

FOCUS ON READING ACTIVITIES:

Teachers' perspectives

Master's thesis

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Lukutaito on yksi suomalaisen opetusjärjestelmän tärkeimpiä tavoitteita. Vieraskielisten tekstien lukutaidon merkitys korostuu lukiassa, jossa oppilaiden lukutaitoa arvioidaan jatkuvasti kielitaidon erillisenä osa-alueena. Vaikka lukemista ja lukutaitoa, erityisesti äidinkielellä, on tutkittu monesta näkökulmasta, vieraalla kielellä lukeminen, erityisesti luetunymmärtämisen harjoitukset, tarjoavat vielä uusia mahdollisuuksia tutkimukselle.</p> <p>Aiemmassa tutkimuksessani luetunymmärtämisen harjoituksista (Karppinen 2013) keskiössä olivat oppikirjojen harjoitukset lukiotasolla. Tämän tutkimuksen päätavoitteena on tutkia luetunymmärtämisen harjoituksia niiden käyttäjien – opettajien – näkökulmasta. Tutkimuskysymyksinä olivat mitä mieltä opettajat olivat oppikirjojen tarjoamista harjoituksista, miten he muokkaavat niitä ja mitä omia harjoituksia he käyttävät luetunymmärtämisen opettamisessa. Tavoitteena oli saada myös tietoa siitä, miten käytettäviä harjoitukset ovat ja miten valmiita harjoituksia hyödynnetään.</p> <p>Tutkimusmateriaalina käytettiin viiden opettajan, joista yksi oli opettajakoulutuksen käynyt, valmistumassa oleva opiskelija, osallistavia haastatteluja: haastateltaville esitettiin esimerkkiharjoituksia, joita he analysoivat haastattelujen aikana apukysymysten avulla. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin kvalitatiivista sisällönanalyysia. Saatuja tuloksia, jotka esitettiin myös taulukoina, vertailtiin lukion opetussuunnitelman tavoitteisiin sekä aiempiin, samasta aiheesta samassa kontekstissa tehtyjen tutkimusten tuloksiin. Aineisto oli suhteellisen suppea ja laajemmalla otannalla olisi luultavasti saatu yleistettävämpiä tuloksia.</p> <p>Tutkimustulokset olivat hyvin pitkälti linjassa aiempien tutkimusten kanssa: opettajat käyttivät paljon valmiita opetusmateriaaleja ja pitivät niitä usein hyödyllisinä. Tuloksista kävi kuitenkin ilmi myös se, että opettajat olivat valmiita muokkaamaan harjoituksia tarpeita vastaavaksi ammattitaitoaan hyödyntäen. Tuloksista kuitenkin selvisi moninaisia syitä siihen, miksi joitain harjoituksia pidettiin parempina kuin toisia. Lisäksi, tutkimuksesta oli käytännönläheistä hyötyä: materiaalista nousi esiin monia tapoja valmiiden harjoitusten muokkaamiseen sekä joitain uusia ideoita luetunymmärtämisen opetukseen.</p>	
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1 Introduction

Reading is considered one of the primary skills that the Finnish educational system aims to provide. Teaching the necessary skills to learn to read in one's mother tongue is among the main goals of preschool education and when examining the role of reading in the Finnish school system even further, one might claim that reading skills lie at the heart of all levels of formal education. Reading in one's mother tongue is practiced throughout the educational cycle, in every taught subject, but it is crucial to note that students are expected to succeed in reading in foreign languages as well. Students reading skills in foreign languages are explicitly evaluated in the matriculation examination, which is a high-stakes exam that takes place at the end of upper secondary school education. The score received from text comprehension section of the exam makes a 23 % total of the students' final grade. Thus, it is safe to say that reading skills in a foreign language may affect a student's success in this examination significantly.

Furthermore, the role of reading in a foreign language is emphasized the higher the educational context: in higher education students are required to be able to understand and make use of academic texts written in foreign languages, most commonly texts written in English. In addition, not only are reading skills valued in education, but also in working life: in several fields, employees are expected to be able to find and read relevant information independently. Furthermore, they are also a part of everyday life. The world has become more global, online communities and networking grow more and more important in every aspect of people's lives.

Even though L2 reading is a term that is sometimes used to describe reading in a second language in particular, in the context of the present study L2 reading refers to reading in a foreign language. However, one might even argue that when considering the role of English in Finland, the exposure to the English language resembles more that of a second, i.e. language not native to the speaker but repeatedly encountered and used in the locale of the speaker, than that of a foreign language. L1 reading, on the other hand, refers to reading in one's mother tongue. A noticeable amount of research (see e.g. Grabe and Stoller 2002, Aebersold and Field 1997, Urquhart and Weir 1998) in L2 reading considers L1 and L2 reading similar core processes. However, there are factors and variables that differentiate L1 and L2 reading. These factors and variables are related to both L2 reading and L2 readers, as L2 reading takes place in a different context and L2 readers obviously

have very different starting points in comparison to L1 readers when they begin reading texts in L2. Another common assumption related to L2 reading is that reading strategies that readers use in their L1 are beneficial and transferred to L2 reading. Evidence of this type of transfer is slightly controversial and the process of transfer of reading strategies is not necessarily as straightforward as researchers claim, as pointed out for instance by Hinkel, 2006. Thus, research in teaching L2 reading is, arguably, a feasible point of interest in the field of research in language teaching.

When examining teaching L2 reading, the role of teaching materials is unquestionable: reading requires interaction between a text and its' reader and studies point out that in the context of the Finnish school system, textbooks are significant content providers (e.g. Luukka et al. 2008). However, in teaching L2 reading, the interaction between the text and the reader is often modified – even limited – by exercises that students are asked to complete. The term *EFL textbook* is often used when examining teaching materials designed for foreign language learners: *EFL* means English as a foreign language and *textbook* may refer to different kinds of books used in teaching. In the present study, the term EFL textbook covers textbooks which include both the texts and the exercises related to them.

Considering the previously presented arguments of reading in L2 being context dependent and of teaching materials playing an important role in teaching L2 reading, it is important to note that even though L2 reading has been studied quite extensively in several context, research in L2 reading exercises in the context of Finnish upper secondary school is scarce. Related studies in similar contexts include for instance a large scale study that examined the text and media practices of Finnish 9th graders (Luukka et al. 2008), and several studies related to L2 reading assessment (Dialuki, 2013). Studies that cover reading activities for L2 reading from the point of view of teachers in this context have not previously been conducted though.

My personal interest in this particular topic, reading in a foreign language, is mostly due to previously mentioned notions of the importance of reading skills. In addition, I have written my BA thesis on the topic of reading exercises in EFL textbooks and it seemed natural to continue on with a topic from the same field of study with a different approach that might reveal something more about what is actually done with the textbooks. The results of my previous, small scale study (Karppinen 2013) showed that the scope of teaching reading in a foreign language represented in textbooks is quite narrow: exercises mainly view reading in a foreign language as equivalent to understanding the main gist of the text. Furthermore, the exercises required very little processing from the

students: most exercises elicit very straightforward understanding of the texts provided, but leave little room for critique or individual interpretation.

However, I also recognize that textbook studies are by nature very limited and say very little of what actually goes on in the classroom. In my view a more practical approach was needed to complement the previous results and consequently I decided to ask the practitioners, teachers of upper secondary school, what they actually do with the exercises provided in textbooks in their classrooms. The most logical way to approach this subject was conducting semi-structured interviews that allowed active participation from the informants. The interviews consisted of first filling in background data forms and then analyzing a set of Examples of reading comprehension exercises found in two different textbooks, Profiles 4 and Open Road 6. The selection and my own analysis of these exercises was based on the framework for analyzing reading activities I established in my previous study.

