképzelések alakítják, amelyeknek nincsenek tudatában. Ezért, a tanári tudás építése során elengedhetetlen, hogy a tanárok ne csak az elméleteket integrálják tudatosan a gyakorlatukba, hanem, a gyakorlatra reflektálva, artikulálják a tanításról-tanulásról vallott látens elképzeléseket, és próbálják meg összhangba hozni őket az explicit teóriáikkal. Igy, a gyakorlatra való reflektálás nem merül ki az órai események szemlélésében, hanem elvezet azoknak az eszméknek a megismeréséhez és megértéséhez, amelyek az eseményeket irányítják.

A reflektív szemléletben, amely a bemutatott interakcionista paradigma sajátja, a tanárok tanulása nem ér véget az intézményesített oktatás befejezésével, hanem osztálytermi kontextusban, az elmélet és a praktikum integrálása során fejlődik tovább. Amennyiben a tanárok megértik, hogy tudásuk nem csak külső forrásból származhat, hanem az elméletek saját kontextusban való értelmezéséből és alkalmazásából, az osztályterem a tanári tanulás állandó és legitim színhelyévé válhat (Johnson, 2006).

Disszertációm másik fókusza a diákok műveltségének kialakítása, amely nem csupán írni-olvasni tudásukra korlátozódik, hanem az olvasáskultúra kialakítását célozza anyanyelven és idegen nyelven egyaránt. A tanári tudáshoz hasonlóan, a műveltség, ezen belül pedig a nyelvi műveltség megszerzése szintén beleágyazódik a szociokulturális kontextusba, és szerves egységben alakul a tanári tudással. A lineáris tanulási modellek a tanítás és tanulás viszonyát ok-okozati összefüggésben értelmezték, ezért a műveltség megszerzését is a tanítás közvetlen hatásának tulajdonították. Az interakcionista szemlélet tágabb értelmezése szerint a műveltség közösségben keletkezik (Lantolf és Thorne, 2006).

Ebben a folyamatban kiemelt szerep hárul a tanárokra, akik támogatni tudják a tanulókat a műveltség folyamatos formálódásában. Így például, fontos, hogy a tanárok építsenek a diákok otthonról hozott olvasáskultúrájára, és hogy integrálják az olvasmányokra vonatkozó javaslataikat (Heath, 1982, 1994; Nikolov, 2000). Ez akkor következhet be, ha a tanárok a műveltség kialakulását sokrétű, a szociokulturális háttérben gyökerező folyamatként értelmezik, amely a közösség folytonos dialógusában épül. Ehhez viszont az is szükséges, hogy a tanárok a saját tudásukat is közösségben létrejövő ismeretként értelmezzék, és gyakorlatukat az elméleti háttér, valamint a kontextus ismeretében folyamatosan újraértékeljék. Amennyiben a tanárokban tudatosodik, hogy saját és diákjaik tanulása egyetlen összefonódó dinamikus rendszert alkotnak, azt is megértik, hogy saját fejlődésük nem csupán előfeltétele a diákok fejlődésének, hanem annak eredménye is: azáltal, hogy segítik a diákok szocializálódását a könyvek kultúrájába, a tanárok is tovább építik a nyelvről és a műveltségről alkotott felfogásmódjukat. Csak ennek a relacionális, dinamikus és kontextusfüggő szemléletnek a birtokában tudják megfelelően segíteni a diákok műveltségének kialakulását.

A felvázolt interakcionista keretben (Lantolf és Thorne, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002) kiemelt szerepet kapnak a narratívák, mint a tanárok és diákok tudását és műveltségét építő médiumok. Az elmúlt évek során növekvő figyelmet kapott a narratívák jelentésteremtő szerepe a különböző tudományágakban (Bruner, 1996; Cobley, 2001; Ehmann, 2002; Horsdal, 2005, 2006; Keen, 2003; László, 2005a). Disszertációmban a narratívákat két perspektívából közelítettem meg. Egyrészt, mint lehetséges jelentés- és identitásteremtő eszközöket (Bruner, 1996; Horsdal, 2006; Schank és Abelson, 1995), amelyek „állványzatként" („scaffolding") segítik a kognitív, érzelmi valamint szociális fejlődést és a műveltség, ezen belül pedig a nyelvi műveltség megszerzését. Ezért, az angol órán való longitudinális használatuk nem csak a tanulók nyelvi kompetenciáinak fejlesztésére alkalmas,

hanem, sokkal tágabban szemlélve, elősegíti a diákok és a tanárok olvasáskultúrába való szocializálódást, és a tanulásról alkotott sokrétű és dinamikus felfogásmód kialakulását.

Másfelől, a narratívákat mint introspekciós módszert vizsgáltam: a tanári elbeszélések, az osztálytermi eseményeken túl, egy „belső tájképet" is láttatnak, mert fényt vetnek a történések mögötti gondolatokra („inner landscape," Bruner, 1986. 11-12 o.). A narratív keret alkalmat teremt arra, hogy a tanárok elbeszéljék és ezáltal tudatosítsák az eddig nem-tudatos nevelési eszméket, amelyek a praktikumot befolyásolják. Így, a tanári narratívák nem csupán egy kultúra termékei, de ők maguk is kultúrateremtő eszközökké válhatnak (Bruner, 1987), azáltal, hogy alakítják a tanári gondolkodást és gyakorlatot.

