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Reading in the second language classroom: Consideration of first language approaches in second language contexts

Abstract

This article reviews research on how three first language (L1) approaches designed to promote reading and other literacy skills have been applied to second language (L2) classrooms in Norway: The Early Years Literacy Programme (EYLP), Reading and Writing Workshops, and Readers Theatre (RT). Key ways that L2 readers differ from L1 readers are initially addressed, highlighting the needs of L2 readers. Following Grabe (2009), L2 readers would benefit from a balanced approach to developing their reading skills, one that incorporates both implicit and explicit teaching and learning. Implicit learning involves plenty and frequent reading input, for example through extensive reading. Explicit learning involves, for example, the development of learners' metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, and an understanding of what it means to be a strategic reader. Benefits and challenges involved in the implementation of the three approaches are addressed. With the exception of RT, no research is known to exist at present on how these approaches have been adapted to L2 contexts outside of Norway. The research in Norway shows that each approach can help English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to develop their reading skills both implicitly and explicitly, as well as their metacognition, but that there are challenges, especially of a practical nature, involved in their implementation. Of the three, RT is arguably the easiest to apply to an L2 context.

Keywords: L1/L2 reading approaches, implicit/explicit learning, metacognition

Lesing i andrespråksklasser: Overveielser over førstespråkstilnærminger i andrespråkskontekster

Sammendrag

Denne artikkelen går gjennom forskning på hvordan tre tilnærminger til lese- og skriveopplæring i førstespråket er blitt anvendt i andrespråksundervisning i Norge: The Early Years Literacy Programme (EYLP), lese- og skriveverksted, og leseater. Innledningsvis diskuteres viktige forskjeller mellom førstespråks-

lesing og andrespråkslesing, med vekt på andrespråksleseres behov. Med utgangspunkt i Grabe (2009), vil andrespråkslesere dra fordel av en balansert tilnærming til å utvikle leseferdigheter, en tilnærming som inkluderer både implisitt og eksplisitt læring. Implisitt læring innebærer mye og hyppig lesing, for eksempel gjennom ekstensiv lesing. Eksplisitt læring innebærer for eksempel utvikling av elevenes metalingvistiske og metakognitive bevissthet og en forståelse av hva det betyr å være en strategisk leser. Fordeler og utfordringer ved å implementere disse tre tilnærmingene blir omtalt. Med unntak av leseteater, kjennes det ikke til forskning på hvordan disse tilnærmingene har blitt tilpasset andrespråkskontekster utenfor Norge. Forskning i Norge viser at hver av de tre tilnærmingene, både implisitt og eksplisitt, kan hjelpe elever til å utvikle sine leseferdigheter og metakognisjon, men at det fins utfordringer, særlig av en praktisk art, når de skal anvendes i andrespråkssammenheng. Av de tre tilnærmingmåtene synes leseteater å være den enkleste å anvende.

Nøkkelord: førstespråkslesing, andrespråkslesing, implisitt/eksplisitt læring, metakognisjon

Introduction

This article reviews research on three first language (L1) approaches to the teaching and learning of reading skills that have been applied to English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in Norway: The Early Years Literacy Programme (EYLP), Reading and Writing Workshops, and Readers Theatre (RT). Reading is here considered from a broad perspective, e.g. the development of accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and motivation to read. While the focus here is on these approaches in relation to reading, it should be pointed out that they also help learners to develop other language skills, e.g. writing in the case of the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops, and oral skills in the case of RT. Although a number of literacy practices used in second language (L2) contexts have their origin in L1 contexts, e.g. reading aloud (Barrs, 2004; Barton, 2007), process writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), and extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 1998), this article addresses two entire L1 approaches to the teaching of reading (the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops). These two approaches, although designed as models for all or most of the classroom teaching in a given L1 educational context, have been implemented in EFL classrooms in Norway. RT, in contrast, is an approach that can easily be used to a lesser or greater extent in combination with other approaches. Each of these approaches has proved to be successful in L1 contexts and it thus seems relevant to explore whether this has also been the case when they have been implemented in Norwegian EFL classrooms.

While Readers Theatre has been practised in L2 contexts outside of Norway (e.g. Chan & Chan, 2009), the author is unaware that the same applies to the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops. Each of these three approaches offers an alternative to the predominant textbook-based teaching in EFL classrooms in Norway (Charboneau, 2016; Hellekjær, 2007). The EYLP is specifically applicable to primary school learners (grades 1–7), Reading and Writing Workshops to the lower and upper secondary levels (grades 8–13), while RT is applicable to all age groups. Although specific reference is made to how the approaches have been applied to a range of EFL classroom contexts in Norway, the approaches are also applicable to other foreign languages in different educational contexts.