As previously noted, the activities have a significant role in L2 teaching and in L2 reading. Yet, even though the present study focuses on reading activities, the main objective is not to analyze the activities from a researcher's point of view but take on a new approach: the main objective of the study is to approach reading activities from the point of view of the user, in the context of this study, the teacher. Thus, the three main research questions, which are built to reflect this aspect of analyzing reading activities and teaching L2 reading, are the following:

- *How do teachers perceive L2 reading activities provided in textbooks?*
- *Do teachers have some ideas or concrete suggestions of how to use the activities differently?*
- *What kind of activities not presented in the books do teachers use?*

To answer these questions, 5 English teachers were interviewed. The data is by nature subjective and the aim is not to provide generalizable answers to the questions presented: As mentioned previously, the aim is to provide insight on what practitioners do with the activities in textbooks, what features they find important when selecting reading activities, what they might do differently and how they view their role as L2 reading teachers. By examining the views of practitioners, the ultimate aim of the present study is to combine theoretical viewpoints and examine what more can be learned from language experts working in the field of education.

The structure of the present study is the following: Firstly, the term L2 reading is explored by providing a general definition of reading and examining some key differences between L1 and L2 reading and readers. Secondly, teaching L2 reading is approached from the point of view of reading instruction, including a separate section focusing on reading activities, as it is the main focus of the present study. Thirdly, the settings, research questions and methods of the present study are introduced. The following section, which focuses on the data collected, includes a description of the background form used before the interviews and of participants' profiles before moving on to data analysis. Finally, the present study is concluded by an overview and a discussion of the findings of the study.

2 L2 reading in theory

In research on language learning and teaching, reading is a topic that has mostly been researched from the point of view of L1 reading. It is generally assumed that the underlying main processes of L1 and L2 reading are somewhat similar (e.g. Grabe and Stoller 2002, Aebbersold and Field 1997). However, there are certain features that are unique to reading in L2 and consequently, not all L1 research is necessarily directly applicable to L2 reading research. The aim of this section is firstly to provide an overview of some of the theoretical aspects of reading in general that describe both L1 and L2 reading and secondly, to present ways in which L1 and L2 reading differ.

2.1 Defining reading

Reading is often described as a silent, solitary activity; a complex process, which consists of several components, all working at the same time. *The act of reading*, in the context of the present study, is mainly defined from the point of view of linguistics: even though the main cognitive processes that take place when reading are explained, further elaborations of cognitive aspects of reading are left out. It needs to be acknowledged that the description of the processes that occur while reading is mostly based on research on L1 reading. The objective of this section is firstly to provide an overview of metaphorical models of reading and secondly, to explore the higher and lower level processes that occur when reading and discuss their relation to the product of the process, reading comprehension. Finally, potential purposes and types of reading are introduced.

Reading as a process affected by skills and strategies

There are several *metaphorical models*, i.e. generalizations of what is presumed to take place when reading, that are used to describe the reading process. The descriptions of the models provided by different authors are often fairly similar (e.g. Urquhart and Weir, 1998:39-45; Grabe and Stoller 2002:31-34, Alderson 2000:16-20) and it is common to divide them into three main categories: the bottom-up model, the top-down model and interactive models, which all describe the reading processes from the point of view of the reader. The main idea behind the *bottom-up model* is that reading comprehension is achieved by moving from smaller units towards larger units of texts, i.e., from understanding words to understanding clauses. The *top-down approach*, on the other hand, focuses on the importance of the reader's background knowledge and expectations of the text. The key idea behind this model is that the reader reaches an interpretation of the given text by making assumptions based on his or her previous knowledge. These assumptions are either confirmed or

discarded as the reading process progresses. According to current perceptions of the reading process, it is likely that neither bottom-up model nor top-down model alone can accurately describe the reading process but rather both approaches can be used simultaneously and separately to achieve reading comprehension. The idea of combining these approaches along with several skills and strategies to achieve interpretation of a given text lies at the heart of all *interactive models of reading*.

It is crucial to point out that all the previously introduced models of reading are not detailed descriptions of the actual process: The act of reading can be broken down further into several processes that, as argued earlier, interact with one another and may take place simultaneously or separately. These processes, according to Grabe and Stoller (2002:19-31), can be divided into lower- and higher-level processes by the function they perform. *Lower-level processes*, including activating lexical access, word recognition, syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation, perform the function of decoding the text and occur at least partially automatically. *Higher-level processes*, on the other hand, are related to building and monitoring reading comprehension. The *forming of a text model*, i.e., understanding main ideas and details and their relation in a text, *the forming of a situation model*, which requires using background knowledge to understand and assess texts, and lastly *executive control processing*, that involves monitoring oneself while reading, are all considered higher level processes.

Although all the aforementioned processes may be necessary in order to arrive at a meaningful interpretation of a text, their importance and the extent to which they are used in each reading situation may vary. For instance, Alderson (2000:19-20) points out that recent research suggests that the mastery of lower-level processes, word recognition in particular, is vital when examining for instance reading speed and fluency. However, when considering achieving successful reading comprehension, higher level processing is vital. Drawing on the concepts of the forming of a text model and the forming of a situational model, Grabe (2002:53) argues that good readers build at least two interpretations of the text when reading it: they form a summary of the author's intended meanings as well as a more detailed interpretation based on the reader's own reactions to the text and pre-existing knowledge of the topic. The idea of several reader interpretations is quite closely linked to ideas of multiple levels of comprehension (see Alderson 2000:6-9) and the relevance of interaction between the text and the reader in forming reading comprehension (e.g. Aebbersold and Field 1997) is also a common assumption.

Other approaches to describing reading include, for instance, defining reading as a set of skills and sub-skills (e.g. Davis 1968). This type of description is more general and does not necessarily

define reading as a process, even though some similar elements of reading process are naturally included in the list of skills required. However, as pointed out by Alderson 2000:9-22, it is not always clear what skills can be labeled as reading skills as they are often closely linked to reading strategies: the role of strategies in reading comprehension will be discussed further in later sections. In addition, the definition of reading as *a set of critical reading skills* that require reasoning is even more problematic, as it is difficult to differentiate critical reading skills from general intelligence.

Thus, considering the previously presented ideas of reading as a set of processes or as a set of skills and subskills, a possible general definition for reading might be that it is a process consisting of several higher and lower level processes, and the level of the product of the process, reading comprehension, may vary. Arriving at meaningful interpretations of texts involves using different skills and strategies, which are selected depending on situational and individual factors. However, the use of specific strategies and skills does not determine the outcome of the process: For instance, Alderson (2000:305-307) points out that different skills and strategies may be used in testing situations to reach similar interpretations. When considering reader interpretations, it must also be acknowledged that a certain degree of variation in the interpretation of texts may not be a sign of different levels of reading skill, but of different ways of thinking.

This kind of definition of reading approaches the concept of literacy. *Literacy* is a way of viewing reading and writing as a means to deal with different kinds of texts and the term has been defined in various ways: the most basic definition is that literacy means the individual's ability to read and write, but since 1980s the term has also been used as a broader concept with sociological and interactional implications (see e.g. Gee 1989). This wider use of the term literacy has become common in recent years. For instance, Kern (2003:48-50), suggests that literacy is based on the idea that reading and writing both involve *communication*. According to this definition, reading is not just a cognitive process, but a phenomenon that involves interpretation, collaboration, cultural conventions and knowledge, problem solving, reflection, self-reflection and language use in a broader sense.

