

FACILITATING SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ACCESS TO EXPOSITORY TEXTS

Teachers' understanding of the challenges involved

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Abstract

Many second-language learners (SLLs) struggle with comprehending texts in their second language. However, teachers have reported feeling incompetent when it comes to teaching SLLs. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' understanding of the challenges involved in facilitating SLLs' access to expository texts. Data were collected through interviews with nine teachers of 10–12-year-olds. The findings show that the teachers understood text challenges to be found at the word and text levels. Further, the teachers recognised SLLs' need for text-comprehension support, which they seemed to understand mainly as providing explanations for words and texts. However, they questioned the effectiveness of their adapted teaching. The findings suggest that the teachers' understanding of the issue may unintentionally restrict SLLs' academic-language development and their opportunities to learn from texts. Hence there may be a need for a change in the teachers' understanding of what it means to give access to texts in order to empower SLLs for future participation in society.

Keywords: teachers' understanding, second-language learners, academic language, expository texts, access to texts

Rangnes, H. (2019). Facilitating second-language learners' access to expository texts: Teachers' understanding of the challenges involved. L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 19, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2019.19.01.16>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning at school is a highly text-based activity, and comprehension of written texts is a critical skill for success both at school and in society (Greenleaf & Valencia, 2017; Skaftun, 2014). Many second-language learners (SLLs) have problems understanding texts in their second language (Frønes, 2016; Strand, Wagner, & Foldnes, 2017; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). Those problems can be explained as due to inadequate knowledge of the academic language characterising expository texts (Cummins, 2000; Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Townsend, Filippini, Collins, & Biancarosa, 2012). This register is not easy to learn—the process is claimed to take up to seven years (Cummins, 2000), and does not happen of its own accord; rather, academic language must be explicitly taught to those who are not already familiar with it from their home environment (Scarcella, 2003). Such familiarity is known to be typically lacking in many children from a lower socio-economic background (Gee, 2015; Heppt, Haag, Böhme, & Stanat, 2015). Further, as children with an immigrant background come from such a lower socio-economic background to a larger extent than majority students¹ (Bakken & Hyggen, 2018, p. 48), many SLLs will need special long-term support in order to develop their academic language.

In Norway, SLLs typically spend most of the time during which their academic language is (or should be) developing in mainstream classrooms at state schools. For this reason, the present study focuses on mainstream teachers' role in assisting that development (Guler, 2018; Pettit, 2011; Wallen & Kelly-Holmes, 2017). We know that many teachers from various countries feel incompetent when it comes to helping SLLs (Hadjioannou, Hutchinson, & Hockman, 2016; Haworth, 2008; Samson & Collins, 2012). It has also been reported that teacher training typically offers insufficient opportunities for future teachers to learn how to teach SLLs in mainstream classrooms (Thomassen, 2016; Villegas, SaizdeLaMora, Martin, & Mills, 2018), in particular that the training future teachers receive in the field of language learning is inadequate (Lucas & Villegas, 2010; Pettit, 2011).

With this as a backdrop, the present study seeks to add to previous research by providing knowledge about the challenges faced by mainstream teachers when teaching SLLs. Specifically, this is done by investigating (1) what aspects of expository texts teachers consider to be challenging for SLLs, and (2) what they believe to be the best ways to help those students gain access to such texts (cf. Hodgkinson & Small, 2018; Percy, Martin-Beltrán, Silverman, & Nunn, 2015).

¹ *There is great variety, and many immigrant students are managing very well in the school system (Bakken & Hyggen, 2018, p. 48). Studies such as those by Penne (2006) and Strand and Schwippert (2019) suggest that the socio-economic background, rather than the linguistic background or home language, is the crucial factor for SLLs' academic achievement.*

1.1 What makes expository texts difficult to comprehend?

Expository texts are typically written in an academic language (Snow & Uccelli, 2009), which differs from that used in everyday social situations (Cummins, 2000). While academic language has traditionally been understood as academic vocabulary, researchers have expanded the notion of academic language in texts to include challenges at all linguistic levels (Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Uccelli, Galloway, Barr, Meneses, & Dobbs, 2015). In line with this understanding, Mesmer, Cunningham and Hiebert (2012) offer an appropriate framework for describing and understanding the challenges that academic language² in expository texts can pose to SLLs. Their framework encompasses three levels: word, sentence and text.³

At the *word level*, knowledge of academic vocabulary such as subject-specific words (*photosynthesis, democracy*) and general academic words (*reduce, process*) is crucial (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). The former category may be more obvious, but the latter one, which includes words used across many different subjects, has in fact been highlighted as a particular challenge for SLLs (Baker et al., 2014; Haag, Heppt, Stanat, Kuhl, & Pant, 2013; Townsend et al., 2012). Teachers often expect students to know those words (Snow, 2010), but they are in fact seldom part of the vocabulary that children use outside the classroom (Gibbons, 1991).

At the *sentence level*, there are several linguistic features which add to the density and abstractness of sentences. For example, academic language is characterised by nominalisations (Nagy & Townsend, 2012)—verbs turned into nouns, such as *explanation* instead of *explain*. This can make it difficult to understand who is performing the actions. Moreover, Nagy and Townsend (2012) explain that while complex ideas tend to be expressed in several clauses in spoken everyday language, in academic language complex ideas tend to be expressed within a single, noun-heavy clause. The combination of high sentence length and high lexical density has been shown to impair SLLs' reading comprehension (Heppt et al., 2015).

At the *text level*, there are several challenges relating to coherence—that is, to how words, sentences and ideas are connected within the text (Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012). Making text inferences, which requires the reader to link information from the wider textual context, is challenging for SLLs (Hvistendal, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2012). In addition, when it comes to making inferences based on prior knowledge, the study by Rydland, Aukrust and Fulland (2012) shows that the limited vocabulary of SLLs may make it more difficult for them to use prior knowledge in the comprehension process. Further, it is clear from the meta-analysis performed by Pyle et al. (2017), although it did not include SLLs, that the logical structure of texts—such

² Mesmer, Cunningham and Hiebert (2012) use the term *text complexities* rather than *academic language*.