The EYLP, firstly, was developed for mother tongue literacy development in primary schools in Victoria, Australia (Hill & Crévola, 1999). The approach is based on principles such as adapted and frequent reading, high levels of pupil engagement, and high achievement expectations (Hill & Crévola, 1999). Reading and Writing Workshops, secondly, are organised and structured classroom environments in which key principles are the provision of substantial time for in-class reading and writing, self-choice of reading matter and writing topics, sharing reading and writing, and raising awareness of different aspects of reading through mini-lessons (Atwell, 1998; Graves, 1991). RT, finally, is an approach in which a group of readers read aloud a text that has been divided into small chunks, often no more than one-sentence units (Black & Stave, 2007). The readers, taking turns to read a small unit at a time, rehearse the text thoroughly before performing it, for example for their peers.

Before elaborating on these approaches, it seems relevant in the present context to compare the needs of L1 and L2 readers. Firstly, according to the Interdependence Hypothesis (Edwards, 2009, p. 59), “Literacy and cognitive skills can be transferred from one language to another and do not need to be learned afresh for each new language.” Thus, skills acquired in a learner’s L1 can be transferred to the learner’s L2 and can thus facilitate L2 reading. At the same time, L2 readers are normally handicapped in several ways compared to L1 readers. Their oral language is usually less developed, they have more limited knowledge of language, more limited background knowledge, more limited vocabulary, and less exposure to reading than would be the case in an L1. While children may possess an oral vocabulary of 5,000 to 8,000 words when starting to learn how to read in their L1 (Cunningham, 2005), L2 learners with a similar vocabulary in the L2 would be considered as relatively advanced (Grabe, 2009). Moreover, while L1 readers may encounter a vast number of words in numerous contexts in their daily lives, L2 readers are often limited to the classroom for their contact with texts, and these are often short texts in textbooks produced for L2 learners (Charboneau, 2016).

Both L1 and L2 readers strive to achieve reading fluency and comprehension. The development of reading fluency and comprehension is a complex

process involving a number of sub-skills, both in an L1 and in an L2 (Grabe, 2009). These include being able to recognise words automatically, being able to represent words phonologically, being able to understand the meaning of words, syntactic parsing, i.e. being able to understand how words link together syntactically, and comprehension of basic meaning structures (units), so-called semantic propositions. Some scholars emphasise the importance of developing fluency and comprehension incidentally, or implicitly, through reading large amounts of text frequently, also known as extensive reading or free voluntary reading (e.g. Day and Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004). However, Grabe (2009) argues that L2 readers need to learn both implicitly and explicitly, which is the view adopted here. Explicit learning aids the development of learners' meta-cognitive and metalinguistic awareness, supporting "higher-level attentional processes that establish goals, make new inferences, monitor comprehension difficulties, apply strategies for improved learning, resolve comprehension difficulties, and evaluate information." (Grabe, 2009, p. 62). "Attention" supports explicit learning and enables conscious focus on input.

Part of explicit learning is becoming a strategic reader, which means having knowledge of reading strategies, knowing the demands incumbent in different reading tasks, knowing about texts, knowing about ways of monitoring comprehension and using strategies when comprehension fails, and training reading strategies during the reading process, e.g. activating prior knowledge, predicting, and making inferences (Grabe, 2009). Strategic readers are aware of when and how to use strategies effectively. According to Grabe (2009, pp. 226–227), strategic readers "engage actively in reading, read far more extensively, and have the motivation to read for longer periods of time; they use reading to seek out information relevant to their needs and interests [...] they have heightened levels of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness that they can use when needed." Strategic readers take care to read more carefully in places, reread when necessary, identify key information, guess unfamiliar words, interpret the text as they read, and summarise main ideas (Grabe, 2009, p. 228).

The aim of the article, by reviewing the research on the three aforementioned approaches, is to consider whether each approach can help learners to develop their L2 reading skills both implicitly and explicitly, in addition to their meta-cognition, and to consider the challenges faced in applying these approaches in L2 classrooms. A brief description of each approach will be followed by a review of the research related to it, especially in the Norwegian EFL context.