Different ways to approach a text: purposes and types of reading

After providing a description of the cognitive processes and the idea of reading as one aspect of literacy, it is necessary to point out that there are different ways of reading for various purposes. The idea of reading as an activity that has a *purpose* is quite self-evident, but the objective of the following section is to address the concept of purposes of reading in combination with types of reading, as they are closely linked together.

Grabe and Stoller (2002:11-39) suggest that purposes for reading could be categorized into six different main purposes. The first purpose is labeled as *reading to search or scan for information*, which often takes place when the reader needs to find a particular piece of information from the text. Another possible purpose is skimming the text to get the gist of it, is often used to decide whether the text is relevant to one's interest or to gain an overall view of the text. The third main purpose is reading to learn, which is what often takes place in institutional settings: when reading to learn, students are expected to absorb information that is provided by texts. The following two purposes require more cognitive processing of texts: reading to integrate information or reading to write or critique texts involves utilizing reasoning skills and not only understanding the text, but also being able to use them to create larger concepts. Finally, reading for general comprehension is suggested as the most common purpose for reading and it is what takes place for instance when reading for pleasure. In addition, they point out that the purpose of reading not only impacts the skills and strategies needed to succeed, but also affects the amount of detail and the level of comprehension that is reached in the reading process.

The purposes, as listed by Grabe and Stoller (2002), seem to be inseparable from different types of reading. There have been multiple attempts to classify types of reading. For instance, Grellet (1981:4) claims that reading could be divided into four basic types: skimming, scanning, extensive reading and intensive reading. Out of these reading types, *skimming* and *scanning* seem to be systematically defined, generally, in the same way: skimming is related to quickly forming a general idea of the contents of the text, whereas scanning is related to finding details from the text without actually forming a detailed interpretation of the text as a whole (see also Urquhart and Weir 1998:102-105). The terms *intensive reading* and *extensive reading* are also commonly used in the field of reading research and are often given the same basic characteristics: Intensive reading is used to gain a detailed understanding of the text and extensive reading, on the other hand, is used to gain a general understanding of the text. The basic taxonomy presented by Grellet (1981) seems to be the basis of several listings of possible *reading strategies*, which will be discussed further when considering aspects of reading instruction in chapter 3.

As previously mentioned, the definitions of skimming and scanning are rarely contested. However, Urquhart and Weir (1998:102-105) suggest that in addition to skimming and scanning, three other types of reading can be defined. Instead of claiming intensive reading and extensive reading as types of reading per se, they introduce the terms *search reading*, *browsing* and *careful reading*. The first can be used when referring to reading with a need to find information on a particular topic and

the second can be used when reading takes place without a specific purpose. Finally, the concept of *careful reading* is related to reading in the classroom or educational context: the purpose of careful reading is to take in information as it is presented in the text, without further evaluation or personal involvement with the text. Thus, their definition of careful reading seems to be closely linked to the idea, presented by Grabe and Stoller (2002), of reading for studying purposes as a specific subtype of reading.

To conclude the previous sections, the points presented so far that apply to both L1 and L2 reading include the following:

- Reading involves several lower and higher level processes
- Language and background knowledge as well as reading skills and strategies are used when reading.
- Both L1 and L2 reading are based on interaction between a text and a reader and take place in a social context.
- Readers may use different strategies and still achieve a similar interpretation of a text
- Purposes of reading have an effect on the types of reading selected and the type of reading may affect the outcome of the reading process

2.2 The key differences between L1 and L2 reading

The description of reading provided in the previous section is based on the notion of L1 and L2 reading being similar in certain aspects. Yet, some key differences between reading in L1 and L2 can be detected. Several categories to label these differences have been presented: For instance, Grabe and Stoller (2002:41-63) suggest three key differences, i.e., linguistic and processing differences, individual and experiential differences and socio-cultural and institutional differences. Aebersold and Field (1997:23-34), on the other hand, introduce six main factors that influence reading in L2. However, as Urquhart and Weir (1998:33-34) point out, L2 readers are a heterogenous group and thus the broad term *L2 reading* itself may be problematic. In this section, general insights into differences between L1 and L2 reading are presented but variables within the group of L2 readers need to be acknowledged.

Linguistic and processing differences between L1 and L2 readers, according to Grabe and Stoller (2002:42-55), include aspects related to lexical, grammatical and discourse knowledge, metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness. Grabe and Stoller emphasize that L1 and L2 readers

have different starting points to the process of reading, as the resources of L1 readers, in terms of knowledge about grammar and vocabulary, are significantly greater than those of L2 readers. Vocabulary knowledge, in particular, is significant when considering success in L2 reading: Hu and Nation (2000 as cited in Schmitt 2010:29) claim that the coverage of words required to understand a text is approximately 98%. Syntactical knowledge, on the other hand, is not necessarily as crucial to achieving reading comprehension (Urquhart and Weir, 1998:60-61). The major perceived advantage of L2 readers is their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

Other linguistic and processing differences mentioned by Grabe and Stoller (2002) are factors that influence the outcome of L2 reading but may vary within the group of L2 readers. Firstly, L2 readers have had different amounts of exposure to L2 texts. Another crucial consideration is the fact that L2 readers have already learned their L1 and usually have some reading skills and strategies at hand. The degree of difference between L1 and L2 may also alter the process of reading, transfer and interaction between L1 and L2 may occur when reading in L2 and the transfer of L1 reading skills and strategies may be more likely to occur at relatively high levels of L2 proficiency. The idea of transfer of reading skills and strategies is also mentioned, for instance, by Aebersold and Field (1997:25), but in the light of recent research, the transfer of reading skills and strategies between L1 and L2 is not as straightforward (Hinkel 2006:120-123). In addition, in the case of young L2 learners, as Aebersold and Field (1997:24) point out, previous knowledge of L1 skills and strategies may not be as thorough.

Individual and experiential differences discussed by Grabe and Stoller (2002:55-58) are related to individual differences in L1 reading ability and motivation, whereas the experiential differences focus on the differences of the reading experience of L1 and L2 readers: when reading in L2 in instructional settings, the texts readers encounter are often suited for that purpose and resources used to facilitate reading, e.g. glossaries and dictionaries, are also common. *Socio-cultural and institutional practices* are also mentioned as defining factors of L2 reading. Socio-cultural aspects feature both socio-cultural backgrounds of readers and cultural preferences of organizing texts. Institutional practices are related to the requirements and objectives set by L2 educational institutions as well as to the resources that are available. Aebersold and Field (1997:29-33) provide a more thorough discussion of cultural factors that may influence reading in L2 and point out that cultural factors may, in addition, affect the reading skills and strategies used by readers.

To summarize, L2 reading is a complex phenomenon with several distinguishable features: Firstly, L2 readers need to cope with texts that may include unfamiliar lexical, grammatical and organizational features. Secondly, L2 readers are, generally, already literate in their L1, which may

be an advantage or, in some cases, a hindrance. In addition, L2 reading often takes place in versatile educational settings, which shapes the purpose and nature of reading. Finally, L2 readers are not a homogenous group, but a group of individuals with different language proficiencies, skills and socio-cultural backgrounds. Consequently, L2 reading is a phenomenon closely tied to its context and when researching L2 readers, the definition of the context in which L2 reading occurs is crucial.