³ Mesmer, Cunningham and Hiebert (2012) use the term *discourse level* rather than *text level*. The latter is used in this study to avoid confusion with the theoretical concept of *Discourse*, which will be presented later on.

as problem–solution, cause–effect, compare–contrast, and different types of sequences—may be unfamiliar to many students, making it hard for them to identify the key ideas in a text. A further factor which may add to text-structure complexity is that a text may not have the same structure throughout (Shanahan et al., 2010).⁴

What is more, according to Shanahan et al. (2010), the relationships between different ideas are typically conveyed through certain clue words (such as *however* in the case of compare–contrast). Someone who is not familiar with those clue words will not be able to draw upon them for support in understanding the structure of a text (Degand & Sanders, 2002). Finally, expository texts are often multi-modal, meaning that the reader needs to know how to interpret and understand illustrations, tables and other non-text material (Roe, 2008).

1.2 Teachers' understanding of how to teach SLLs

According to Pettit (2011), teachers need to take a positive attitude towards SLLs and to have high expectations of them in order for SLLs to become academically successful. However, studies indicate that those requirements do not seem to be met. According to the literature reviews by Pettit (2011) and Khong and Saito (2014), teachers seem to have low expectations of SLLs. Hence they may conclude, for example, that SLLs should receive less rigorous teaching without any critical-thinking activities (de Araujo, 2017; Murphy & Torff, 2019), and that they need to be exposed to simplified language to avoid the risk that they will fail to understand (Rangnes & Gourvennec, 2018; Harper & De Jong, 2004; Khong & Saito, 2014). Such ideas may be reflected in the reporting by Harklau (1999) of teachers who were afraid of embarrassing SLLs.

By contrast, Pettit (2011) stresses that mainstream teachers need to acknowledge their responsibility for SLLs' academic development. However, when it comes to adapted teaching for SLLs, some studies show that even though teachers held positive or neutral attitudes towards SLLs, they were not interested in adapting their teaching to meet those students' needs (Carley Rizzuto, 2017; Walker, Shafer, & liams, 2004). Further, in a Norwegian survey covering 95 schools (grades 5–10), Nes (2018, p. 95) questioned the extent to which teaching had been appropriately adapted in cases where teachers reported lower academic achievement, weaker motivation and less effort on the part of SLLs compared with students with Norwegian as their first language. By contrast, in the survey by Reeves (2006), the teachers took a neutral to slightly positive attitude to coursework modifications. According to Reeves (2006), the teachers' attitude seemed to be influenced by their concern for educational equity—that is, their wish not to do SLLs a disfavor by making too many modifications.

According to Khong and Saito (2014), improving the poor academic achievement of many SLLs represents a challenging task for teachers. In a survey of almost 5,300

⁴ *This study concerns students from kindergarten to grade 3, but the principles described there also apply to older students.*

teachers by Gàndara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005), the teachers reported difficulties in communicating academic content to SLLs. This may be in line with Greenleaf and Valencia's study showing that teachers often avoid using texts, and that they "deliver the content and even do the thinking" (Greenleaf & Valencia, 2017, p. 239). Further, there are also reports from teachers of other challenges when teaching SLLs, such as a lack of time (Gàndara et al., 2005; Haworth, 2008; Khong & Saito, 2014; Pettit, 2011; Sandberg & Norling, 2018) and a lack of resources such as appropriate texts and assessments tools (Gàndara et al., 2005; Khong & Saito, 2014).

In this context, Pettit (2011) emphasises that teachers seem to lack crucial knowledge about how long it really takes to learn a second language. As a result, various misconceptions are common, for example that learning a second language takes only a year or two (Khong & Saito, 2014; Pettit, 2011; Reeves, 2006; Walker et al., 2004) and that you can do so fully through natural exposure and interactions (Harper & De Jong, 2004; Khong & Saito, 2014). Further, many teachers also seem to hold the misconception that use of the first language will interfere with the learning of a second language (Carley Rizzuto, 2017; Khong & Saito, 2014; Pettit, 2011; Shim, 2014). When it comes to effective ways of supporting SLLs' second-language acquisition at school, Danbolt and Kulbrandstad (2012) report that teachers highlighted talking, for example on themes taken from textbooks, as well as work on vocabulary and reading.

Finally, when it comes to textual challenges, there are few studies that take teachers' understanding of those challenges into account, but the study by Hodgkinson and Small (2018)—focusing on textual challenges for all students, not only SLLs—found that teachers understood vocabulary, sentences and coherence to be challenging in texts. At an overall level, the teachers who participated in that study were unable to identify textual challenges in an adequate manner, but those teachers who had undertaken extensive further professional training in the field of literacy provided more detailed definitions of textual challenges than those without such training. By contrast, there did not appear to be a relationship between the quality of the definitions presented by the teachers and the extent of their professional experience.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study starts from a socio-cultural understanding of literacy education as a process where students are invited to join an academic community, and where language use represents a way to think about texts and various subjects. In the present study, literacy is understood as access to texts on three different levels: "on the levels of the written code, of the textual meaning, and that of participation in a text culture" (Skaftun, 2015, p. 1). Here we pay particular attention to the second level—specifically, to teachers' understanding of how to give SLLs access to textual meaning. The present study also draws upon the RAND Reading Study Group's

(RRSG) understanding of reading comprehension⁵ as an act of extracting and constructing meaning from texts within a socio-cultural context (RRSG, 2002). According to the RRSg (2002), this comprehension process includes three elements: *the reader, the text* and *the teacher's teaching*.⁶ The interaction among these three elements addresses some important issues. For example, it is not always easy to extract and construct meaning from texts. Gaskin (2003) suggests that students should be taught how to process texts beyond the literal level to foster high-level comprehension, and Uccelli et al. (2015) argue that language skills play an increasingly important role in reading comprehension. This would seem to highlight the need for teachers to teach SLLs about the academic language characterizing expository texts at all linguistic levels.