The Early Years Literacy Program (EYLP)

The Early Years Literacy Program (EYLP) was the result of large-scale collaborative research projects undertaken in the late 1990s by the University of Melbourne, the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office in

Victoria, and local schools in the state of Victoria, Australia. The aim of the projects was to implement and evaluate whole-school approaches to improve early literacy outcomes (Hill & Crévola, 1999). Schools with students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds were especially targeted. The rationale for adopting a whole-school approach was that it would counteract differences at the class level within a school. Three factors deemed as especially important for effective teaching were “high expectations of student achievement, engaged learning time, and focused teaching” (Hill & Crévola, 1999, p. 5). It was important that both staff and students held shared beliefs about the potential of each student to maximise their “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 84–86). Students were taught in two-hour daily literacy teaching blocks that incorporated both whole class and small group teaching. When divided into groups, the students would experience teaching and learning at different learning centres, also known as “working stations”, in the classroom, including one led by the teacher. At the teacher learning centre, students would experience guided reading and explicit teaching of reading strategies. At the other learning centres, they would experience, for example, individual silent reading and writing.

The EYLP proved to be successful in enhancing the literacy skills of the young learners who participated. Significant features in promoting development were regular literacy sessions, clear performance standards and associated targets, regular monitoring of students’ progress, and professional training for teachers “to challenge teachers’ thinking, develop their beliefs and understandings, and help them to understand how they can use a range of strategies in meeting the needs of the range of students in their classes” (Hill & Crévola, 1999, pp. 10–11).

The EYLP was first introduced into first language teaching in Norway in 2003 by Nylund primary school in Stavanger (Drew, 2009). Improved literacy levels among pupils in the school attracted interest from other schools, both regionally and nationally. In 2005, the approach was implemented in EFL teaching in grades 3 to 7. In the EFL classes, the school used the same series of Wings graded readers, on a scale of 1–26 levels, which had been used in Australia. An increasing number of Norwegian primary schools have since adopted the model in EFL classes (Charboneau, 2016). In a survey of reading approaches and materials used in EFL teaching in Norwegian primary school, Charboneau (2012) found that nine schools out of 343 (2.6%) used the EYLP. Although the number was relatively small, one should bear in mind that in 2005 Nylund school was the only primary school in Norway to use the approach in EFL teaching. Reference will be made to four research studies related to the EYLP in the Norwegian EFL context: Charboneau (2016), Drew (2009, 2010), and Larsen (2016).

Drew’s (2009) study investigated the effectiveness of the EYLP during the initial stages of implementation in 3rd and 4th grade EFL classes compared to pupils in two control schools. Two sets of Cambridge Young Learners Starters

tests were used to assess the pupils in Nylund school and the two control schools in listening, reading and writing, and oral skills during a period of six months. Whereas the pupils in Nylund school had the lowest listening score and second lowest oral score on the first test, they achieved the highest scores in all skills during the second set of tests. The greater rate of progress gained by the Nylund pupils was attributed to the EYLP, especially the substantial amount of reading to which the pupils were exposed.

In an observational case study of how the EYLP functioned in EFL lessons in 4th and 5th grade classes in one school, Charboneau (2016) found that numerous benefits were derived from the approach. Pupils in the school were able to select from a large selection of reading materials, they read many books, they enjoyed reading and were actively engaged in it, learning was differentiated, pupils were given individual attention and feedback from the teacher and, finally, awareness of print and reading strategies were explicitly taught. Metacognitive awareness and reading strategies were especially developed through guided reading at the teacher learning centre, where pupils were taught reading strategies such as looking at pictures for contextual clues, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words through context, using dictionaries, and using an illustrated mind-map. Moreover, according to Charboneau (2016, p. 327):

Reading awareness and the concept of print were developed through introducing the concept of authors, main characters, and genres, and how to make predictions about the book based on the title and the cover. The teacher generally began by asking the students what the title of the book was, what a title was, who the author was, what an author was, who the main characters were, and how they knew this. This routine was repeated for each new book.

In a three-year longitudinal study, Drew (2010) followed the English writing development of 33 pupils being taught through the EYLP as they progressed from the 4th to the 6th grade. The pupils wrote a text within a limited, specified time at the end of each year level. The corpora of texts were analysed and compared, focussing on fluency and grammatical and lexical complexity. The quantifiable measures used were text length, the number and length of T-units, the number of simple and complex noun phrases, noun, lexical verb and adjective types, and the degree and types of subordination.

The study showed that the pupils made considerable progress from the 4th to the 6th grades in terms of the items measured, with many of the scores doubling, and sometimes even trebling. One of the aims of the study was to find out to what extent the pupils' written language development was mirrored in the books they were reading at each level. The same criteria were therefore used to measure both the pupils' texts and the language of their reading books, a relatively original approach in the analysis of language learner texts. The finding here was that there was a strong correspondence between the two with respect to many of the items being measured. It was thus argued that the pupils' reading

had had a considerable influence on their writing. Both their reading and writing skills had benefitted from the large amounts of reading they had undertaken.