3 Teaching L2 reading

The earliest views of teaching reading did not recognize reading comprehension as something that could be taught. This view was, however, later on challenged, as described by Duffy et al. 2010:58-69: prior to 1975, the general ideas of how to teach reading and reading comprehension were related to training different reading skills and facilitating text comprehension by using high-level questions. Post-1975, ideas of reading as an active process, teaching reading by focusing first on particular features and gradually moving towards comprehension and independent reading, as well as the recognition of the significance of meta-cognitive aspects and strategies, have been influential. (Duffy et al. 2010:58-69). Thus, it has been acknowledged that the development of L1 reading skills can be supported in several ways. This kind of thinking does not necessarily extend to teaching L2 reading: according to some views presented in the field of reading research, L2 readers who have learned to read in their L1 will learn to read in L2 without any formal reading instruction, as long as they have sufficient grammatical and lexical knowledge (e.g. Urquhart and Weir 1998:178). However, drawing on the previously presented variables and factors that affect L2 reading, it is reasonable to argue that the differences between reading in L1 and L2 create a demand for L2 reading instruction. The aim of the following discussion is firstly to provide insights into areas of language teaching and reading instruction that may be of use in teaching L2 reading and secondly, to generally move towards even more practical considerations, such as teaching materials and activities, that are commonly used in teaching L2 reading.

3.1. Possible approaches to L2 reading instruction

A common argument for reading instruction is that without it, the more proficient students will learn on their own, whereas the less proficient students will not be able to develop their reading skills (e.g. Urquhart and Weir 1998:178). Arguably, this reason alone is enough to justify the need for reading instruction. The argument becomes even more valid when considering it from the perspective of teaching L2 reading: With varying L2 proficiencies, students have very different starting points and capabilities to deal with different texts. Currently, there is no consensus over the

correct methods for L2 reading instruction nor is there a clear answer to whether students benefit more from textbooks or authentic texts. I would suggest that it is useful to analyze teaching L2 reading from two viewpoints: a holistic approach to teaching L2 reading would include for instance training general language proficiency and combining reading with other skills, whereas reading strategy instruction could be seen as its own approach with a focus solely on training reading strategies. The discussion in this section addresses reading strategy instruction in more depth, as it is an area particular to reading instruction and may prove to be especially relevant to L2 readers. As mentioned previously, discussion related to reading instruction is also closely related to considerations of teaching materials: the question of authentic materials in teaching L2 reading is also briefly addressed in this section.

A *holistic approach* towards language teaching, which has been a current trend in language teaching in general, extends to teaching reading as well. For instance, Grabe and Stoller (2002:44) suggest that helping students improve their general language proficiency will aid them in reading in L2. This claim seems legitimate, as it is impossible to understand a text without understanding the language. The holistic view of teaching L2 reading also covers the idea of teaching reading in combination with other skills: Hinkel (2006:113-123) points out that teaching L2 reading seems to be moving towards teaching skills that facilitate the use of bottom-up strategies and thus, the role of vocabulary instruction in combination with reading instruction is crucial. In addition to promoting vocabulary learning along with L2 reading, extensive reading is also gaining popularity: it has been argued that extensive reading may facilitate reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition and the training of these skills will be of use when reading in L2.

Nevertheless, vocabulary instruction is not the only language skill that can be combined with teaching reading. In a small-scale study on Finnish EFL textbooks (Karppinen 2013:18), it was noted that even though one might assume that reading and writing are the most common pairing, this is not always the case: texts were more often used as material for pair or group discussions. Consequently, it could be argued that teaching reading may rely heavily on peer scaffolding. What was also notable in the same study was that reading activities that required writing were very limited by nature and often facilitated the acquisition of certain grammatical items or general text comprehension. Thus, the question of reading materials and what can be done with them potentially plays a role in what kind of skills can, or should, be trained in combination with reading.

There is some controversy over whether *reading strategies* should be taught and to what extent. For instance, it has been claimed that interfering with students' reading by forcing them to use strategies and to analyze their reading process actively might actually be counter-productive, especially when

reading fiction (Narter 2013:64-68). However, it is reasonable to assume that due to the differences between L1 and L2 reading, the role of reading strategies is emphasized when students face a difficult L2 text: they may encounter unfamiliar lexis and structures and thus, even though they might be fluent readers in their L1, the process of reading is different by nature. Another argument that has been made is that L1 reading strategies transfer to L2 reading as long as a certain threshold level of L2 has been mastered and thus, teaching reading strategies is not necessary when teaching foreign languages. However, successful transfer of reading strategies has not been conclusively proved (Hinkel 2006:120-123) and due to possible cultural preferences in organizing texts, not all reading strategies useful in L1 are as useful when reading texts in L2.

The extent of reading strategy instruction has also been under debate. For instance, Urquhart and Frazee (2012:69) claim that in the light of recent research, teaching fewer strategies and how to use them efficiently is the key to helping students make the most out of reading strategies. The argument of using fewer strategies efficiently seems reasonable. Similar conclusions were reached for instance in a study on successful strategy use conducted with control groups of intermediate language learners: The findings showed that students were often resourceful in strategies, but were not able to use them efficiently or adequately and for this reason, scaffolding and reading strategy training were recommended (Finkbeiner et al. 2012).

If indeed reading strategies should be taught, the question then arises of how to define reading strategies. For instance Grabe and Stoller (2002:15) recognize that there is some controversy in the field of reading research in differentiating reading skills from strategies, and offer purposefulness and automaticity as the differentiators: skills are automatic and happen quite unconsciously, whereas strategies are purposeful activities that sometimes require conscious effort. This definition of reading strategies supports the idea that reading strategies are something that can be taught and can be actively used by students as *tools* in situations where they face a demanding text.

It is common to divide reading strategies into categories based on their occurrence in relation to the act of reading: *Pre-reading strategies* take place before reading and are used to activate prior knowledge on the topic, *during-reading strategies* are often related to monitoring comprehension and *post-reading strategies* elicit evaluation and interpretation of texts (Urquhart and Weir 1998:184-188). A similar division of reading strategies into three main phases, frontloading learning, guiding comprehension and consolidating understanding, has been suggested by Buehl (2013:48). Another possibility for categorizing reading strategies is dividing them into cognitive, socio-affective and meta-cognitive strategies. *Cognitive strategies* include for instance summarisation, resourcing, language-related world elaboration, inferencing, translation, content-

related world elaboration, whereas *socio-affective strategies* include using questions for clarification and finally, *meta-cognitive strategies* are related to monitoring understanding. (Finkbeiner et al. 2012:66).

When acknowledging the role of reading strategies as tools for L2 students to facilitate reading comprehension, it is relevant to consider which strategies should be focused on in L2 reading instruction. Urquhart and Frazee (2012:69) argue that teachers are the experts of their own field and as such, capable of determining which strategies are most useful for their own students. Finkbeiner et al. (2012) also mention that teachers need to be able to define individual factors of students and take them into account when instructing students on reading strategy use. However, they also point out that FL teachers do not necessarily have enough knowledge on reading strategies to be able to efficiently do so. Thus, it could be argued that L2 teachers need to be aware of the significance of reading strategy instruction and need to consider both situational and individual factors in choosing which strategies to teach. Another possibility when considering suited reading strategies are the text types and comprehension processes related to them that students are facing. (e.g. Buehl 2013:51-54).

Reading instruction and reading materials cannot be separated from one another. In Finland, textbooks have been, traditionally, the main source for teaching – and reading – material in FLT. For instance, a large scale study (Luukka et al. 2008) that examined the text- and media practices of Finnish 9th graders and their teachers showed that nearly all foreign language teachers used a textbook and the activities provided in them considerably often. Thus, the common notion of a strong emphasis on textbooks as content providers seems justified.

Recent research, however, has revolved around the advantages and disadvantages of using *authentic materials*. *Authenticity* in language learning itself is a complex term with several possible definitions, as it is possible to examine for instance authenticity of language, authenticity of task, or authenticity of situation (Taylor 1994). What all of these concepts share is the idea of using something real or genuine in teaching a language. Authenticity and using authentic materials have been criticized as some researchers claim that using any material for the purpose of teaching transforms the original, authentic idea of the used material into something entirely different (see e.g. Widdowson 1998:711-712).