Further, the present study uses Gee's (2015) theoretical concepts of *Discourse, acquisition* and *learning*. The use of theories in research provides lenses to guide the design of research questions, the selection of relevant data and the interpretation of the data, and according to Reeves, Albert, Kuper and Hodges (2008), theories also provide lenses in order to make sense of a complex social reality. To begin with, Gee's (2015) concept of Discourse is defined as follows:

A discourse with a capital D is composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing with other people and with various objects, tools and technologies. (p. 166; italics in the original)

The concept of Discourse offers a useful lens to describe some SLLs' difficulties in understanding expository texts. According to Gee, a person's *primary Discourse* consists of the Discourse into which he or she was socialised during childhood. This Discourse serves as a framework for the person's acquisition and learning of other *secondary Discourses* later in life (p. 193). Gee describes such secondary Discourses as acquired within institutions that are part of the wider communities, for example schools (p. 174). Many students from lower socio-economic and/or immigrant backgrounds have a primary Discourse which is quite different from the Discourse used in the classroom, meaning that they will face difficulties comprehending the school Discourse (p. 182ff.). Children whose first language is Norwegian may also have a primary Discourse which is very different from the school Discourse, but in the case of SLLs, the primary Discourse is actually also in another language. According to Gee (p. 179), if schools are not aware of the differences in Discourses, they may create insiders and outsiders. This has implications for teachers' practices: if some SLLs (or other students, for that matter) are less familiar with the classroom

⁵ *The terms reading comprehension and text comprehension are used interchangeably in this article (cf. Uccelli et al., 2015), but text comprehension is preferred here as this term brings the texts and the challenges posed by them to the fore.*

⁶ *In the RRSg's original model, the terms reader, text and activity are used. However, activities "are most often assigned by the teacher" (Gaskin, 2003, p. 159), which is why the term activity is understood in the present study as referring to the teacher's teaching.*

Discourse, and so find themselves in a worse position when it comes to understanding texts, the question of what teachers can do about the matter arises.

According to Gee (2015), people gain access to Discourses through acquisition and learning. These two concepts provide a lens to help us understand what approach to teaching is necessary in order to give many SLLs equal learning opportunities. Acquisition is understood as the “process of acquiring something [...] without formal teaching” (p. 189), and “wherein the teacher scaffolds the students’ growing abilities to say, do, value, believe [...] within that Discourse” (p. 198). Some students will not reach full mastery through acquisition, meaning that there is a need to teach learning to those students; Gee describes learning as:

a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching [...] or through certain life experiences that trigger conscious reflection. This teaching or reflection involves explanations and analysis. [...] It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter. (p. 189)

According to Gee (2015), if teachers are to develop students’ meta-knowledge, they need to juxtapose different Discourses for comparison and contrast. In the case of SLLs, this may also include Discourses in their first language. Nagy and Townsend (2012, p. 104) have suggested some questions—all anchored in the texts—that can be used to guide such modelling, in line with Gee’s concept of teaching-for-learning: “How many pieces or chunks of information are there in this sentence?”, “Are there some clue words that tell us about relationships?”, and “Do we see any phrases that we don’t often use when we speak? Why are they here?”. If teachers manage to visualize the Discourses reflected in those expository texts that SLLs are attempting to understand, and to relate those Discourses to those that SLLs already master, then SLLs can develop meta-knowledge. This can be a form of power and liberation (Gee, 2015, pp. 192 and 198)—and it may also enable all students to use one Discourse to change another (p. 185).

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of the present study was to investigate teachers’ understanding of the challenges that arise in the context of facilitating SLLs’ access to expository texts. This was done through in-depth interviews with nine teachers in Norway. Norwegian teachers, like their colleagues in other countries, seem to be offered few opportunities during teacher training to acquire skills when it comes to teaching SLLs (Dyrnes, Johansen, & Jónsdóttir, 2015; Thomassen, 2016; Tolo, 2014).

The present study seeks to add to previous research into teachers’ understanding of teaching SLLs in mainstream classrooms by further investigating the challenges faced by teachers when it comes to improving SLLs’ academic achievement (Khong & Saito, 2014), and when it comes to communicating academic content to them (Gàndara et al., 2005). It is important to be aware that such communication does not take place in a vacuum, but is influenced by teachers’ understanding of textual

challenges, of SLLs' need to develop their language beyond the initial level, and of appropriate methods to help SLLs gain access to demanding academic texts.

The present study involves teachers who teach social studies. The reason why teachers of that subject were chosen is that social studies is a subject known to prepare students for future participation in society (Lee & Spratley, 2010; O'Brien, 2011). Further, the teachers interviewed teach in grades 5–7 (10–12-year-olds). This is an interesting age, as it can be said to represent the period when language used at school begins to differ more clearly from the everyday language of social interaction. While the expository texts⁷ that students are exposed to at school grow increasingly subject-specific, it can be assumed that the texts used in grades 5–7 are still largely characterised by a need for "literacy skills common to many tasks, including generic comprehension strategies, common word meanings, and basic fluency" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 44).

A first prerequisite for attaining the purpose assigned to the present study was to learn more about the teachers' understanding of what exactly it is that makes expository texts difficult to understand. Hence the first research question was the following:

What characterises the teachers' understanding of what makes expository texts difficult to comprehend for second-language learners?

Knowledge about the teachers' understanding of what makes texts difficult to comprehend naturally leads on to a wish to know more about their understanding of how best to support SLLs' comprehension of texts. The second research question was the following:

What characterises the teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching intended to facilitate second-language learners' access to expository texts?

4. METHOD

4.1 Participants

To obtain a purposeful sample (Creswell, 2013, p. 155), i.e. a sample consisting of teachers with experience teaching SLLs in mainstream classrooms, 31 schools in areas with rather a high proportion of immigrants (12–33%) were contacted.⁸ The schools were mainly located in low-income areas in the western part of Norway, and

⁷ The teachers included in the present study mainly used school textbooks. School textbooks differ in some ways from typical expository texts (Mortimer & Scott, 2003), but the term expository text is used in this study for reasons of simplicity.

⁸ The data come from the 2015–2017 surveys of living conditions in different municipalities. The surveys focus on immigrants who were born abroad or born in Norway by immigrant parents from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa or Latin America. The cities/towns were divided into areas according to the proportion of immigrants living there: approximately 0–6.9%, 7–9.5%, 9.6–12%, 12.1–15%, 16–20%, 21–26% and 27–32%. The overall proportion of immigrants in Norway is 16%.

they were contacted through an email sent to the principal, who forwarded the request to relevant teachers. Nine teachers, seven women and two men, from seven different schools volunteered to participate in the interview study. They all taught social studies; four of them taught in grade 5, one in grade 6 and four in grade 7. They had between two and nine SLLs in their classes. The number of their SLLs who attended the official language programme varied.⁹ The total number of students in the classes ranged from 17 to 28. The participant teachers had 2–25 years' work experience, and several had obtained additional professional qualifications. Information about the participants is given in Table 1. Teachers from the same schools were interviewed several days apart, and they did not know about each other. The author did not know any of the participating teachers before the interviews, but they all knew the author's background as a teacher.