Finally, Larsen (2016) compared 7th grade English texts written by pupils being taught through the EYLP with those in a control group. The pupils wrote a 30-minute timed task based on a picture story. The texts were analysed using many of the same measures of fluency and complexity as used in the study by Drew (2009). The results showed that the EYLP pupils' scores were higher in all the measures of fluency and complexity being studied. Larsen attributed the superior scores of the EYLP group to the pupils having done much more reading than those in the control group and the fact that their reading had been much more differentiated. They had benefitted from their reading and these benefits were reflected in their writing.

The above studies show that learners' reading and writing skills in particular benefitted from using the EYLP. Three of the studies demonstrate especially the importance of implicit learning through the EYLP (Drew, 2009, 2010; Larsen, 2016), while Charboneau's (2016) study shows how the EYLP caters for both implicit and explicit learning. However, one should be aware of certain challenges when applying the EYLP to an L2 context. One major challenge is that its primary focus is on literacy development, whereas opportunities to practise oral skills are also extremely important for L2 learners. One possibility is to ascribe one of the learning centres to practising oral skills, for example to role plays. Furthermore, as a whole school approach, the teachers' freedom is highly restricted within the approach, as they are required to conform to a highly structured and predetermined teaching model, which not all teachers may appreciate. The teacher's mobility during a typical learning centre session is also restricted. Since the teacher receives each group of pupils at the teacher learning centre, he/she cannot monitor or contribute to what is going on at the other learning centres. The pupils are left on their own at these centres and thus cannot receive help from the teacher while they are working on the different activities that are the focus of each learning centre. A final challenge is the cost of the numerous books, especially group sets, which are required in the EYLP, and which may constitute a major financial investment, one that many schools may not be able to afford.

Reading and Writing Workshops

Reading and Writing Workshops have been practised in first language classrooms in the US (Graves, 1991; Atwell, 1998). As the name suggests, these workshops aim to promote learners' reading and writing skills, as well as their motivation to read and write. Learners are expected to read, write and take an active role in their learning. They are expected to seek guidance and feedback

from peers and the teacher, and to share their reading and writing with each other and others.

As one of the principal advocates of reading and writing workshops, Atwell (1998) describes how she moved from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach as a junior high school teacher in Maine. This shift was the consequence of experiencing how one of her pupils, Geoff, who struggled to read and write, made enormous progress in reading and writing after he started to read literature on a topic that he was interested in, namely the sea, and to write about the same subject. Atwell understood the importance of self-choice of reading and writing, and this became one of the fundamental principles of her workshops. It was also important for her to share her passion for reading and writing with her students and to inform them of her reading and writing “territories”, i.e. what she was interested in reading and writing.

All of Atwell’s teaching took place in the form of workshops, which were highly organised and structured. A typical workshop would last for 90 minutes and consist of the following: reading and discussing a poem, a reading/writing mini-lesson, independent writing and conferring, reading aloud from a book or short story and, finally, independent reading.

The mini-lessons provided a forum for the teacher to share her knowledge and experience with her less experienced learners. These lessons helped to raise the learners’ metacognition in relation to reading and writing. They incorporated four broad categories (Atwell, 1998): 1) Procedures, rules and routines for workshops 2) Issues of literary craft 3) Issues of written conventions 4) Strategies of good readers. A mini-lesson on procedures, rules and routines could include discussing and role-playing conferences, discussing the evaluation of reading and writing, and providing instruction on how to keep records of one’s reading and writing. A mini-lesson on literary craft could include instruction on genres, styles of writing, authors and literary works, writing techniques, e.g. consistency of tense and the use of reference books. A mini-lesson on reading strategies could include instruction on schema theory and reading processes, how to become lifelong readers, strategies for fluent reading, and advice on when and where to read.

Pupils were also expected to write journals about their reading and writing, to which the teacher would respond. These also became a tool for raising meta-cognitive awareness. Topics for reading journals, for example, could include how the author wrote, something about the author, something about the genre, the reader’s strategies, the reader’s affect, and how the reading influenced the student’s own writing.

Atwell’s Reading and Writing Workshop produced a dynamic learning environment in which learners became highly engaged in the acts of reading and writing and shared their reading and writing with each other. The learners developed their reading and writing skills considerably in the course of a school year, during which they would read up to 35 books and write numerous texts

that were the products of a process of writing. The workshop laid the foundation for these adolescents to become avid life-long readers and writers.