Even though authentic materials have been a topic of discussion in recent research in language teaching, this discussion and debate is not at all revolutionary: the origins of authenticity discussion in language learning and teaching date back to 1970s and to the ideas of communicative language

teaching that focus on meaning instead of form (Mishan 2004:1-3). A simple definition of authenticity in teaching materials is related to an examination of the linguistic similarity between teaching materials and those that are available beyond the classroom environment (Chapelle 2009:748). Authenticity in materials could also be defined as using any items with writing on them and not altering them in any way before using them as teaching materials, in contrast to the commonly used modified materials (Aebbersold and Field 1997:48). What the results of studies on using authentic materials seem to suggest is that the perceived benefits of studying authentic materials, i.e. focus on communicating meaning, increased learner autonomy, empowerment of L2 readers, are not necessarily in all cases easily obtainable. The obstacles that L2 readers face are often based on lacking knowledge of the target language as well as on limited understanding of suitable reading strategies that could be used to compensate for these shortcomings. (Meister 2012).

It might be the case that authentic materials are not as effective teaching materials per se, however, extensive reading of authentic materials can be considered a suitable way of training certain areas of L2 reading, such as fluency, vocabulary and automaticity Hinkel (2006:122-123). Such benefits might not be easily measurable, but it does not mean they are in any way less significant. When considering the subject of authentic texts from a purely pragmatic point of view, encountering authentic texts in the classroom might help students deal with authentic texts later on in higher education and working life.

3.2. Reading activities as a means of facilitating reading comprehension

When approaching a text in an institutional context, students are often asked to complete tasks and activities. This has significant relevance on several aspects of L2 reading: activities may shape the purpose of reading (Alderson 2000:248-249) and the interpretation students reach (Luukka et al. 2008:64). In addition, as they may have an effect on the strategies and types of reading students select to approach the text, they can be used to elicit the use of certain reading strategies (Finkbeiner et al. 2012:61). The aim of this section is to provide an overview of possible ways of categorizing reading activities. Firstly, the activities are analyzed from a more technical view-point that includes examination of task modes and techniques. Secondly, activities may be categorized by the function, purpose or goal they may have, such as elicitation of a certain reading strategy or type of reading. Thirdly, activities can be labeled according to the type of language use they require: this aspect includes the analysis of the mode, i.e., written or spoken and the type of the answer as well as an analysis of the nature of the understanding of the text that is required.

Task modes and techniques

Firstly, it is possible to look at the very basic elements of an activity and classify it accordingly. Task types, or *task modes*, can include examination of how the activity is conducted, as it can be conducted alone, in pairs, or in groups. It is crucial to point out that in the context of the present study, the term *task* is used in a general sense as opposed to the definition of a task characteristic to task-based teaching.

Another technical aspect related to reading activities is the *technique* that is used: the techniques used in language testing are similar to those that are used in language teaching. For instance, Alderson (2000:202-270) introduces a list of 14 activity types used specifically in the field of assessing reading. Alderson includes the following activity types:

- 1) Multiple choice
- 2) Cloze or gap filling tests
- 3) Matching techniques
- 4) Ordering tasks
- 5) Dichotomous items
- 6) Editing tests
- 7) The C-test
- 8) "Negative cloze test",
- 9) Short-answer questions
- 10) The free recall test
- 11) Summary
- 12) The gapped summary
- 13) Information transfer
- 14) Informal methods of assessment

These activity types are naturally best suited for specific purposes and one might question if all the task types are measuring reading ability per se: The C-test requires the ability to read and infer the correct missing word, but the exercise might be more telling of general language ability than of reading ability. Looking more closely at the context of the Finnish school system, the regulations for the Finnish matriculation examination list the tasks that can be used to test reading comprehension explicitly as the following (Toisen kotimaisen kielen ja vieraiden kielten kokeita koskevat määräykset, 2011):

- Multiple choice questions in either L1 or the target language
- Open-ended questions in either L1 or the target language
- Summaries or instructed summaries
- Translations, explanations

Several of these activity types, especially those listed in the regulations set for the Finnish matriculation examination, seem to be fairly common in teaching materials used in the context of

the Finnish upper secondary school (Karppinen 2013). Consequently, it is reasonable to argue that it is valid to label reading activities based on the *techniques* used in language assessment.

Functions, goals and purposes of activities

If reading activities may shape the purpose of reading, one might assume that reading activities could be labeled by the purpose or function they supposedly serve. Grellet (1981) suggests that the underlying basic *functions* of reading activities could be categorized as practicing reading techniques, reaching overall comprehension, understanding meaning, and assessing and evaluating the text.

The idea of practicing reading techniques as a primary function of a task could be expanded into an analysis of *reading strategies* that are elicited by activities. A good general description of reading strategies has been provided for instance by Urquhart and Weir (1998:184-188): As previously mentioned, reading strategies can be divided into pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities and it would make sense to categorize activities based on this taxonomy. Pre-reading tasks may include discussions, quizzes or vocabulary instruction that takes place before reading. While – or during-reading tasks, on the other hand, would include several activities that take place during reading, such as summarizing paragraphs or comprehension and support questions posed by the teacher. Finally, post-reading activities involve tasks that require comprehension of the text and might include, for instance, post-reading questions and evaluative discussions or activities that require personal response to the text. A similar division of tasks based on their occurrence to reading of a text is provided by Aebersold and Field (1997:65-136): they suggest concrete activities according to different phases of reading, the phases being preparing to read, reading the text and reviewing reading. Their suggestions for the pre-reading phase include establishing a purpose for reading, activating and building background knowledge and previewing the text. In the reading phase, they suggest eliciting reading strategies through formal instruction and tasks. Lastly, what could be suggested for reviewing reading is reading comprehension questions, discussions that require inferencing and going beyond the text and evaluating information located in the text.

Another possible way to look at the function of an activity is to consider *the purposes of reading* as presented by Grabe and Stoller (2002:13-15): reading to search or scan for a piece of information, skimming the text to get the gist of it, reading to learn, reading to integrate information, reading to write or critique texts and reading for general comprehension. As discussed previously, these purposes are closely tied to types of reading and it is possible to consider the *type of reading*, e.g. skimming, skanning, careful reading, elicited by the activities as a way of categorizing activities

Grabe and Stoller (2002:230-236) also offer other possible ways to analyze *the goals of reading* activities. A simplified version of these purposes and goals of activities was used in a previous small-scale study (Karppinen 2013) and the categories included were finding grammar items, finding vocabulary items, reaching sentence level comprehension, understanding main ideas and details, identifying author's point of view, eliciting personal response, evaluating and criticizing and reading to write.

Type of language use required by the activities

Finally, reading activities could be divided into categories by *the type of language use* they require. It is possible to look at the mode of the answer, i.e., if the answer is required in writing or orally. The type of language use required can, however, be considered from a broader point of view. For instance, Johnson (2008:255-272) discusses dividing tasks roughly into drills or into “the real thing”. Scales or drills are activities that are, by nature, repetitive, relatively meaningless, atomistic, indirect and controlled, whereas in contrast “the real thing”, i.e., more authentic communicative tasks, are non-repetitive, meaningful, holistic, direct and free. This division does not necessarily translate directly into reading activities. However, these characteristics provided can be used to analyze what is actually done with the text when fulfilling the objectives of a given activity. Tasks that require understanding, interpretation and evaluation of texts and allow students to communicate their own ideas could be viewed as the real thing, but tasks that require atomistic approach to the text and require, for instance, word to word translation of items located in the text could be considered drills.