E két szempont integrálásával egyrészt annak feltárására végeztem vizsgálatokat, hogy miként hatnak a narratívák angolul tanuló gyerekek és tanáraik motivációjára és olvasáskultúrájára, és hogyan építik interakcióban a könyvekről, kultúrákról és az idegen nyelvről való tudásukat. Továbbá arra is kerestem a választ, hogy a narratívák, úgy is mint autentikus tananyagok, és úgy is mint tanári elbeszélések, hogyan segítik a tanárok szakmai fejlődését. Ez utóbbi kérdés megválaszolására, a tanárok elbeszéléseire támaszkodva vizsgáltam, hogyan értelmezik a tanárok a gyakorlatukat és a tanításról való felfogásukat, és hogyan építik tanári identitásukat a narratívákon keresztül. Empirikus kutatásaimban az interakcionista paradigma (Johnson, 2006; Lantolf és Thorne, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002) olyan elméleti keretnek bizonyult, amely integrálja a tanulás kognitív, affektív, szociális és kulturális aspektusait, ezért jól használható a diákok és a tanárok sokrétű tanulásának vizsgálatára.

A disszertáció felépítése

A disszertációm két fő részre és azon belül hét fejezetre oszlik. Az első részben, amely az első négy fejezetet foglalja magába, bemutatom a kutatásokhoz kapcsolódó elméleti hátteret. Az első fejezetben áttekintem azokat a neveléselméleti tradíciókat, amelyek nagy jelentőségűek a nyelvi nevelés kutatásában. Az áttekintés nem a teljesség igényével készült, hanem elsősorban az empirikus tanulmányokban vizsgált folyamatok jellegéhez igazodik. Ez indokolja, hogy a neveléspszichológiai elméletek tárgyalása során kiemelten foglalkozom azokkal a megközelítésekkel, amelyek nagy jelentőséget tulajdonítanak a tanulás és a tanítás szociális kontextusának, beleértve a résztvevők személyes, szakmai és kulturális történetét (Bruner, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978), valamint a tanár szerepét a diákok tudásának kialakulásában.

Továbbá, fontos szerepet kapnak a természettudományok területéről ismert káosz/komplexitás elméletek, amelyek a holisztikus, dinamikus és kontextusfüggő episztemológiai modellek közé tartoznak.

A káosz/komplexitás elméletek alapgondolata, miszerint a részek kölcsönhatásait vizsgálva juthatunk el olyan meglátásokra, amelyek az egyes elemek külön vizsgálata során rejtve maradnak (Larsen-Freeman, 2002), újszerűen alkalmazható a műveltség, az idegen nyelvi kompetencia és a tanári tudás kialakulásának vizsgálatakor. A káosz/komplexitás elméletek fogalomrendszere lehetőséget teremt arra, hogy ezeket a folyamatokat ne egymástól elszigetelve, egysíkúan közelítsük meg, hanem úgy, ahogy a valóságban léteznek: egymást teremtő kölcsönhatásban. Például a diákok műveltségének, és ezen belül a nyelvtudásnak a kialakítása szorosan összefügg a tanárok tudásával és a szocio-kulturális közeg eszmei hátterével.

A második fejezet a narratívák szerepét vizsgálja a műveltség és a tanári tudás kialakításában. A narratívákat olyan eszközökként tárgyalja, amelyek nagyban hozzájárulnak a gyermekek kognitív, nyelvi és érzelmi fejlődéséhez, különösen az egyén személyes és a szociális identitásépítéséhez (Bruner, 1987; Bettelheim, 1991; Horsdal, 2006; King és Nikolov, 1992; Schank és Abelson, 1995). Schank és Abelson kognitív pszichológusok rávilágítanak a narratíva jelentésteremtő szerepére az emberi gondolkodásban. A séma teória szerint az emberi tudás narratív sémák köré szerveződik: új eseményeket régi történetek alapján értelmezünk (1995). Ezért, minél több történetet hallanak és olvasnak a gyerekek, annál több lehetőségük nyílik a későbbiek során új ismeretek rendszerezésére és feldolgozására. Ez kiemelten vonatkozik a nyelvi fejlődésre, ezen belül pedig az idegen nyelvi tudás kialakítására. Margaret Donaldson (1987) kutatásai bizonyítják, hogy a gyermekek tanulása szituációhoz kötődő, és az új ismereteket leginkább az életükben releváns, értelmezhető kontextusba helyezve képesek elsajátítani. A második- és idegennyelv elsajátítás területén végzett kutatások szintén alátámasztják, a gyermekek életéhez kapcsolódó, motiváló kontextus jelentőségét (Elley, 1989), így igazolva a narratívák hordozta lehetőségeket a nyelvtudás kialakításában.

A kognitív fejlődést szolgáló szerepük mellett, Bettelheim (1991) a meséknek a gyermekek érzelmi fejlődésben betöltött sarkalatos szerepét hangsúlyozza. A mesék archetipikus történései alapvető egzisztenciális szorongásokat testesítenek meg, amelyek, ezáltal, feldolgozhatóvá válnak, és segítik a bontakozó gyermeki lelket értelemkereső törekvéseiben. Fontos azonban hozzátenni, hogy nem csupán a mese műfaja járul hozzá a személyiség fejlődéséhez, hanem maga a narratív gondolkodás is. Bruner (1996) elkülöníti a

narratív és a paradigmatikus gondolkodást, és kiemeli az utóbbi fontosságát a személyiség fejlődésében és a kulturális identitás megőrzésében. Osztálytermi kutatások igazolják, hogy a narratívák kohéziót teremtő ereje osztályközösségek életében is látványos: a mesék és mítoszok hosszantartó használata pozitívan befolyásolja a résztvevők olvasási és nyelvtanulási motivációját, műveltségét, önkifejezését, valamint a közösség formálását (King és Nikolov, 1992; Rosen, 1988).