Table 1. Overview of the participants.

Teacher (fictional names)	Gender	Work experience (years)	Additional professional qualifications	Grade	Number of students in classroom	SLLs having left official language programme	SLLs attending official language programme
Anette	F	9	Reading	5	21	0	7
Bente	F	4		5	26	1	4
Emma	F	2		6	28	3	2
Guro	F	9	Social studies	5	25	4	5
Henrik	M	10		7	19	3	2
Jane	F	25	Reading	5	24	3	3
Mari	F	10		7	22	0	2
Petter	M	17		7	25	0	3
Tove	F	7	SLA	7	17	4	2

Note. SLA stands for second-language acquisition.

⁹ The present study was conducted in areas where immigrant students attend either separate reception schools or separate reception classes for a year or two before being transferred to state schools. According to Section 2(8) of the Norwegian Education Act (*Opplæringslova, 1998*), immigrant students have the right to attend official language programmes until they have developed a sufficient knowledge of Norwegian. SLLs are enrolled in the programme to learn Norwegian, but if they need some instruction in their first language and/or bilingual support in content areas, they are entitled to receive that. After transferring to a state school, they attend the programme on a partial basis, usually for a couple of hours a week (Nes, 2018). However, they typically need further language support after completing the programme.

4.2 *The interviews*

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), in-depth interviews are suitable when the researcher wants information about different aspects of people's experiences. In the present study, the interviews provided data relating to the teachers' discursive understanding of the issues involved, as the utterances were expressed within the context of the interviews. The interviews lasted for 70 to 90 minutes, and were conducted during the spring of 2017 at the participants' schools.

The day before each interview, the teacher was sent an example text (412 words) appropriate for 10–12-year-olds. The text, which was about the parliamentary elections in Norway and the history of democracy,¹⁰ contained both subject-specific academic words (e.g. *stortingsvalg* 'parliamentary elections'), and general academic words (e.g. *ytterligere* 'further'). The text had a relatively high information density, and there were several gaps in it, meaning that the reader had to make inferences. Further, the text had elements of both sequential and compare–contrast structure. The teachers were asked to read through the text prior to the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured, and the interview themes were sent to the teachers one day before the interviews. The themes covered were the following: general background information, what the teacher considered important in his or her job, work on texts, reading comprehension, teaching SLLs, classroom and peer talks, and development opportunities of SLLs. The interviews were inspired by the template for interview guides presented in Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen (2010), meaning that there was an open introductory question to each of the themes covered. Further, there were two or three open key questions within each theme. All of the questions were framed on the basis of what has been highlighted in theoretical works and previous research as important for SLLs' text comprehension. The author asked the teachers directly what challenges for SLLs they saw in the texts they typically used as well as in the example text. The teachers reflected on their own practice either in response to a direct question or as part of their spontaneous comments on their own practice at various points during the interview.

4.3 *Analysis of the interviews*

The nine interviews were audio-taped. The author first listened through them all afterwards, writing summaries including her own reflections. Then the interviews were transcribed, and each utterance in the interviews was assigned a number (with each interview starting on number one).¹¹ The transcriptions were imported into the NVIVO software for the analysis. To anonymise the teachers, pseudonyms were used.

Within the framework of Skaftun's (2015) understanding of literacy as access to texts, the data material was approached using the three elements of text, reader and

¹⁰ <https://nysgjerrigper.no/Artikler/2013/september/demokrati> (retrieved on May 19, 2017).

¹¹ A simplified version of Jefferson's transcription key was used (Atkinson & Heritage, 1999).

teaching as lenses. In the present study, those three elements are used to describe the teachers' understanding of the academic language characterising expository texts, their understanding of the challenges faced by SLLs, and their understanding of their own adapted teaching for such students in mainstream classrooms. This means that those three elements are used as organisational categories (Maxwell, 2005). In line with Maxwell's (2008) recommendations, sub-categories emerged from a combination of the author's theoretical approach and the participants' utterances. An overview of the hierarchical coding system is given in Table 2.

Within the organisational category of *text: expository text*, teachers' utterances about textual challenges were coded according to the three linguistic levels proposed by Mesmer et al. (2012): word, sentence and text (*word level*, *sentence level* and *text level*). For the latter, a sub-sub-category was added for the teachers' descriptions of expository texts (*descriptions of expository text*).

For the organisational category of *reader: SLLs*, there emerged three sub-categories describing teachers' understanding of the challenges faced by SLLs: one for their general experiences of the challenges that SLL students face in the mainstream classroom (*in the mainstream classroom*), one for SLLs' text use and the related challenges (*challenges of text use*), and one for SLLs' need for support (*need for support*). For the first sub-category, there also emerged a sub-sub-category describing the teachers' understanding of how SLLs best learned Norwegian as a second language (*learning Norwegian as a second language*).

Finally, with regard to the third organisational category, *teaching: teachers' teaching*, the aspects of greatest interest seemed to be the teachers' understanding of how to best facilitate SLLs' text comprehension as well as the teachers' questions regarding their own teaching, given that those aspects have the potential to yield targeted recommendations for improvement based on the teachers' own voices. Hence there emerged three sub-categories: the teachers' utterances about their own adaptations and simplifications of texts and language (*adaptations and simplification*), the need for additional or different adaptations to teaching (*the need for something more*), and the extent to which the teachers experienced that the SLLs learned anything from their explanations (*students' learning outcome*).

The coding process was conducted by the author in several steps. First, the interview guide was used as a tool for data reduction. At the initial stage, different theoretical concepts were applied as organisational categories to determine whether they provided a useful approach to the material. In this process, the author discussed the coding and the examples with an experienced qualitative researcher. As part of this discussion, the author's colleague coded part of the material, and this was used for further adjustment and discussion of the codes in the initial coding phase. This process has been referred to as "inter-coder agreement" or "cross-checking" (Creswell, 2014, p. 203). The author conducted several rounds of data reduction, guided by the research questions and increasingly precise codes, and this process was also discussed on several occasions with the above-mentioned colleague. Further, in this process the author constantly returned to the raw material

to juxtapose the data with the codes in order to ensure that there was no drift in the definition of the codes (Creswell, 2014).

Table 2. Overview of the hierarchical coding system: Categories describing the teachers' understanding of challenges when it comes to helping SLLs gain access to expository texts.