In conclusion, categorizing reading activities is a not a straightforward task as the activities may be paired with a particular type of text, take place at a different stage of reading, have versatile goals, require different amounts of understanding and elicit different types of reading. In the present study, the framework used to categorize tasks is based on my previous study (Karppinen 2013) on reading tasks in textbooks. The main categories used in the study were task types and techniques, types of reading elicited by tasks and identifiable goals of tasks. In the present study one additional category concerning the depth of understanding required by the task is added.

Previous research on teaching L2 reading in the context of the Finnish school system

The focus of the present study, teachers' perceptions of activities, was selected as it seems there is currently no similar research on the topic in the context of Finnish education system. In addition to my previous research on activities in textbooks (Karppinen 2013) other related studies in this context include, for instance, a large scale study by Luukka et al. 2008 that examined the text and media practices of Finnish 9th graders and their teachers and a study focusing on diagnostics of reading in a second language (Alderson et al. 2015).

The related findings of the large scale, questionnaire study by Luukka et al. (2008), which covered multiple aspects related to reading practices of students and teachers in the context of the Finnish school system, showed that textbooks are highly influential factors in setting goals for teaching and that they also serve as significant content providers in foreign language teaching. What is noted particularly on reading activities is that they have an impact on the way texts are approached and how interpretations may be formed – what this suggests is that the role of activities in teaching L2 reading is crucial.

On the other hand, the interview study related to reading assessment in this context, conducted by Alderson et al. (2015), found that teachers might have difficulties analyzing and diagnosing their students' L2 reading skills due to several reasons. The main three reasons were that teachers did not feel they knew their students well enough, they lacked understanding of what reading in L2 involves and finally, they also did not have the appropriate tools for accurate diagnoses. In addition to the main findings of the study, some lesser themes that were relevant to this research were also mentioned in the study: the interviews conducted showed that teachers rely heavily on teaching materials, favor certain activity types in the classroom, i.e. translation of the text or parts of it, asking questions about the text and reading aloud, for assessing their students reading proficiency and that finding texts that motivate students is difficult.

What these conclusions of the previous studies might implicate is that more research on reading activities, especially on reading activities in textbooks, might be valuable as they might give more insight on what teachers do with activities and how they could be more efficiently used to facilitate reading instruction and potentially reading assessment.

4 The present study

My viewpoint, based on the previously presented ideas on reading, is that L2 reading is a multifaceted, complex process defined by multiple factors and variables and closely tied to its context. Thus, the social and institutional context of L2 reading needs to be introduced in order to allocate any meaning to the results of the study. This section consists of four subsections: the context of the study, research questions, data collection and methods.

4.1. The context of the study

The main topic of my study is reading activities and teachers perspectives on them, whereas the educational setting is the context of upper secondary school in Finland. It is recognized that each classroom in itself forms its' individual context, but to establish a general framework for the study, two different institutional factors that lie at the heart of the school system are briefly introduced. These institutional factors include both the regulations provided in the National Core Curriculum as well as the assessment criteria used in evaluating students' success in the Matriculation examination.

In Finland, students mostly study English as their primary foreign language. The general objective for students in upper secondary school who study English as their main foreign language, also referred to as A1-level in the *National Core Curriculum*, is to reach the reading comprehension skills equivalent for CEFR level B2.1, which means that the student needs to have the skills necessary to manage regular interaction with native speakers. (*National Core Curriculum for upper secondary school* 2003:102; 246.) The more detailed objectives as stated in the *National Core Curriculum* (2003:247) are the following:

- Can read a few pages of text independently (newspaper articles, short stories, popular fiction and nonfiction, reports and detailed instructions) about his/her own field or general topics. Texts may deal with abstract, conceptual or vocational subjects and contain facts, attitudes and opinions.
- Can identify the meaning of a text and its writer and locate several different details in a long text. Can quickly identify the content of text and the relevance of new information to decide whether closer study is worthwhile.
- Difficulties only occur with idioms and cultural allusions in longer texts.

The guidelines portray L2 reading as a solitary activity, as something that the student needs to be able to do *independently*. In addition, they state that readers are expected to be able to identify *the meaning of the text and to find details* in various kinds of texts. The guidelines also elicit deeper processing of the texts as students are required to identify *the writer and to be able to deal with texts that may contain attitudes and opinions*. Thus, the framework provided for upper-secondary school education assumes that texts have, at least to some extent, a fixed meaning and that the readers should be able to comprehend and locate main ideas, details and the writer. In addition, students should also be able to notice whether presented information is factual or based on opinions or attitudes. Understanding of culturally situational implications and expressions, however, is not required. Reading strategies are not explicitly mentioned, but as students need to be able to “quickly identify the content of text and the relevance of new information to decide whether closer study is worthwhile” as well as to identify the crucial elements of the texts, it is reasonable to assume that skimming, scanning and reading for general comprehension are part of the objectives set in the guidelines.

It is important to note that the requirements are about to change as in 2016, the National Core Curriculum will undergo some noticeable changes. The official new curriculum has not yet been released, but the main goal in the current draft of the new curriculum is still to obtain the skills equivalent to CEFR level B2.1. As the upper secondary school system in Finland is based on courses, the main differences take place on a course level. A combining factor in the current designs for new course descriptions seems to be the possibility to integrate teaching English with other subjects. (*Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet, luonnos*). This, in my view, might open possibilities for a very different approach to teaching L2 reading as well, as it might encourage teachers to use authentic texts from different fields of expertise.

Even though the National Core Curriculum is the only official document that regulates teaching in Finland, another relevant goal of upper secondary school education is to provide students with the skills necessary to succeed in the Finnish matriculation examination, in which students participate after all compulsory courses and possibly some optional courses have been completed. The matriculation examination is a high-stakes exam that has a significant effect on students' possibilities to continue to higher education, and it consists of a listening comprehension section, conducted separately, reading comprehension section, section related to structures and vocabulary

knowledge as well as a writing task. The score received of the reading comprehension section makes 23% of the participants overall score.

The Finnish matriculation examination has a specific list of task types that may be used in foreign language testing. The task types include multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, summaries or instructed summaries, translations and explanations (*Toisen kotimaisen kielen ja vieraiden kielten kokeita koskevat määräykset 2011:20*). The criteria also state that those participating in a foreign language test in the Matriculation examination are expected to be able to understand the main idea or ideas of a text, understand relevant details and Examples, make inferences and translate single words or expressions (*Toisen kotimaisen kielen ja vieraiden kielten kokeita koskevat määräykset 2011:20*).

The nature of L2 reading in the light of these regulations is quite similar to the description of L2 reading provided in the guidelines provided in the National core curriculum: students are required to be able to deal with texts on their own, to recognize main ideas and details, to understand implications of the texts and even translate singular words or expressions.

To conclude, in light of these documents the framework for L2 reading in the Finnish upper secondary school system is heavily oriented towards understanding main ideas and details, with varying degrees of importance to using reading strategies. Even though both the guidelines and the criteria for assessment require students to be able to identify things not explicitly presented in the texts, the degree of interpretation required is not openly stated.

4.2. Research questions

The present study focuses on teacher' understandings on teaching L2 reading in upper secondary school level in Finland in particular. The aim of the present study is firstly to examine what kinds of tools textbooks provide their users, especially teachers, in building and monitoring text comprehension. As noted earlier, even though the focus is on reading activities, it is not assumed that all exercises in textbooks are used as such. The second main question is how teachers modify and use the exercises provided by textbooks: it was assumed that teachers do not always use activities as they are or rely solely on textbooks in reading comprehension instruction. Thus, the main research questions and related sub-questions are the following:

- *How do teachers perceive L2 reading activities provided in textbooks?*
 - What kinds of reading activities do teachers use to teach L2 reading and why?
 - What kinds of activities do teachers exclude and why?
 - How useful do they consider the activities provided in textbooks?
- *Do teachers have ideas or concrete suggestions of how to modify existing activities or produce activities of their own?*
 - Do they modify activities and if they do, how?
 - What kind of activities not presented in the books do they use?