Certain aspects of the reading and writing workshop approach have been incorporated into L2 classrooms. For example, providing learners with the opportunity to choose their reading materials is the cornerstone of extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 1998). Numerous studies on the effects of extensive reading in the L2 classroom have shown gains in different language skills and increased motivation and positive attitudes towards reading (e.g. Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Elley, 1991; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Krashen, 2004). Self-choice of writing topics is considered important for engaging the L2 writer in the act of writing (Hyland, 2003). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, the only case where the Reading and Writing Workshop approach has been adapted in its entirety to an L2 environment is the one reported by Vatnaland (2016).

In her longitudinal study, Vatnaland implemented the approach during an entire school year in a Norwegian 8th grade EFL class of nine pupils, basing all of the English lessons that year on the approach. The class was furnished with a large class library of English books in addition to books in the school library. Pupils chose what to read and write, they shared their reading and writing with each other, instruction was provided through brief mini-lessons (e.g. on different reading strategies, how to choose a book, why reading is important, and how to increase reading speed), and the pupils wrote reading journals every two weeks (e.g. on what they thought about a book and its characters). The approach thus combined implicit and explicit learning on a regular, structured and balanced basis, and explicit learning through the mini-lessons helped to promote the learners' metacognition.

The aims of the study were to find out if the approach enhanced the pupils' writing competence and whether it had an effect on their motivation and attitudes to reading and writing in English. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with pupils, questionnaires, reading journals, and an analysis of pupils' written texts. The results showed that the pupils' writing improved during the period, especially in terms of what each pupil had struggled the most with. Pupils who had been negative or neutral to reading and writing at the beginning of the year were clearly more positive at the end of the year. What they considered as more positive was doing something different, being given the freedom of choice with their reading and writing, and the way the lessons were organised. The pupils read extensively and gradually reflected more on their reading in their reading journals. As one pupil put it: "I have learned more. I have found out that reading books is fun and that you learn a lot from it", while another wrote, "I understand more of what I am reading, and I recognize the mistakes I have made." (Vatnaland, 2016, p. 93).

As with the EYLP, reading and writing workshops were originally designed primarily to promote L1 learners' literacy skills. There are thus challenges when

applying the approach to an L2 context, where practice in oral skills is an extremely important component of L2 development. In order to accommodate for oral skill practice and development, Vatnaland (2016) had to modify the approach so that it incorporated regular oral activities that would counterbalance the heavy focus on literacy development. Also similar to the EYLP, this approach faces the challenge of providing learners with substantial amounts of reading materials, especially a wide range of books from which pupils can choose to read and which cater for different ability levels in the class. The onus is likely to fall on the teacher to acquire the necessary books, possibly even at the teacher's own expense. Furthermore, in contrast to the whole school EYLP approach, reading and writing workshops, as in the case of Atwell (1998) and Vatnaland (2016), can be practised by individual teachers who believe in the merits of the approach, while other teachers in the same school may be approaching EFL lessons in a totally different way. A teacher using reading and writing workshops in EFL lessons may then need to justify its use, convincing pupils, parents, the school leadership, and peers that this approach is worth following.

Readers Theatre

Readers Theatre (RT) has been especially practised in the US at different levels in the educational system (Peebles, 2007; Rinehart, 1999; Uthman, 2002). RT is a “whole language” approach to reading, integrating both oral and written language with an authentic communicative purpose (Rinehart, 1999). RT helps learners develop their reading, listening and speaking skills simultaneously and, when asked to create their own RT texts, also their writing skills (Drew & Pedersen, 2012).

Although RT exists in many forms, it is essentially an activity in which members of a group take turns to read aloud small units of a visible text from beginning to end. While stories and folktales have traditionally been the predominant text genre (Shepard, 2004; 2007), any kind of text can in principle be used for RT. The readers rehearse the text thoroughly before performing it to an audience (Black & Stave, 2007). RT has been practised both as a form of drama on stage and as an educational method in schools (Drew, 2013). When practised in schools, the audience is usually the readers' peers in a class.

The RT process helps readers to develop multiple skills simultaneously, e.g. articulation, pronunciation, intonation, reading fluency and comprehension, vocabulary, and story schema (Black & Stave, 2007, p. 7). In addition to cognitive development, RT has also shown gains in increased motivation, confidence, and more positive attitudes to reading (Chan & Chan, 2009; Uthman, 2002). RT has been especially beneficial for struggling readers, who make considerable gains from it, both cognitive and affective (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999;

Peebles, 2007; Rasinski, 2006; Uthman, 2002). Repeated reading of texts during rehearsals is an important factor in the fluency development of struggling readers (Peebles, 2007). As Tyler and Chard (2000, p. 166) argue, RT provides struggling readers with “an acceptable, legitimate reason to reread the same text several times.”