Organisational category	Sub-category	Sub-sub-category	Anchor examples
Text: expository texts	Word level		"There's a whole bunch [of difficult words] here [in the text]" (Bente, 74)
	Sentence level		"So [SLLs] would have stopped there [at a complex sentence in the example text] and thought, 'statesman', now that's a hard word" (Henrik, 141).
	Text level		"The answer can be found in different places in the text" (Jane, 317).
Reader: SLLs	In the mainstream classroom	Description of expository texts	Text described as "jumping about" (Emma, 219).
		Learning Norwegian as a second language	"But I can see [...] that [SLLs] often tend to [...] become passive" (Mari, 201).
	Challenges of text use		"Well, you know, you can tell if [SLLs] start attending activities with other children who are Norwegian" (Guro, 358).
		Need for support	"SLLs find it harder than others to read between the lines" (Bente, 114).
			"I sort of hope [SLLs] may [understand] when they have read it themselves" (Guro, 195).

Teaching: teachers' teaching	Adaptations and simplifications	"But what I think we've used more than anything else is simply talking our way through a text. That is, reading two pages and then talking" (Tove, 158).
	The need for something more	"Should we give [SLLs] really simple texts, or should we give them the challenging texts that the others encounter?" (Anette, 187).
	Students' learning outcome	"As I've said, we know we're supposed to work on concepts, but that's about all we know" (Anette, 83).
		"They soon come to an agreement, or they don't know" (Jane, 87).

Note. For the sub-category Adaptations and simplifications, two anchor examples are given: one for adaptations and one for simplification. The numbers refer to utterance numbers within each interview.

5. RESULTS

In this section, the results will be presented against the background of the research questions, which are answered with reference to the teachers' understanding of the three elements of text, reader and teaching. The results relating to the first research question are presented first. That question—What characterises the teachers' understanding of what makes expository texts difficult to comprehend for second-language learners?—is answered mainly by the data material coded as text: expository texts, with its sub-(sub-)categories. Next, the results relating to the second research question are presented. The data material used to answer that question—What characterises the teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching intended to facilitate second-language learners' access to expository texts?—is mainly derived from the material coded as reader: SLLs and teaching: teachers' teaching, including their sub-(sub-)categories. The illustrative quotations from teacher interviews have all been translated from Norwegian by the author.

5.1 Text

The categories describing the teachers' understanding of what makes expository texts difficult to comprehend move from word-level over sentence-level to text-level challenges.

Word-level challenges. All teachers immediately recognised vocabulary as a challenge for SLLs' text comprehension. First, in particular, they highlighted subject-specific vocabulary found in the example text they had been given: "There's a whole bunch [of difficult words] here. [The example text] is really hard. [...] I would have explained *parliamentary elections, party, modern democracy, voting rights* [...]. It's really chock-a-block with them here" (Bente, 74).¹² Further, eight teachers also identified general academic words as a challenge. Even though they referred to those words as everyday words, they expressed an emerging understanding of the need to explain them: "Also, the technical concepts may not necessarily be the problem. Those that we see as completely everyday words are simply unknown precisely to the students with a different native language" (Henrik, 69). In addition, the teachers identified several other challenges at the word level: eight highlighted metaphors as challenging, five identified compound words (a common feature of—especially written—Norwegian), and two teachers mentioned polysemous words as an obstacle. Finally, three teachers pointed to knowledge of word roots and word elements as useful for SLLs' comprehension:

Well, because then there's the last sentence [of the example text]: 'Our democracy is more democratic'. That can be hard enough to understand. In my opinion, it's not self-evident that [SLLs] will understand democratic even if they've had democracy defined to them. They don't always understand words that are derived from each other (Tove, 188).

Sentence-level challenges. At the sentence level, none of the teachers mentioned sentence complexity as a challenge, either in the example text or in the social-studies textbook they used. They seemed to lack knowledge of how to express issues of sentence complexity, and six teachers resorted to the word level when trying to describe text complexity beyond the word level: "So [SLLs] would have stopped there [at a complex sentence in the example text] [...], and thought, 'statesman', now that's a hard word" (Henrik, 141).

Text-level challenges. The teachers described expository texts, including the example text, as demanding for SLLs. However, while vocabulary was a text challenge that the teachers recognised immediately in expository texts in general, text coherence was mentioned while they were describing other issues. They pointed to different aspects of text coherence as challenging. Emma (219) described a particular expository text as "jumping about" and difficult to make sense of; she probably referred to the fact that this text required many inferences in order to be comprehensible. On the other hand, Anette characterised expository texts as easier

¹² The numbers refer to utterance numbers within each interview.

to understand than narratives, apparently because there was no need for making inferences: “[i]t’s so concrete for students. [...] They don’t have to interpret anything” (Anette, 93 and 95). Henrik (147) mentioned difficult words as an obstacle for text coherence, and Jane mentioned the need to make text inferences generally in expository texts as a challenge when trying to answer questions, because “the answer can be found in different places in the text” (Jane, 317). Further, all the teachers mentioned that abstract and “distant” themes, such as ancient Greek democracy, were challenges for SLLs’ text comprehension, and Bente (66) drew attention to the challenges associated with the multi-modal structure of expository texts. However, none of the teachers mentioned the issue of clue words in texts that can help readers understand the relationships between ideas, and nor did any of them mention the need to make text inferences in the example text.

5.2 Reader

The categories used give three different perspectives on how the teachers understand the readers in question: (1) an overall perspective on the challenges that SLLs face in mainstream classrooms, (2) the particular text-related challenges that SLLs face, and (3) the kind of support that SLLs need.

In the mainstream classroom. The teachers mentioned several challenges that, in their experience, SLLs faced in the mainstream classroom. However, they also expressed clearly that they considered SLLs to be a very heterogeneous group; in fact, seven teachers said that they did not consider SLLs as a single group at all: “No, as I said, I’ve never thought of them as a group and seen them as opposite to the rest. It’s more a question of that and that individual student” (Tove, 218). Even so, throughout the interviews the teachers revealed some more or less general challenges that they felt this group of students encountered. Eight teachers said that they experienced some SLLs as more likely than other students to be silent in the classroom: “But I can see [...] that [SLLs] often tend to [...] become passive” (Mari, 201), and seven of them suggested that part of the reason why some SLLs tended to be silent during classroom talks about texts might be a fear of making mistakes. This may be supported by Bente’s (38) observation that it was in many SLLs’ culture to always answer “yes”, and that this left her uncertain whether those SLLs had actually understood. Two teachers reflected on the challenges facing SLLs when it came to expressing themselves: “In fact, using everyday language and binding it together is more likely to be a problem for [SLLs]” (Henrik, 211). Petter first generally said that students tended to position themselves along a scale between the two extremes of “long thinkers” and “short thinkers”, in terms of their ability to hold on to complex arguments while talking, and then concluded: “[SLLs] do not tend to be long thinkers, actually. No, they’re on the short side” (Petter, 205).