These research questions were formulated to obtain more information about how teachers perceive reading comprehension activities in textbooks but also to create an opportunity for sharing means of reading instruction. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the answers to these questions are strictly based on the views of the interviewees: the aim of the present study is not to give generalizable answers but to gain a deeper understanding of the views of actual practitioners and consider what could be learned from these views.

4.3. Data collection

The data consists of 5 recorded single session *semi-structured interviews* of 5 English teachers. There was a certain basic structure to the interviews and some pre-considered prompts and questions were used, but the format was open-ended: the questions presented were open-ended and the participants were allowed to ask questions, comment freely and share their thoughts on all related matters in an informal context. Interviews were considered a logical choice for methods of data collection, as the research questions aim at gaining a view of the subjective understandings of the participants and the objective was to gather diverse data without a certain expected outcome. For these reasons it was assumed that interviews would yield more useful data than for instance surveys. The considered strength of interviews – the possibility to gain subjective “*insider perspective*” (Dörnyei 2007:37-38) on the research topic in an informal context with the researcher acting as a discussion partner – can also be considered the main weakness of interviews. It is crucial to note that interpersonal relations may have played a role in the data collection process and even though a conscious effort was made to keep personal bias to a minimum, it is possible that unintentionally the researcher’s views did affect the outcome.

The basic outline of the interviews followed a certain pattern: Firstly, the interviewees were asked to fill in a background data form (see attachment 1). The form had questions related to their age, teaching experience and a set of statements related to teaching L2 reading. The main idea behind collecting background information from the participants was to be able to build profiles for each of the interviewees. On the other hand, the background data form also allowed teachers to consider their relationship with teaching L2 reading: In a way, the background data form was assumed to work as an orientation to the actual interviews. Secondly, the teachers were given 11 reading activities, one at a time. They were asked to consider the pros and cons of each activity and also to comment whether they could use them in the classroom or not. After going through the interviews, they were asked to select three activities they would most likely use in their classrooms and three activities that they most likely would not use and provide some reasons for their decisions. Finally, the participants were asked if some kinds of activities they would normally use were missing and additional comments and discussion was also encouraged.

The participants were from different schools located in Central Finland and had varying degrees of experience of teaching in upper-secondary school: one of the interviewees was still a student who had completed teacher training and was therefore only at the beginning of her career as a teacher. At the other end of the spectrum, one of the interviewees had over 20 years of experience of teaching English in upper secondary school. The selection of the interviewees was based on convenience: even though several interview invitations were sent, most teachers did not have the time to participate in the study.

All five interviews were conducted during spring of 2015. Videotaping interviews was considered, but ultimately recording was an easier option due to changing locations and busy schedules of the interviewees. There was one pilot interview before the actual interviews took place. Based on the pilot interview, some questions and statements in the background data form were reformulated. In addition, the original idea was to use the activities in a simplified form, providing the participants only with the textual information of the exercises to minimize potential bias towards certain textbooks. However, this did not prove to be effective as it was sometimes difficult to understand how the activity was supposed to be completed and the layout of the activity might have a considerable effect on the usability of the activity. Thus, in the actual interviews, participants were provided with the tasks as they were presented in the textbooks.

The prompts used in the present study were taken from two textbooks *Profiles Course 4* (Ikonen et al. 2009) and *Open road 6* (Karapalo et al. 2010), which are used as teaching material in upper secondary school. The selection of the books was based on the relatively similar publishing date, as they are published after 2003, they should both be in accordance with the descriptions of course contents provided in the National Curriculum. *The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School* (2003:104) states that during the 4th course, the course will require practicing reading comprehension at a “*relatively demanding level*” and reading strategies are also to be practiced. In course 6, from the point of view of reading, emphasizing understanding of demanding language material and providing possibilities to practice reading strategies are relevant throughout the course. Considering that both courses 4 and 6 place emphasis on reading comprehension, it is assumed that the books provide a reasonable amount of exercises related to teaching L2 reading.

Nearly all activities provided in textbooks require using reading skills to some extent. The activities selected as prompts were either directly related to the key texts provided in the book: direct relation to the text means that the exercise could not be completed without some degree of interaction with the text. As an exception, one pre-reading activity was also included. Another aim in the prompt selection was to have a range of different types of exercises, a further analysis of the chosen activities is given in Table 1, p. 27. To provide a general description of the activities that were discussed during the interview and to help put the data in a context, a summary and brief analysis of the exercises is included.

The activities selected were analyzed from a more technical view point that includes examination of task modes and techniques. Secondly, activities were categorized by the reading strategies and types of reading they might elicit and by their potential goals. Thirdly, activities were labeled by the type of language use they require: this aspect includes the analysis of the mode, i.e., written or spoken and the type of the answer as well as an analysis of the nature of the understanding of the text that is required. The division of the prompts, based on the previously presented categorization used in my previous study (Karppinen 2013) with slight modification, used in the interviews is the following.

Table 1 shows what task modes and techniques were included in the selected exercises. If it was not specifically stated that the exercise was to be completed with a partner or in a group, it was listed as an individually conducted exercise. As for the techniques, guided summaries included retelling the text with the help of different prompts, e.g. words or other textual clues, open-ended questions require answering to questions related to the text in either Finnish or in English. The translation exercises contained parts of the text that needed to be translated into Finnish. The multiple choice

question required choosing the right definition for an expression found in the text, whereas the matching exercise was about combining a paragraph of the text with a summarizing sentence. The discussion exercise on the other hand require students to share their ideas and thoughts related to the upcoming text. Examples 8 and 10 utilized both task modes, as the exercises had several phases.

Table 1. Task modes and techniques.

	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example	Example
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Task mode											
Individual	x		x			x	x	x		x	
Pair/group		x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Technique											
Guided summary		x				x		x		x	
Open-ended questions			x						x		
Translations				x	x						
Multiple-choice questions							x				
Matching exercise	x										
Discussion											x

As shown in Table 1, four of the exercises provided were to be conducted individually, whereas 5 required working with a partner or in groups. Two exercises (Examples 8 and 10) required both working individually and with a partner. The techniques selected included guided summaries (4), open-ended questions (2), translations (2) multiple-choice questions (1), matching exercises (1) and a discussion (1).

In Table 2, the exercises are divided into categories by the reading strategies and types of reading they might support. One of the primary functions of reading activities is to practice reading techniques and strategies and trying out different types of reading and when selecting the exercises, one main criterion was that there would need to be at least one Example of each reading strategy. The potential goals of the exercises are also listed.

Table 2. Reading strategies, types of reading and goals.

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5	Example 6	Example 7	Example 8	Example 9	Example 10	Example 11
Reading strategies											
Pre-reading											X
During reading				X							
Post-reading	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Type of reading											
Careful reading					X		X		X	X	-
Reading for general comprehension	X	X	X			X					-
Skimming				X							-
Scanning								X			-
Goals											
Understanding main ideas and/or details	X	X	X					X	X		
Sentence-level comprehension				X	X		X				
Eliciting personal response											X
Vocabulary training						X					
Identifying author's point of view										X	

Table 2 indicates that the focus of the activities selected was on post-reading activities (8), there were two possible during reading activities and only one pre-reading activity. As for types of reading, most activities had to do with reading for general comprehension, i.e. with the focus on main ideas (4). Careful reading was also commonly elicited (4), whereas exercises related to skimming and scanning were rare, as there was only one activity related to each strategy. The goals of the activities were mostly to understand main ideas and details (5). Other assumed goals included reaching sentence level comprehension (3), vocabulary training (1), identifying authors' opinions (1) and eliciting personal response (1).