Much of the research on RT in L1 environments has been conducted with primary school learners in the US (e.g. Martinez et al., 1999; Peebles, 2007; Uthman, 2002). Typical of this research is that it consists of case studies of classes in which RT has been practised, and the research is primarily based on qualitative research methods, especially classroom observations. Some research has been carried out on RT in L2 contexts outside of Norway (e.g. Chan & Chan, 2009). However, a growing number of studies have been carried out on RT in a range of English language classrooms and with learners of different age groups in Norway. There have been studies on RT in primary EFL classrooms (Myrset, 2014; Myrset & Drew, 2016), in lower secondary classrooms (Drew & Pedersen, 2010, 2012; Pettersen, 2013), and with adult learners (Næss, 2016).

At the primary level, Myrset (2014) conducted research on a 6th grade EFL class of 27 learners. The class experienced RT during two cycles, the first using pre-written fairytale scripts and the second using Christmas stories the learners had produced themselves. The aims were to find out the cognitive and affective benefits of RT, as well as the challenges of using it in the class. Data were collected through mixed methods: teacher interviews, pupil journals, classroom observations, and video recordings of rehearsals and performances. Video recordings enabled the researcher to compare pronunciation, word recognition and fluency during the first rehearsals and performances of the groups, something which was original in the research on RT in an L2 context. Substantial gains were recorded in pronunciation, word recognition and fluency, especially amongst the struggling learners in the class (Myrset, 2014; Myrset & Drew, 2016). In addition to improvement in their reading skills, the learners produced a good deal of text in their Christmas stories, were enthusiastic and engaged in the project, became more confident about their reading, and were eager to participate in another RT project.

At the lower secondary level, Drew and Pedersen's (2010) research focussed on RT with a group of struggling 9th grade EFL learners at the beginning of the school year. Drew and Pedersen collected data from a pupil questionnaire, teacher interviews and logs, and classroom observations. The RT project became an excellent way of bonding the pupils together, as well as forming a bond between them and the teacher. In order to produce the best possible performances, the learners actively sought help from the teacher when unable to pronounce or stress words correctly. The project generally had a positive effect on the learners' reading skills and motivation to read. Shy learners and those who had previously been unwilling to participate in oral activities became

engaged in the project and grew in confidence. The outcome was “something living and entertaining performed by the group” (p. 12).

In another study at the lower secondary level, Drew and Pedersen (2012) conducted research on the use of RT in two parallel mainstream 8th grade EFL classes, comprising 50 pupils in total. The learners experienced RT through three variants during the course of a school year: using ready-made RT texts, adapting texts for RT and, finally, creating their own RT texts. Once again, RT showed positive cognitive and affective benefits for the learners involved.

The majority of the learners found the third variant the most stimulating and productive of the three. They were divided into seven groups and each group was assigned a continent of the world about which they were to create an RT text. The level of commitment during rehearsals was extremely high, with pupils even staying behind after school to rehearse in order for the performances to be as polished as possible. The performances themselves showed an exceptional level of creativity, ingenuity, richness of language, and communication skills. The learners benefitted from both performing an RT text about their continent to the others, but also learned a good deal about the continents of the world by listening to the other groups. As a consequence of the impact of RT, the teacher claimed that these pupils were far more advanced in oral presentation skills than any other pupils she had had at the same level.

In the third study at the lower secondary level, Pettersen (2013) researched the use of content-based RT in an 8th grade EFL class. The learners experienced RT in the same three variants as those in Drew and Pedersen (2012). In this case also, it was the third variant (self-produced texts) that was the most stimulating and successful. Addressing the fact that RT had mostly been practised and researched with fictional texts, Pettersen wanted to find out how it would work with content-based texts, in this case about Australia and the US. Data were collected through pre- and post-project questionnaires, teacher interviews and classroom observations. The fact that the third variant was the pupils’ preferred one was attributed to them being given the autonomy to work on a topic and create an RT text about it. While the project generally had a positive effect on the pupils’ self-confidence and reading fluency, it seemed to benefit the lower achievers in the class most of all.

Finally, Næss (2016) was based on a study of RT with a group of minority background adult learners of English following the 10th grade curriculum at an adult education centre in Norway. The target group was different from those in most other studies of RT, which have focussed on children of different ages. For the participants, coming from multilingual backgrounds, English was their third, fourth or fifth language, and their levels of proficiency in English were generally low. As in Myrset (2014), the learners experienced two cycles of RT: firstly with pre-written scripts and then with scripts they created themselves. The self-created texts were unique in RT research as the participants created texts to share with each other about the countries and cultures from which they came.