The teachers expressed concern about the SLLs’ need to develop Norwegian as a second language. Four teachers said explicitly that SLLs had good developmental opportunities at school. On the other hand, eight of them also mentioned that SLLs tended to learn their second language better if they spent time with Norwegian

peers outside school as well, rather than encountering their second language only in a school context: “Well, you know, you can tell if [SLLs] [...] start attending activities with other children who are Norwegian” (Guro, 358). Bente (128) did not seem to consider use of the first language to interfere with learning Norwegian, as she encouraged those of her SLLs who shared the same first language to use it in the classroom when collaborating. However, two other teachers problematised the fact that some SLLs communicated in a third language (that is, neither the students’ first language nor Norwegian). One teacher mentioned that SLLs would benefit from speaking Norwegian at home.

Challenges of text use. The teachers reported some challenges that, in their experience, SLLs tended to encounter when working on texts. For example, two teachers said explicitly that SLLs were less likely to refer to the text during classroom talks: “No, I think it may be a little hard [referring to the text during a discussion]. [SLLs] are better at using things they know from before” (Emma, 207). In line with this, five teachers—although this was not characterised as a challenge—pointed out that the texts were often not the subject of discussions, but rather only a starting-point for both the teacher’s and the students’ associations. Bente mentioned that many SLLs struggled with finding information in texts: “They find it easier to ask than to use the text. They don’t feel much like searching. [...] The weaker they are, the less they use the text” (Bente, 92). Further, seven teachers mentioned that SLLs in general struggled with different aspects of text coherence. Five teachers mentioned that SLLs tended to have difficulties with knowledge inference, which some teachers referred to as “reading between the lines”. Bente (114) said that “[SLLs] probably find it harder than others to read between the lines. [...] I mean, thinking your way to information”. In line with this, five teachers noted that SLLs were better able to manage, and preferred, literal questions: “But if [SLLs] are able simply to go to the text and locate the answer, that’s what they find easiest” (Guro, 167). Finally, two teachers mentioned that SLLs had difficulty distinguishing between important and unimportant information in a text.

Need for support. When describing their practices, the teachers reflected on students’ need for support in various settings. Mari made a distinction in terms of SLLs’ need for linguistic support depending on where they were in the second-language acquisition process:

Well, it depends. [...] If you have refugees who have just arrived in Norway and don’t know a word. That’s different from in the case of those who were born here and have grown up here, and who need to learn some more, because then it’s at a conceptual level. (Mari, 225)

Bente noted that even SLLs who had left the official language programme were “struggling with concepts that I wasn’t really able to shed light on in the classroom” (Bente, 60). By contrast, three teachers characterised their SLLs who remained enrolled in the language programme as managing well: “[They are] fairly strong, relatively speaking, linguistically and subject-wise, so I can’t say they have a particularly strong effect on the student group” (Petter, 39). Further, three teachers

recounted how they had felt surprise when realising that they had not prepared for their students' challenges: "Sometimes I forget to prepare the ground for [students who have left the language programme]. [...] Then I sometimes feel; Oh, so that's something you're wondering about" (Emma, 65). Five teachers reflected on how they did not always meet all SLLs' needs:

But then there are those who [...] have become too good for Section 2(8)¹³—with them I don't work through [the text] beforehand, but I sort of hope they may [understand] when they have read it themselves. And if they haven't understood everything, at least they will have got bits of it, and as we go through it afterwards, they'll understand, I hope. (Guro, 195)

Three teachers seemed to be very attentive both to students who faced major challenges, regardless of their first language, and to SLLs who had recently transferred to a state school. Finally, four teachers mentioned that SLLs had fewer opportunities to obtain support at home.

5.3 Teaching

The categories used here characterise the teachers' understanding of their teaching. While describing how they facilitated SLLs' access to texts, many of the teachers also started to reflect critically on their own teaching. When they reported about their own adaptations, some started to question simplification. One step further from that was to reflect on how something more may be needed in order to meet SLLs' needs. Finally, this questioning culminated in concerns about SLLs' learning outcome.

Adaptations and simplification. The teachers reported making several adaptations and simplifications to facilitate SLLs' text comprehension; for instance, eight teachers highlighted activating students' prior/background knowledge as the most important reading phase. Four teachers reported teaching about word parts, and five teachers said they sometimes or always pre-taught vocabulary. Three teachers mentioned that they encouraged their students to use surrounding information to figure out the meaning of a new word, and four teachers asked their students to summarise the text. They also mentioned activities such as visualisation, answering questions to texts, comparing—for instance ancient Greek democracy with modern democracy—and letting the students make presentations. All teachers used peer talk as part of classroom talks about texts, and three teachers emphasised that giving SLLs support is regarded as a normal situation. However, four teachers said they did not pay much attention to teaching coherence.

Further, all teachers reported reading texts aloud and explaining words and text content to their students; this seemed to be their main activity intended to facilitate SLLs' access to texts: "But what I think we've used more than anything else is simply talking our way through a text. That is, reading two pages and then talking" (Tove,

¹³ Under Section 2(8) of the Norwegian Education Act (*Opplæringslova*, 1998), immigrant students have the right to attend an official language programme until they have attained a sufficient knowledge of Norwegian.