Szintén a második fejezetben kap helyet a narratívák más szempontú megközelítése is: introspekciós eszközként, a tanárok tanításról valló elbeszélései betekintést nyújtanak a tanárok gondolkodásába (Bruner, 1987; Horsdal, 2006; László, 2005a), és ezáltal válnak jelentésteremtő eszközökké. Bruner konstruktivista szemléletében a narratívák „világteremtő" eszközök (1987. 691 o.), amelyek, azáltal, hogy megfogalmazzák és értelmezik a valóságot, alakítják is azt. Igy, a tanári narratívák nem csupán az elbeszélő tanárok gyakorlatát befolyásolják, hanem, hatással vannak a tanítási kultúra egészére.

A harmadik fejezet a műveltség kialakulását tárgyalja. A dolgozatban javasolt megközelítésben, a műveltség („literacy") megszerzése túlmutat az írni-olvasni tudáson, és sokkal tágabb perspektívában gondolkozva, az olvasáskultúrába való szocializációt célozza. A lineáris tanulási modellektől eltérően, amelyek a tanítás és tanulás viszonyát ok-okozati összefüggésben értelmezték, és ezért a műveltség megszerzését is a tanítás közvetlen hatásának tulajdonították, az interakcionista szemlélet a műveltséget szociálisan létrehozott folyamatként értelmezi (Heath, 1994; Hudelson, 1985). Ezért, kialakulását nem csupán a közvetlenül írást-olvasást tanító tevékenységek befolyásolják, hanem a kulturális kontextus, például az ösztönző osztálytermi légkör, vagy a közösség (tanárok, társak, szülők) műveltségről hordozott felfogása is.

A műveltség kialakulásának dialogikus szemlélete tehát rávilágít a környezet, és ezen belül a tanár szerepére. Iskolai kontextusban elsősorban a tanárra hárul az a feladat, hogy olyan környezetet teremtsen, amely nem csupán az írás-olvasás elsajátítását segíti, hanem tartósan felkelti a gyermekek érdeklődését az írás és olvasás iránt, azáltal, hogy érdekes és értelmes tevékenységeknek láttatja őket (Hiebert, 1991; Hudelson, 1995; Langer, 1991; Smith, 1988). Például, kulcsfontosságú hosszútávon olyan tananyagokat és hozzájuk kapcsolódó tevékenységeket beépíteni a nyelvórába, amelyek felkeltik és megtartják az olvasás, és ezzel összefonódva, az idegen-nyelv tanulás iránti motivációt. A narratívák erre több ok miatt is alkalmasnak bizonyulnak.

Az intrinzikus motiváció megteremtése és a már előbb említett kognitív, affektív és érzelmi potenciáljuk mellett, a narratívák azért is jelentősek a nyelvi műveltség építése

szempontjából, mert szorosan összefonódnak az anyanyelvi műveltséggel. Egyrészt, építenek az első nyelvből hozott háttértudásra és sémákra, másrészt, a nyelvi interdependencia kutatások eredményei szerint (Cummins, 1991), az idegen nyelven való olvasottság pozitívan befolyásolja az első nyelvi műveltség kialakulását. Ezt figyelembe véve, nagy jelentősége van a motiváló olvasmányoknak az angol órán, kivált a hátrányos helyzetű diákok esetében (Krashen, 1997-8).

A negyedik fejezetben az autentikus narratívák, ezeken belül pedig a képeskönyvek szerepét vizsgálom a műveltség kialakításában és az angol nyelvi nevelésben. A képeskönyveket általában kora gyermekkorhoz kötődő olvasmányokként tartjuk számon, amelyek átmenetet képeznek a „komolyabb" könyvek felé (Marriott, 1998). Ennél árnyaltabb megközelítések viszont figyelemmel kísérik a képeskönyvek eklektikus, intertextuális voltát, és hangsúlyozzák, hogy olvasásuk során bonyolult, a verbális és vizuális szöveget összehangoltan értelmező folyamatok zajlanak (Baddeley és Eddershaw, 1994; Evans, 1998; Graham, 1998; Stephens, 1992; Styles, 1996). Poliszemikus, többféle műfajt integráló diskurzusukból fakadóan, a képeskönyvek olvasása kreatív folyamat, amely szellemi kihívást jelent gyermek és felnőtt olvasóközönség számára egyaránt. Azáltal, hogy olvasásuk összefügg a kognitív, érzelmi, morális és művészeti fejlődéssel (Arizpe, 2006; Marriott, 1998; Stephens, 1992; Zipes, 1983, 1997), az autentikus képeskönyvek fontos szerepet tölthetnek be a gyermekek műveltségének kialakításában. Ez különösen érvényes az idegen nyelvi műveltség építésére, mert az idegen nyelv motiváló, a gyermekek számára releváns verbális és vizuális kontextusban jelenik meg, amely gondolkodásra és beszélgetésre sarkall (Baddeley és Eddershaw, 1998; Elley, 1989).