Data were collected through teacher and student interviews, classroom observations, and audio recordings of first rehearsals and performances. The latter, as in Myrset (2014) and Myrset and Drew (2016), allowed the researcher to measure the learners' improvement in fluency, pronunciation, and word recognition.

Supporting Myrset (2014) and Myrset and Drew (2016), the study showed that the learners' fluency improved and that they made considerably fewer pronunciation and word recognition mistakes in the performances compared to the rehearsals. They had become conscious of the need to be as accurate as possible and through peer and especially teacher assistance, had improved their reading accuracy and fluency. The students had enjoyed working with RT and the performances had boosted their confidence. The personal self-written scripts had appealed to them, as they had been eager to share information about their own home countries and backgrounds through RT.

As with the two other approaches, RT provides the opportunity for both implicit and explicit learning. In terms of implicit learning, pupils are exposed to multiple texts in a typical RT session in addition to the one with which they themselves work. They thus have the opportunity to acquire language and vocabulary through their exposure to language in a communicative setting, both as performers and listeners. At the same time, rehearsals enable pupils to learn explicitly, for example through the teacher or peers correcting mispronunciations or misreadings of words, or explaining the meaning of words. They enable learners to become more aware of their reading proficiency and how to enhance it by improving their accuracy, fluency and comprehension through repeated readings of the text. They become better strategic readers by guessing unfamiliar words and interpreting the text as they read (cf. Grabe, 2009).

However, practising RT in relatively large classes places logistical demands and challenges on teachers. Firstly, they need to be able to place pupils in groups that match the number of participants in each of the different scripts and they need to consider the composition of the groups. They also need to ensure that the scripts are of a suitable interest, length and level of difficulty, irrespective of whether these are ready-available scripts or ones they have adapted. Furthermore, adapting texts for RT may be time-consuming. They also need to ensure that pupils can practise their scripts without disturbing each other or revealing the content of their texts to the other groups during rehearsals, which would remove the element of surprise and communication of texts that adds to the appeal of RT performances. Finally, they need to move from group to group during rehearsals, which they may experience as stressful (Drew & Pedersen, 2012).

Discussion

The aim of the article was to consider whether the three approaches in question (The Early Years Literacy Programme, Reading and Writing Workshops, and

Readers Theatre), when implemented in an L2 context, could help learners develop their reading skills both implicitly and explicitly, in addition to their metacognition. The aim was also to point out challenges involved when applying the approaches to L2 contexts. Much of the L2 research reviewed here supports the findings of the L1 research.

In terms of implicit learning, studies of both the EYLP and Vatnaland's (2016) Reading and Writing Workshop showed that learners were provided with the opportunity for extensive reading, which helped them develop reading fluency and comprehension incidentally (cf. Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Krashen, 2004). The EYLP incorporated extensive reading by ensuring that learners were provided with the opportunity to read self-chosen books at the reading learning centre during a regular session that also involved other learning centres, e.g. writing. Self-choice of extensive reading materials was also an important principle of the Reading and Writing Workshop (cf. Atwell, 1998). In addition, learners in the EYLP read a considerable number of graded readers at their level of ability, usually from the Wings series of books, which were not self-chosen, but which nevertheless provided additional reading practice on a large scale (Drew, 2009).

The studies by both Charboneau (2016) and Vatnaland (2016) showed that learners benefitted positively from being allowed to choose reading materials freely and from reading extensively, for example in terms of acquiring vocabulary. Free choice of reading materials allowed pupils to read what they were interested in and at their own level of difficulty. It thus differentiated reading input to suit the individual learner, which becomes more difficult, for example, if all learners are using one and the same textbook in a class. Extensive reading within the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshop approaches enhanced not only the reading skill and motivation to read, but also other language skills, particularly writing. As far as the EYLP was concerned, the studies by Drew (2010) and Larsen (2016) established a strong link between the considerable amount of reading pupils undertook and their writing performance. Vatnaland (2016) also established a similar link between the two in her longitudinal study of a Reading and Writing Workshop adapted to an 8th grade EFL class.

However, both these approaches were designed to promote literacy skills in L1 educational contexts, with all or most of the teaching in these contexts expected to be based on the specific approach in question. Both approaches require a wide range of books, probably at a high financial cost, which many schools may not be able to afford or willing to invest in. In the case of the EYLP, the approach is a whole-school one which the school leaders require all teachers to follow, whether they like it or not. This naturally removes a good deal of the teacher's autonomy and freedom. Moreover, in the L1 contexts in which the two approaches originate, pupils' oral skills are taken for granted. This is not the case in L2 contexts, where attention to the development of both oral and written language is necessary. When implementing these approaches in

L2 classrooms, teachers therefore need to make provision for adequate oral language practice, which may mean adapting the approach to find a balance between oral and written activities. An alternative in L2 contexts may thus be to devote some but not all of the time to the approach. For example, some lessons or some periods of time could be devoted to the EYLP in EFL classes, while other lessons or periods of time could be devoted to other activities, e.g. role play and drama, that especially promote oral language. Some of the principles of the Reading and Writing Workshop approach could be applied in EFL lessons, for example giving pupils more opportunities to choose what to read and write, without implementing the approach as a whole and in the same way as it would be implemented in an L1 classroom. In other words, a compromise between these approaches and other ways of teaching may be a favourable option for teachers who are looking at ways to add variety to their teaching.