158). One teacher said that she almost never used the texts after the class had read through them in the classroom. Four teachers mentioned that the students did not necessarily need to read the text to complete tasks, because they could obtain the information required in other ways:

This did not really require them to understand the text and to understand the content. [...] I could see that when they wrote their own argumentative texts, many of the arguments they included [...] were taken from [the classroom talks]. (Anette, 151)

Finally, the teachers reported making additional adaptations in order to simplify the reading process for students who were struggling—either using easier words or texts, rewriting the original texts, or letting the students read only parts of the original text. However, some of them problematised such simplification; for example, three teachers questioned the simplification of words used in texts:

Nor should I simplify [the language] so much that they won't learn those words. You know, I often feel that I easily fall into that trap, of trying to make the language as simple as possible. But they're supposed to develop their language, after all. (Bente, 264)

Anette problematised the simplification of texts:

Should we give [SLLs] really simple texts, or should we give them the challenging texts that the others encounter? [...] After all, they will sit the national tests. The same demands will be made of them as of all the others, so I kind of think, "No, we have to just push ahead." Then it's better to work very intensely on the texts. (Anette, 187)

The need for something more. All teachers said that they did not have enough time to meet SLLs' needs, but five of them also expressed a feeling that, even though they devoted a great deal of time to making adaptations, they still did not feel they met SLLs' learning needs. Hence they directly or indirectly expressed a need for something more. They did not seem to know what those additional adaptations might consist in: "As I've said, we know we're supposed to work on concepts, but that's about all we know. It's pretty hard" (Anette, 83). Petter (255) was particularly concerned with how to teach newly arrived students, and Henrik (49) mentioned how he struggled with explaining when students did not understand. Further, three teachers problematised the use of pictures to visualise abstract words: "You know, I can't really show a picture of a political institution, so [the example text] would have been pretty hard to explain, if you ask me" (Bente, 86).

Students' learning outcomes. Even though all the teachers put much effort into making texts comprehensible to their students, six teachers expressed uncertainty about whether SLLs actually understood and remembered their explanations, and/or whether they learned anything: "You know, many [SLLs] are struggling a bit to remember what we've gone through when they return home" (Guro, 152). Two teachers explicitly mentioned SLLs' ability to learn new words: Bente (105) pointed out that SLLs apparently understood more words than they actively used, and Henrik mentioned that SLLs often learned subject-specific vocabulary: "Well, I often notice that they're good at using words they've just been working on" (Henrik, 209). By contrast, four teachers said that they did not pay much attention to whether students used new words or not in discussions. Further, even though all teachers

used peer talk to prepare all students for classroom talk, four teachers were uncertain about the effect of such talk or about what their students actually discussed: "They soon come to an agreement, or they don't know" (Jane, 87). For this reason, two teachers preferred classroom talk to peer talk.

6. DISCUSSION

This study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) What characterises the teachers' understanding of what makes expository texts difficult to comprehend for second-language learners? and (2) What characterises the teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching intended to facilitate second-language learners' access to expository texts? In the following, Gee's (2015) concepts of Discourse, acquisition and learning will be applied when discussing those research questions.

Research question 1: What characterises the teachers' understanding of what makes expository texts difficult to comprehend for second-language learners? The teachers in the present study seemed to understand textual challenges to be at the word and text levels (cf. Hodgkinson & Small, 2018), meaning that they were partially aware of some of the differences between Discourses (Gee, 2015). For example, similarly to the teachers in the study by Danbolt and Kulbrandstad (2012), the teachers in the present study immediately recognised challenges for SLLs' comprehension at the word level. However, while Snow (2010) claims that teachers seem to expect general academic words to be known, several teachers in the present study showed an emerging understanding of the need to teach those words, although they seemed to believe that SLLs would learn those words if only they spent enough time with Norwegian peers outside the classroom. In a sense, this finding is in line with previous research: teachers tend to assume that language is learned by exposure alone (Harper & De Jung, 2004; Khong & Saito, 2014). Hence teachers may understand general academic words to form part of social language and of all children's primary Discourse. However, even though leisure-time activities can represent an important arena for developing social language, general academic words are seldom part of children's everyday vocabulary and therefore need to be taught explicitly (Scarcella, 2003).

Further, the teachers also mentioned challenges for SLLs at the text level, for example abstract themes as a challenge for SLLs comprehension probably due to lack of prior/background knowledge (cf. Rydland et al., 2012). This is in line with the findings of Hodgkinson and Small (2018), but the teachers in the present study did not seem to have much knowledge either of complex sentence structures or of issues of text coherence, meaning that they considered those features to be part of a secondary Discourse only to a limited extent. This may be linked to knowledge from previous research that suggests teachers seem to lack opportunities to learn how to adapt their teaching to SLLs (cf. Thomassen, 2016), particularly in the field of language learning (Lucas & Villegas, 2010; Pettit, 2011). However, the teachers in the present study had an up-to-date awareness of the importance of explaining words to SLLs. In addition, similarly to the teachers in the study by Hodgkinson and Small

(2018), some of the teachers' utterances reflected their further professional training; for instance, some of Anette's and Jane's utterances seemed to reflect their further training in the field of reading, and Tove mentioned some typical challenges for SLLs. By contrast, there seemed to be fewer connections between the teachers' work experience and their utterances (cf. Hodgkinson & Small, 2018).

It should be noted in this context that Discourses are not neutral and unproblematic. For example, one Discourse may favour some viewpoints and values at the expense of others (Gee, 2015, p. 179). This might leave SLLs in a situation where they perceive that their second language and the school Discourse are valued more highly than their first language and their primary Discourse. This is a dilemma that needs to be taken seriously: empowering SLLs through mastery of the school Discourse(s), which is a necessity for success at school and in society, and is therefore ultimately an issue of inclusion, while at the same time acknowledging their multi-lingual backgrounds as an integral part of the teaching.

Research question 2: What characterises the teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching intended to facilitate second-language learners' access to expository texts? In order to understand teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching for SLLs, we also need to know how they understand the students they are adapting their teaching to. In addition, to answer the second research question, we also need to draw upon the findings from the first research question.

The teachers in the present study seemed to acknowledge many SLLs' need for text-comprehension support, and they seemed to believe that the best way for them to facilitate SLLs' access to texts was by explaining the content through classroom talk about words and texts. Further, they seemed to understand classroom and peer talk as important for SLLs' learning. These findings support those of the study by Danbolt and Kulbrandstad (2012), and the findings can also be understood as being in line with Gee's (2015) concept of acquisition. However, one difference compared with previous studies (Carley Rizzuto, 2017; Walker et al., 2004) is that the teachers in the present study were interested in adapting their teaching to meet SLLs' needs. In fact, several of them gave examples that can be associated with Gee's (2015) idea of teaching-for-learning. For instance, some teachers reported teaching word parts, and all teachers explained vocabulary. What is more, some teachers reflected upon the fact that they did not pay attention to the text level in their teaching, and they also expressed an understanding of the need for more adaptations to their teaching, but they did not link those two factors together (for example by identifying a need to teach students how and when to make text inferences). Along the lines of Nes (2018), it may therefore be questioned whether the teachers really adapted their teaching to SLLs in a meaningful sense.