Az empirikus kutatások bemutatása és eredményei

A disszertáció második része túlnyomórészt öt és tizenkét év közötti angolul tanuló gyermekekkel és tanáraikkal végzett három empirikus kutatást foglal magába. Bizonyos esetekben azonban, a résztvevő tanárok középiskolásokat és felnőtteket is bevontak az osztálytermi kutatásaikba, így más korosztályok által nyert adatok is szerepelnek a vizsgálatok adatbázisában. A bemutatott tanulmányokban az idegen-nyelv tanulási és tanítási folyamatokat kognitív, affektív és szociális folyamatokkal összefüggésben vizsgáltam. A kutatás során a nyelvtanulók és a tanárok fejlődését egyaránt figyelemmel kísértem, mert tanulási folyamataik egymással dinamikus interakcióban kontextualizálódnak.

Mindhárom tanulmány kvalitatív vizsgálódás eredménye, mind az adatgyűjtést, mind pedig az adatok feldolgozását illetően. Ezért, a kvalitatív kutatási tradícióra jellemző módon, céljuk nem előre megfogalmazott hipotézisek bizonyítása, és általánosítható következtetések levonása volt, hanem sokkal inkább az angol nyelvi neveléshez kapcsolódó kognitív, nyelvi, affektív és szociális folyamatok leírása, elemzése és értelmezése, amelynek során további kérdések és hipotézisek merülhetnek fel (Creswell, 1998; Mackey és Gass, 2005). A következőkben bemutatom a három vizsgálat kutatási kérdéseit, adatgyűjtő eszközeit, és ismertetem a lényeges eredményeket.

Az első kutatás: A narratívák szerepe a tanárok tanulás-felfogásának alakulásában

Az ötödik fejezetben leírt vizsgálatban szereplő 32 gyakorló tanár a Pécsi Tudományegyetem angol posztgraduális képzésének résztvevője. Ők módszertani szemináriumokon azt a feladatot kapták, hogy bármely korosztállyal történeteket használjanak az angol órákon, és írásban mutassák be kísérleteik eredményét. Ilyen módon, a kutatás két síkon kívánta vizsgálni a narratívák és a nyelvtanulók, valamint a nyelvtanárok kapcsolatát: egyfelől célja volt bemutatni az angol órán kiegészítő anyagokként használt narratívák szerepét a nyelvtanulók és tanárok fejlődésében, különös tekintettel a tanárok narratívák iránti attitűdjére. Másfelől, a tanárok elbeszéléseit kontextusba ágyazott jelentésteremtő eszközökként vizsgálta. Ilyen szempontból a narratívák keretet teremthettek arra, hogy a praktikumukat értelmezni próbáló tanárok a látszólag különálló osztálytermi jelenségeket koherens rendszerben lássák, és a közösség nevelési tradícióiban kontextualizálják (Bruner, 1987). A kutatás eszközeiként a résztvevő tanárok órai önmegfigyelése és a megfigyeléseket elmesélő és elemző dolgozataik, a szemináriumi beszélgetésekről készült jegyzeteim, valamint egy, a narratívák órai használatára és a tanárok olvasási szokásaira fókuszáló kérdőív szolgált.

A vizsgálat feltárja a tanárok ambivalens narratíva-felfogását. Annak ellenére, hogy tisztában vannak a narratívák kognitív, affektív és szociális előnyeivel, valamint a tanári fejlődésre tett jótékony hatásukkal, attól tartanak, hogy rendszeres órai használatuk értékes időt venne el a nyelvtanközpontú tanítástól, amit saját pedagógiai szocializációjuk folytán elsődlegesnek vélnek a nyelvi nevelésben. Ez a meggyőződés feltehetően részben a nyugati episztemológiai tradícióra jellemző felfogásban gyökerezik, amely előnyben részesíti az analitikus gondolkodást a narratív gondolkodással szemben (Bruner, 1996; Egan, 1989;

Wells, 1986). Ennek mentén felértékelődik az explicit, lépésről lépésre történő tanítás, a kreatív, gondolkoztató, és a tanulók autonómiáját serkentő tevékenységek rovására. Másrészt, az eredmények arra is rámutatnak, hogy a vizsgált tanárok a tanárképzés során megszerzett elméleti tudást nem integrálják a mindennapi gyakorlatukba. Így, továbbra sem tudnak elrugaszkodni az egymástól elszigetelt, teoretikus hátteret nélkülöző technikák szintjétől, egy, a teóriákat és technikákat koherensen látó koncepció felé.

Az, hogy a tanárok nem alkalmazzák az elméleti tudásukat a gyakorlatban, abból a meggyőződésükből is kitűnik, hogy az autentikus narratívákat túl nehéznek vélik a nyelvtanulóknak. Érdekes megemlíteni, hogy a tanárok mindig a nyelvi nehézséget említik, és nem veszik figyelembe azokat az esetleges fogalmi nehézségeket, amelyek nehezíthetik a megértést. Ez a megközelítés egyrészt azt sugallja, hogy a szöveg megértéséhez ismernünk kell a benne szereplő szavakat és nyelvi szerkezeteket; másrészt, nem veszi figyelembe azokat a természetes szövegértési stratégiákat, amelyekhez az első nyelven is spontán folyamodunk, mint például a háttértudás és a szövegkörnyezet felhasználása, valamint a segítségkérés. Ezek szerint, a nyelvtanulók akkor állnak készen az autentikus narratívák befogadására, ha már megtanították nekik a megfelelő nyelvezetet. Ez a nézet ellentétben áll azokkal az explicit kommunikatív elméletekkel, amelyeket a vizsgált tanárok vallanak, és a kommunikatív kompetencia fogalmával, amely a nyelvi nevelés fő céljai között szerepel.