Compared to the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops approaches, Readers Theatre provides a different approach to reading, with its focus on reading texts aloud in groups. It does not provide learners with an extensive reading experience in the same way as the other two approaches. However, learners normally work with whole texts, for example folktales and stories that may take ten or more minutes to read through, and this provides a rich textual and language experience for those participating, both as performers and listeners. Readers Theatre is arguably the most effective approach of the three for training L2 learners' oral skills, in addition to reading skills, as it is essentially an oral reading of a written text. For example, pupils in Drew and Pedersen (2010) found RT to be an excellent way of practising oral English. Those in Myrset (2014), Myrset and Drew (2016), and Næss (2016) made considerable gains in oral fluency, pronunciation and word recognition. Furthermore, those in Drew and Pedersen (2012), Pettersen (2013), Myrset (2014) and Næss (2016) all additionally trained their writing skills by writing their own RT texts, which they subsequently performed for others. This variant of RT, based on self-produced texts, was reported to be the most successful in these studies.

In terms of explicit learning, specific parts of the EYLP and the Reading and Writing Workshop provided arenas in which explicit learning and the raising of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness took place. In the EYLP, at the teacher learning centre, where guided reading took place with homogeneous groups of learners at a time, the teacher was able to focus attention on each pupil's reading skills, focus the learners' attention on different aspects of reading, different features of a text, and make the learners aware of, e.g. reading strategies (Charboneau, 2016). In this way, teachers were able to explicitly develop metacognitive skills in their learners. In the Reading and Writing Workshop, the mini-lessons focussed the learners' attention on a wide range of reading- and writing-connected aspects that were important to raise consciousness about at any given time. The regularity of mini-lessons in the approach balanced nicely with the regularity of opportunities for plentiful self-chosen

reading and writing experiences (Vatnaland, 2016). In addition, reading journals also provided opportunities for raising metacognitive awareness among the learners. Through her written responses to journals, the teacher was able to raise the learners' awareness of e.g. reading strategies and a writer's style and voice.

Readers Theatre, in turn, also provided multiple opportunities for explicit learning to take place, especially during rehearsals. Learners became aware of the need for their reading to be as accurate and fluent as possible. They understood the value of strategies in this process, such as repeatedly reading the same text, seeking and giving help to each other, for example in connection with the pronunciation, stress and comprehension of words, and seeking help from the teacher (Drew & Pedersen, 2010). Their metacognition thus developed naturally as a consequence of the nature of RT. Attention to detail improved reading accuracy and fluency (Myrset, 2014; Myrset & Drew, 2016; Næss, 2016). Each member of a group, irrespective of that person's strengths or weaknesses as a reader, understood the need to make a contribution to the group as a whole and was thus aware of his/her role in the bigger picture.

Conclusion

This article has reviewed research on how three reading approaches originating in L1 contexts have been adapted to EFL contexts in Norway. In the case of the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops, their implementation is only known to have happened in the Norwegian context. Research following up the implementation of all of these approaches, which all contain elements of implicit and explicit learning, has shown them to have cognitive and affective benefits for learners of different ages. Each approach also helps learners to develop their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness. Their implementation, however, requires adapting, for example, the choice and level of materials, and the time spent, to suit the specific L2 context. Each approach also has its challenges when adapted to an L2 context, for example allowing for sufficient oral practice in the EYLP and Reading and Writing Workshops. RT seems to be the easiest to implement since it can be used in so many different contexts, with so many different texts, age groups, and over shorter or longer periods of time.

Only one study has been conducted on the adaptation of Reading and Writing Workshops in an EFL context. More case studies on this approach, for example with other learners at the same level or with older learners, would be beneficial. Follow-up studies on the EYLP could involve interviews with larger samples of teachers and pupils who have experienced it. Finally, studies on the use of RT in other foreign languages, more quantitative studies of the effects of RT on pupils' reading skills, and studies of RT from the perspective of the listeners, and not just from that of the readers, would provide a broader picture of its effectiveness.

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