Further, the present teachers recognised that it could be difficult to include some SLLs in classroom talks because they were very quiet. This may be in line with research showing that teachers might be afraid of making SLLs uncomfortable or embarrassing them (Harklau, 1999), which again could lead to low expectations and less rigorous teaching (de Araujo, 2017; Murphy & Torff, 2019). This may also be reflected in the teachers' adaptations. Even though they made many adaptations,

they seemed to think that many SLLs were unable to relate to the texts, and so understood their role as teachers as that of conveyors of the content of words and texts (cf. Greenleaf & Valencia, 2017). This may be one reason why the teachers did not mention the importance of addressing sentence- and text-level challenges to the same extent as word-level challenges; in a sense, they seemed to be taking on many of the linguistic challenges themselves, and providing their students with the outcome. Although word knowledge is unquestionably important for text comprehension, reducing comprehension to the word level may lead to a fragmentary understanding of texts, and prevent students from reaching the stage where they analyse and disentangle complex expository texts at all linguistic levels through challenging talks where the teacher models those textual challenges (cf. Gaskin, 2003; Gee, 2015; Nagy and Townsend, 2012; Uccelli et al., 2015).

Despite all this, however, the teachers' understanding of their own adapted teaching seemed to be characterised, to a varying extent, by uncertainty about the effectiveness of their own teaching—and like the teachers in the survey by Gàndara et al. (2005), they referred to difficulties in conveying academic content to SLLs. For example, some teachers said that many SLLs had difficulties with text use, and they were uncertain whether the SLLs actually learned anything. In response to the tension between the students' needs and their own teaching, some teachers questioned the use of simplified texts and of language that closely resembles the students' social language (cf. Rangnes & Gourvennec, 2018; Khong & Saito, 2014), thereby implicitly stating that this may not be a very efficient process for acquisition—or for socialisation into the academic discourse. This is in line with the study by Reeves (2006), where the teachers reported concerns about educational equity.

When it comes to the issue of what students the teachers had in mind when describing their adaptations, they seemed to be concerned about students who were relatively new arrivals from reception school and/or still enrolled in the language programme. However, according to Pettit (2011), teachers need to be aware of the time it takes to learn a second language. One could say that the teachers in the present study, judging from their emphasis on vocabulary instruction and text explanations, seemed to be aware that the process of second-language acquisition is a long-term one. On the other hand, even though they all expressed concern about SLLs' second-language development, they seemed only partially aware of the needs of those beyond the initial stage of learning Norwegian as a second language. Here there may be a link between the teachers' views on which students needed support and their concept of academic language: if teachers only have a partial knowledge of the characteristics of the secondary Discourse typical of expository texts as compared with social language, they will be less able to recognise the needs of SLLs. In particular, it will be less obvious to them that even those SLLs who have mastered the social language still have a need for support when it comes to the development of academic language. The outcome of this may well be that those SLLs remain outsiders even though they are not recognised as such (because the teachers

consider them to have become insiders based on the observation that they are managing well linguistically in social situations).

One way to make SLLs insiders may be to explicitly compare Discourses in the classroom. According to Gee (2015, p. 192), diversity is necessary for the development of meta-awareness. To ensure that all of their students encounter diversity, teachers could specifically encourage SLLs to compare Discourses. This would be beneficial to all students, in that it will help them gain a greater awareness of the existence of various Discourses and the differences between them, and it might actually be one way to acknowledge SLLs' multi-lingual background as an integral, and useful, part of learning processes. Further, the development of such a meta-knowledge about different Discourses is also a prerequisite for the ability to criticise specific Discourses, and the ways in which they constitute us as persons and situate us in society (Gee, 2015, p. 197). In other words, teaching-for-learning can be a road to empowerment and liberation for marginalised groups by enabling them to break the pattern of social reproduction.

Limitations and future research

There are several limitations to the present study, for example regarding the small sample of the study and the use of a particular example text. Further, this study is concerned with the teachers' work on texts in the subject of social studies; they may well work differently on texts in other subjects. There are also limitations regarding teachers' collaboration: although some of the teachers interviewed mentioned that they collaborated with (monolingual and bilingual) teachers teaching SLLs in the official language programme, that collaboration was not explored in the present study, either in terms of how the teachers involved experienced it or in terms of how it was organised.

We need further research to better understand the teacher/SLL/text relationship and so obtain a clearer picture of SLLs' learning opportunities at school. One way to meet those needs is to investigate teachers' collaboration, and to investigate the potential of classroom talk for SLLs' language- and text-comprehension development. Finally, there seems to be a need to investigate teacher development—how changes in practice come about.

7. CONCLUSION

This study seems to largely confirm the findings of previous studies: the teachers seemed to consider the word and text levels to be challenging in expository texts, and they seemed to understand facilitating SLLs' access to texts as mainly involving the conveying of content. However, the study also adds to previous research by shedding light on teachers' question about their own teaching. This question can be seen to yield targeted implications for teacher training; student teachers need to be taught how to use texts as one way to support SLLs' learning of content and of their second language. Gee's (2015) theoretical concepts of Discourse, acquisition and

learning are useful lenses to help us understand the complexities of what it means to give SLLs access to texts. To begin with, the concepts of secondary Discourse and learning imply that future teachers need to be taught how to teach-for-learning, for example by teaching knowledge about Discourses. Further, the concept of acquisition implies that teachers need to be taught that giving SLLs access to texts amounts to much more than just explaining content—rather, it is a matter of socialising students into an academic Discourse with strong teacher support when the students analyse and disentangle texts. The findings of the present study may indicate a need for a change in teachers' understanding of what it means to give SLLs access to texts. If teachers' conception of adaptations for SLLs tends towards over-facilitation on the content side, and if teachers are not aware of the long-term need for academic-language development, they will—unintentionally—deprive their students of the opportunity to develop their academic language, and hence to strengthen their ability to learn from texts. In the longer run, this is highly likely to translate into restricted democratic participation in society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the research team at the University of Stavanger, Norway, and in particular my colleague Aslaug Fodstad Gourvennec, for important feedback on previous versions of the manuscript. I also thank the teachers for participating in the study, and the blind peer reviewers for useful comments.

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