A második kutatás: Az autentikus képeskönyvek szerepe a műveltség kialakításában

A hatodik fejezetben hét és tíz év közötti magyar iskolás gyerekekkel és az őket tanító négy tanárral végzett kutatást mutatok be. A három pécsi és egy Pécs környéki általános iskolában végzett vizsgálat során a gyermekek és tanáraik autentikus angol képeskönyveket olvastak az angolórán, a tananyag kiegészítéseképpen. A kutatás egyrészt azért újszerű, mert az autentikus képeskönyvek olyannyira ritkaság számba mennek Magyarországon, hogy a kutatásban résztvevő gyerekek ezidáig nem is láttak ezekhez hasonló könyveket. Másrészt, a rendszeres órai használat mellett, a tanulók, a magyarországi gyakorlattal ellentétben, ki is kölcsönözhették a könyveket. A vizsgálat céljai között szerepelt, hogy betekintést engedjen a gyeremekek és tanáraik motivációjába, angol nyelvi fejlődésükbe, és órai együttműködésébe, valamint a szűkebb közösség (tanárok, diákok, társak, testvérek, szülők, kollégák) együttműködésébe az autentikus gyermekkönyvek olvasása során.

Az eredmények igazolni látszanak az autentikus narratíváknak a nyelvi, érzelmi és szociális fejlődésre tett jótékony hatását. A képeskönyvek olvasása során a diákok és a tanárok egyaránt intrinzikus motiváció jeleit mutatták az idegen nyelv és az idegen nyelven való olvasás iránt. A tanárok beszámolnak arról, hogy nyitottabb és kölcsönösen elfogadóbb kapcsolatuk lett a diákjaikkal, és a gyermekek is toleránsabbak, és az órai munka során együttműködőbbek lettek egymással.

A longitudinális vizsgálódás alkalmat adott arra, hogy megfigyeljem a tanári attitűdök változását is, a kutatás kezdetén megnyilvánuló szkepticizmustól az autentikus könyvekben rejlő lehetőségeket értő, és használatukat szakmai kihívásnak tekintő magatartásig. A négy vizsgált tanár közül hárman a szakmai fejlődés jegyeit mutatták, motivációban, reflexióban és autonómiában: érzékenyebben és differenciáltabban reagáltak a gyerekek érdeklődésére és szükségleteire, és szívesen kísérleteztek új anyagokkal és osztálytermi eljárásokkal. Tudatosabb és autonómabb tanárokká váltak. Az autonómiára vonatkozó eredmények azért is fontosak, mert a magyarországi nevelési hagyományok elég kevés teret adnak a tanárok egyéni gondolatainak és döntéshozatalának a tanítás folyamatát illetően. Amint azt az ötödik fejezetben bemutott kutatás is igazolja, a tanárok legszívesebben a tankönyveket követik, és nehezen vállalkoznak a kísérletezésre, pedig nem csak a diákok életében hozhat változást, hanem a tanári tudás építéséhez is elengedhetetlen (Johnson, 2006).

A kutatás egyik fontos eredménye az első és második nyelvi olvasási motiváció kölcsönhatására vonatkozik. A tanárok beszámolnak arról, hogy az angol nyelvű képeskönyvek látványosan felkeltették a gyermekek olvasás iránti érdeklődését, és szívesen hozták be saját, magyar nyelvű könyveiket az angolórára. Ez az eredmény kivált a hátrányos helyzetű tanulók esetében fontos, ahol a könyvek használata a nyelvórán nem csak a nyelvi kompetenia kialakítását célozza, hanem a hátrányos helyzetből adódó, műveltségbeli hiányokat is ellensúlyozni hivatott. Mindazonáltal, további longitudinális vizsgálat tárgyát képezi, hogy az autentikus narratívák hosszútávú és rendszeres olvasása angolul hogyan hat az anyanyelvi olvasási motivációra.

A harmadik kutatás: Interakcióban megnyilvánuló értelemteremtés

A hetedik fejezetben bemutatott tanulmány öt és tizenkét éves gyermekeknek az autentikus angol képeskönyvek olvasása során elhangzó spontán, magyar nyelvű hozzászólásait, ún. „kommentálását" (Nikolov, 2002) elemzi. Az órai megfigyelések során gyűjtött adatok olyan

kognitív és affektív folyamatokat tárnak fel, amelyek a képeskönyvek értelmezése közben zajlanak, és amelyek a gyermekek és tanárok interakcióiban nyilvánulnak meg.

A kutatás során gyűjtött adatok elemzése igazolja a kommentálás létjogosultságát az angolórán. Ezek a spontán megjegyzések ugyanis azt bizonyítják, hogy a gyermekek szívesen olvasnak autentikus könyveket az angol órán, és lelkesen nyilvánítanak eredeti véleményt az olvasottakról. Továbbá, a gyermekek magyar nyelvű hozzászólásai lehetőséget teremtenek arra, hogy a tanárok angolul reagáljanak rájuk, és így segítsék a gyermekek célnyelvi fejlődését. Ez, természetesen, csak abban az esetben lehetséges, ha a tanár úgy dönt, hogy reagál ezekre a kommentárokra, és beépíti őket a tanári diskurzusba. Vannak viszont a fejezetben arra is példák, amikor a tanár nem tartja helyénvalónak a kommentálást, és így elszalasztja a diákok által kezdeményezett spontán kommunikációs lehetőséget, és egyben a lehetőséget arra, hogy fenntartsa a gyermekek érdeklődését.

Az, hogy a tanárok hogyan reagálnak a tanulók kommentárjaira a képeskönyvek olvasása közben, összefüggésben van a tanulásról alkotott felfogásukkal. Azokban az esetekben, amikor a tanárok integrálták a gyerekek spontán megjegyzéseit a tanári diskurzusba, további lehetőségeket teremtettek a nyelvelsajátításra és a kognitív fejlődésre. Ezáltal azt is jelezték, hogy a nyelvi fejlődést és műveltség kialakulását egységes és dinamikus, folyamatként látják, amelynek során a nyelvről, kultúráról és könyvekről való felfogás a résztvevők interakciójában épül. Másrészt, valahányszor a tanárok nem vették figyelembe a gyerekek hozzászólásait, egyirányú és lineáris tanulás-felfogásról, és több esetben autoriter tanárszemélyiségről árulkodtak.

A kutatások korlátai

Az eredmények mellett fontos megemlíteni a kutatás korlátait is, amelyek túlnyomóan a kvalitatív vizsgálatok jellemzőiből fakadnak (Creswell, 1998; Mackey és Gass, 2005). Elsősorban, mivel a bemutatott kutatások nyelvtanulók, tanulók, tanárok és környezetük sokrétű és dinamikus interakcióját vizsgálják, ezért a hangsúly sokkal inkább a folyamatok értelmezésére tevődött, mint mérhető és általánosítható eredményekre. Továbbá, az eredmények azért sem általánosíthatóak, mert a kvalitatív vizsgálódások jellemző módon viszonylag kevés résztvevővel dolgoznak. Ez a helyzet a négy nyelvtanár és diákjaik fejlődését bemutató vizsgálatban, valamint a gyermekek kommentárjait elemző kutatásban, ahol a négy legfiatalabb résztvevő (öt és nyolc év közöttiek) privilegizált háttérből jön, ezért

sem tapasztalataik, sem viselkedésük nem tekinthető tipikusnak a korosztályukra nézve. Annak ellenére, hogy az eredmények a kutatásban bemutatott kontextus sajátjai, olyan tendenciákat tárnak fel, amelyek más tanárok számára is értelmezhetőek és tanulságosak lehetnek.

Ugyanakkor, a felsorolt korlátok a kutatások előnyeit is szolgálják, hiszen a tágabb és nyitottabb kutatási kérdések, valamint a kevés résztvevő, lehetőséget teremtett a folyamatok mélyebb és intenzívebb vizsgálatára. Ide kapcsolódik még a kvalitatív, különösen a narratívákat és interjúkat használó kutatásoknak az a sajátossága, hogy a résztvevők és a kutató nézőpontjait integrálják (Bailey és Nunan, 1996). Az emikus és az etikus perspektívák ötvözése kétségtelenül szubjektívebb, de mindenképpen árnyaltabb keretet teremt a vizsgált jelenségeknek. Ezt mindhárom kutatás jól illusztrálja.

Mint említettem, az elemzett folyamatok sokrétű és dinamikus voltánál fogva, az eredmények újabb kérdéseket vetnek fel, és további kutatási irányokat jelölnek ki. Ezek közé tartozik az elmélet és gyakorlat integrálásának problematikája, specifikusan, hogy mennyire tipikus jelenség az, hogy a tanárok nem élnek a narratívákban rejlő lehetőségekkel a nyelvórán, kivált ami a gyermekek nyelvi nevelését illeti. Lényeges lenne ugyanezt a jelenséget megvizsgálni más idegen nyelvek, illetve más tantárgyak esetében is.

Összegzés

Kutatásaim eredményei alátámasztják, hogy a diákok műveltsége és idegen nyelvi kompetenciája, valamint a tanári tudás egymással szoros és sokrétű kölcsönhatásban alakulnak, és elválaszthatatlanok a kulturális kontextustól. Ezt bizonyítja az első kutatásban feltárt trend, miszerint a tanárok a tanárképzés során megszerzett teoretikus tudást nem integrálják a mindennapi gyakorlatukba. Például, annak ellenére, hogy elméleti szinten tisztában vannak a narratívák előnyeivel a nyelvtanulók és saját szakmai fejlődésük szempontjából, óvakodnak a holisztikus nyelvi neveléstől, és ezen belül a narratíváknak rendszeres és stratégikus használatától. Ehelyett, ragaszkodnak a tankönyvek biztonságot adó korlátaihoz, és még a narratívák használata során is hagyományos, behaviorista és nyelvtani-fordításos hagyományok technikáiban gondolkodnak. Amennyiben a tanárok az idegen-nyelvi tudás építését organikus egységben látnák a műveltség kialakításával és saját tudásuk fejlesztésével, felismernék annak fontosságát, hogy más kontextusból szerzett tapasztalatokat átültessenek az osztálytermi gyakorlatba. Ebben az esetben, a narratívák, amelyek különben

az első nyelv elsajátításának alapvető eszközei, nem szorulnának a nevelési kultúra peremére a magyar iskolákban, és az idegen-nyelv órán is létjogosultságot nyernének.

Másrészt, az eredmények azt is megerősítették, hogy a tanári tudás építése hosszantartó folyamat. Míg az első kutatásban résztvevő tanárokat csak négy hónapon át figyeltem, a második kutatásban bemutatott, négy éven át tartó longitudinális vizsgálat alkalmat adott arra, hogy dokumentáljam a tanulásról és tanításról, ezen belül pedig a narratívák használatáról alkotott felfogásuk pozitív változását az idők folyamán. Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy a tanárok szakmai fejlődését egyrészt a könyvek rendszeres, és a kreativitásnak egyre nagyobb teret adó használata, valamint az ezzel összefonódó, értelmező reflexió befolyásolta. Az első tanulmányban szereplő tanárok esetében, a kutatási idő rövidsége (négy hónap), nem tette lehetővé a tartós változások dokumentálását a tanításról és tanulásról vallott meggyőződéseik terén. A tanárok narratívák iránti lelkesedése mellett elfértek az ide vonatkozó kételyeik is, valamint a nyelvtan-központú oktatásba vetett hitük. Ez további érvként szolgál amellett, hogy ahhoz, hogy a tanári gyakorlat változzon, nem elég új tanterveket és új tananyagokat bevezetni. Tartós változások csak a gondolkodás és az attitűdök hosszantartó alakulásával érhetők el (Lemke, 2002).

Mindez felhívja a figyelmet arra, hogy a tanárképzés során kulcsfontosságú olyan releváns nyelvészeti, pszichológiai és szociológiai kereteket nyújtani, amelyek segítségével a tanárok értelmezni tudják az osztálytermi jelenségeket, és amelyek a fejlődés nyelvi, affektív és szociális aspektusait összefüggéseikben láttatják. Továbbá, rávilágít a tanári önreflexió szerepére, amelynek során az elmélet és a gyakorlat kölcsönösen megvilágítja egymást, és értelmezhetővé válik (Gebhard és Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 2006). A reflexióra való nevelés különösen fontos lenne azokban a kontextusokban, ahol a tanári tudás építése jellemzően az elmélettől halad a praktikum felé, és a kettő nem ér össze egy koherens módszertanban.

Nemrég alkalmam adódott meglátogatni tizenegy kilenc éves gyermek iskolai angol óráját, ahol a tanár 45 percen belül három autentikus képeskönyvet használt. Nem olvasta fel őket, csak, rámutatva bizonyos képekre, kikérdezte az előzőleg kontextus nélkül megtanított szavakat. A *One Moose, Twenty Mice* (Beaton, 2000) számolókönyvben a tanár és a gyerekek nem számolták végig a különböző állatokat, még csak az állatok között rejtőző cicát sem kellett megkeresniük. A könnyen érthető, és képekkel amúgy is megtámogatott *"One moose, but where's the cat? Two crabs, but where's the cat? Three ladybirds, but where's the cat?"* nem is hangzott el, talán azért, mert a tanár úgy gondolta, hogy a kilenc éves gyermekek még nem képesek megérteni az érdekes, vizuális kontextusba ágyazott nyelvet. Ehelyett,

rámutatott a képekre, és magyarul feltett kérdéseire (*"Hány katicabogár van a képen?"*) angolul várt választ.

Ez az óra aligha hivatott bárkit is meggyőzni az autentikus képeskönyveknek az angol nyelvi nevelésben betöltött szerepéről. A gyerekek kezdeti lelkesedése szemmel láthatóan alábbhagyott, amikor kiderült, hogy az angol órai mese-olvasás nem hasonlít a korábbi, anyanyelven szerzett tapasztalataikhoz. Márcsak azért sem, mert a tanár a felénél abbahagyta a könyvet, mondván, hogy a gyerekek még csak tízig tanulták a számokat angolul. Az órán történtek arra engedtek következtetni, hogy ennek a bizonyos tanárnak, aki nem tartozott a kutatások résztvevői közé, elengedhetetlen szüksége van megfelelő technikákra és releváns fogalmi háttérre, amelyen keresztül az órai jelenségeket értelmezni tudja, ahhoz, hogy diákjai és saját maga fejlődését segítse. Továbbá, ez a tapasztalat megerősített a dolgozatban is kifejtett meggyőződésemben, hogy van még tennivaló a tanárképzés terén.

Referenciák

Arizpe, E. (2006). Young interpreters: children's response to pictures. In: J. Enever, & G. Schmid-Schönbein (Eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 35-48). München: Langenscheidt.

Baddeley, P., & Eddershaw, C. (1994). *Not-so-simple picture books: Developing responses to literature with 4-12 year olds.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Bailey, K.M., & Nunan, D. (1996). *Voices from the language classroom: Qualitative research in second language education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beaton, C. (2000). *One moose, twenty mice.* Bristol: Barefoot Books.

Bettelheim, B. (1991). *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales.* Fourth edition. London: Penguin.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, *71*(3), 691-711.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Cobley, P. (2001). *Narrative.* London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions. London: Sage Publications.

Cummins, J. (1991). Interdependence of first- and second-language proficiency in bilingual children. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), *Language processing in bilingual children* (pp. 70-90). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Donaldson, M. (1987). *Children's minds*. London: Fontana Press.

Egan, K. (1989). *Teaching as story telling: An alternative approach to teaching and curriculum in the elementary school*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ehmann, B. (2002). *A szöveg mélyén*. Budapest: Uj Mandátum Könyvkiadó.

Elley, W. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly, 24*(2), 174-189.

Evans, J. (1998). Responding to illustrations in picture books. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. xiii-xviii). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Gebhard, J.G., & Oprandy, R. (1999) *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graham, J. (1998). Turning the visual into the verbal: children reading wordless books. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 25-43). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Heath, S. B. (1982). Questioning at home and at school: A comparative study. In: G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action* (pp. 102-131). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Heath, S. B. (1994). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. In J. Maybin (Ed.), *Language and literacy in social practice* (pp. 73-95). Clevedon, Aron: Multilingual Matters.

Hiebert, E. H. (1991). Introduction. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 1-6). New York: Teachers College Press.

Horsdal, M. (2005, December). *Életút-történetek elemzése és értelmezése*. [Analysing and understanding life-story narratives] Retrieved on 8 June 2006 from: http:civil.nepfoiskola.hu3/3.1.3htm

Horsdal, M. (2006, August). Life-story narratives in voluntary organisations. Retrieved on 9 August 2006 from: www.lua.it./esrea/papers/Horsdal.doc

Hudelson, S. (1994). Literacy development of second language children. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp.129-158). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 235-257.

Johnson, K.E., & Golombek, P. (2003). "Seeing" teacher learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(4), 729-737.

Keen, S. (2003). *Narrative form*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

King, N., & Nikolov, M. (1992). Storymaking and drama with two groups of Hungarian children. *Modern English Teacher*, *1*, 1-8.

Krashen, S. (1997-8.) „Bridging inequity with books." *Educational Leadership, 55*(4), 18-22.

Langer, J. A. (1991). Literacy and schooling: A sociocognitive perspective. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 9-27). New York: Teachers College Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. P. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2002). Language acquisition and language use from a chaos/complexity theory perspective. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 33-46). London: Continuum.

László J. (2005a). *A történetek tudománya*. Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó.

Lemke, J. L. (2002). Language development and identity: Multiple timescales in the social ecology of learning. In C. Kramsch (Ed.), *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 68-87). London: Continuum.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research, methodology and design.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Marriott, S. (1998). Picture books and the moral imperative. In Evans, J. (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 1-24). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Nikolov, M. (2000). 'We do what we like': negotiated classroom work with Hungarian children. In M. Breen, & A. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Classroom decision-making: Negotiation and process syllabuses in practice* (pp. 83-93).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nikolov, M. (2002). *Issues in English language education.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Rosen, B. (1988). *And none of it was nonsense: The power of storytelling in school.* London: Mary Glasgow Publications.

Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1995). Knowledge and memory: The real story. In R. S. Jr. Wyer (Ed.), *Advances in social cognition. Volume VIII* (pp. 1-85). Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Smith, F. (1988). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into education.* Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction.* London: Longman.

Styles, M. (1996). Inside the tunnel: a radical kind of reading picture books, pupils and post-modernism. In V. Watson, & M. Styles (Eds.), *Talking pictures: Pictorial texts and young readers*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

van Dam, J. (2002). Ritual, dance, and play in a first English lesson: Bootstrapping a classroom culture. In C. Kramsch (Ed.)*, Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives* (pp. 237-265). London: Continuum.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wells, G. (1986). *The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Zipes, J. (1983). *Fairy tales and the art of subversion: The classical genre for children and the process of civilization.* New York: Routledge.

Zipes, J. (1997). *Happily ever after: Fairy tales, children, and the culture industry.* New York: Routledge.

A témához kapcsolódó saját publikációk

Barbu, E., Dumitrache, M., Lugossy, R., Pavel, G. Ralea, M., & Wohl, E. (2007). *Eroi, bufoni si masti in curtea scolii: Ghid alternativ pentru profesori, copii si adolescenti atinsi de microbul teatrului.* Cluj Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta.

Lugossy, R. (2007). Authentic picture books in the lives of young EFL learners and their teachers. In Nikolov, M., Mihaljevic Djigunovic, J., Mattheoudakis, M., Lundberg, G., & Flanagan, T. (Eds.), *Teaching modern languages to young learners: teachers, curricula and materials* (pp. 77-89). Strasbourg: European Centre for Modern Languages/Council of Europe Publishing.

Lugossy, R. (2006). Shaping teachers' beliefs through narratives. In Nikolov, M., & Horváth J. (Eds.), *UPRT 2006: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics* (pp. 313-336). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.

Lugossy, R. (2006). Browsing and borrowing your way to motivation through picture books. In Enever, J., Schmid-Schönbein, G. (eds.), *Picture books and young learners of English* (pp. 23-35). München: Langenscheidt.

Lugossy, R. (2005). Learning English through Picture Books. *Learning Languages, 10* (2), 16-17.

Lugossy, R. (2003). The Real Book Project: Using authentic reading materials with young EFL learners. In: Petrovic, E., Smajic, D., Bagaric,V., & Radisic, M. (Eds.), *Dijete I Jezik Danas*, (191- 203). Osijek: Sveuciliste Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku Visoka Uiteljaska Skola.

Lugossy, R. (2003). Code-switching in the young learner classroom. In: Andor, J., Horváth J., & Nikolov M. (eds.), *Studies in English Theoretical and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 300–309). Pécs: Lingua Franca Csoport.

Lugossy, R. (2003). "I think my mum's a witch": teaching tips. *Chalkface,* 45, 5-6.

Nikolov, M., & Lugossy R. (2003). Real books in real schools: using authentic reading materials with young EFL learners. *Novelty*, *10* (1), 66-75.

Bors, L., Nikolov, M, & Lugossy, R. (2001). Az angol nyelv oktatása pécsi általános iskolákban. *Iskolakultúra*, *1* (4), 73-89.

Lugossy, R. (2001). Autentikus anyagok a nyelvórán. In: Papp Andrea (Ed.) *A gyermekirodalom helye a magyar felsőoktatásban* (pp. 54-59). Budapest: ELTE Idegennyelvi Lektorátus.

Lugossy, R. (1998). When giants turn out to be good. *Novelty*, *5* (3), 37-43.