Table 3 shows how the activities were divided in terms of what type of language use they might encourage. In addition, the use of different language skills and the focus of the activities was considered. It needs to be noted that Examples 8 and 10 had included several phases and for this reason, multiple language skills were needed to complete the task.

Table 3. Language use, language skills and focus of activities

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5	Example 6	Example 7	Example 8	Example 9	Example 10	Example 11
Language use											
Finnish			x								
English	x	x			x	x	x		x		x
Both				x				x		x	
Use of language skills											
Reading only	x						x				
Reading and writing			x			x		x		x	
Reading and speaking		x		x	x			x	x	x	x
Focus											
on form				x	x		x				
on meaning	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x

As Table 3 illustrates, target language use was prominent in the exercises, as only one activity elicited answers solely in Finnish. Most exercises combined reading with speaking (7), several tasks included combining reading with writing (4), whereas some only required reading (3). Target language use was prominent in the exercises, as only one activity elicited answers solely in Finnish. Most activities selected (7) focused on meaning, only 4 activities were form-focused.

4.4. Methods of analysis

Considering the nature of the data and the research questions, the present study is quite a typical Example of *qualitative research*, which, at its core, aims to explore, describe and interpret the research topic at a deeper level without the assumption of the possibility to generalize the results. The main objective of the present study is to examine how particular teachers deal with the daunting task of teaching L2 reading and how they perceive reading activities provided in textbooks: the aim is not to provide generalizable answers on how all teachers act, but to learn from the experience of individuals. Thus, the primary data is by nature qualitative.

Nevertheless, it is often possible to combine the quantitative approach with the qualitative approach. As Dörnyei (2007:25) points out, quantitative and qualitative research are actually just different ends of the same continuum. *Mixed methods research* was used to help gather some more information from the participants, as the interviewees were asked to fill in a questionnaire before taking part in the interview. The questionnaire is used to build profiles to the interviewees, but no numerical data is drawn from the forms.

In the present study, the method of analysis selected to answer the research questions presented is qualitative content analysis. The main idea of qualitative content analysis is to derive an analysis of written, heard or seen content (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:91). The data is then textualized so that it can be interpreted and processed by the researcher to organize it and draw conclusions from it.

To explain this method further, it is useful to present the common steps taken to conduct the analysis. The steps, as presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:92-94), are the following: going through the content to find the material that is relevant to the research question, giving a textual form to the content and dividing the relevant content into different categories and subcategories with suitable labels that simplify the presentation of the results. The analysis is then completed by writing a summary of the results. When discussing the organization of the results, it is also common to classify the research as either inductive, which means moving from one Example towards a generalization or as deductive, which means moving from a generalization to examine single Examples (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009:97-98). The approach used in the present study is mostly inductive, but some deductive elements are used. For instance, pre-existing categories that are based on the concepts explored in the previous section were used to select prompts and questions for

interviews and this naturally affects the nature of the collected data. The initial framework for organizing the data was also loosely based on the research questions, but finding subcategories and reformulating the original research questions was done afterwards, based on the data collected.

To summarize, in the present study, the methods of qualitative content analysis as presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:92-98) are followed quite closely. Interviews were conducted first, then the data was textualized and finally organized thematically to answer the main research questions. The organization of presenting the results is the following: firstly, the quantitative data collected in the background data form is used to create a teacher profile for each participant. After that, the data collected during the interviews is thematically presented and the order of presentation follows the order of the main research questions. Data Examples are given in textual form after each theme. The conventions of textualization used in the present study are simplified, as CA and discourse analysis are not used as a method of analysis. Finally, the results are briefly compared with the previously presented contextual and theoretical framework.

5 Teachers' views on reading activities

The present study focuses on teachers' views, opinions and ideas related to teaching reading in a foreign language and especially on the role of reading activities. The method selected is qualitative content analysis, where the focus is on the thematic organization of the collected data. The organization of the data presentation in this section takes on an approach that is similar to the interview process: First, the background form and the participants are presented to provide some context for the actual data and its focal points. Secondly, the data is presented in a thematic order which is based on the previously presented research questions. The main categories are teachers' comments and evaluations on reading activities, their suggestions related to modifying or creating new activities related to reading in a foreign language. The third part of this section features discussion of the presented results and how they mirror the ideas presented in the National Core Curriculum as well as the theoretical aspects presented earlier.

5.1. The participants and the background form

The research conducted for the present study took place during the spring of 2015. The interviewees were approached with invitations to interviews. Approximately 20 invitations were sent and there were 4 positive responses. The selection of participants was based firstly on geographical factors: as

the idea was to record data from face-to-face interviews it was decided that the best option would be to try to find a fitting sample in the area of Central Finland. The teachers were all from different schools and had varying teaching backgrounds. After finding the first four participants and realizing that they all had had quite lengthy teaching careers, the option to interview student teachers was explored. Informal invitations were given and one teacher student was selected for the interview. The main criterion for the selection of the student teacher participant was that he or she needed to have completed the subject studies of teacher education and needed to have experience of teaching English in upper secondary school.

Before the actual interviews the interviewees were given background data forms, which consisted of questions related to their teaching experience and of various statements related to teaching reading in a foreign language. The idea of the background forms was naturally to provide some additional information of the participants to allow creation of teacher profiles, but they also may have helped the participants to orient to a topic that, according to some comments received from the interviewees, may at first seem difficult and abstract to discuss. In this section, the background forms and the teacher profiles created on the basis of the collected forms are introduced.

The background form

The entire background form was written in Finnish and it consisted of two sections (see Appendix 1). In the first section, there were three questions related to the age and teaching experience of the participants. Age was considered a possibly relevant factor as it shows how wide a gap there is between the interviewees own experience of upper secondary school in comparison to those students they are now teaching. Teaching experience was also considered a meaningful piece of information as it shows when the interviewee has attended teacher education and how much time the interviewee has had to develop his or her own views and methods of teaching. Finally, the participants were asked what textbook series they use or have used when teaching English in upper secondary school. This question is quite relevant, as the Example activities were from commonly used textbooks and if the participants had first-hand experience of using the activities they were asked to analyze, this may have affected how they perceived the activities.

The statements were built based on some of the theoretical aspects previously discussed in the present study. The respondents were asked to evaluate them on a Likert scale from 1 to 5: The values representing the responses were 1="I strongly disagree", 2="I mostly disagree", 3="I am not sure", 4="I mostly agree", 5= "I strongly agree". Another feasible option would have been to assign

the middle of the scale with a more neutral response and include the option of not being sure as its own entry. However, in my view, not giving a neutral option was useful in this case, as the participants were required to take a stance and consider the statements more carefully. In addition, the options "I somewhat agree" and "I somewhat disagree" show a more neutral stance to the given statement. Another reason for not including the neutral option was that the results of the interviews were not ultimately defined by the respondents' choices, so if the respondent decided to choose the option "I am not sure", this response was possibly clarified later on during the interviews.

The original statements the respondents were asked to evaluate and their English translations are the following:

1. Reading comprehension is an integral part of foreign language teaching.

(Luetunymmärtäminen on keskeinen kielitaidon osa-alue vieraan kielen opetuksessa.)

2. The student's skills in L1 reading have an effect on his or her L2 reading skills and reading comprehension.

(Oppilaan lukutaito omalla äidinkielellä vaikuttaa oppilaan vieraan kielen luetunymmärtämiseen.)

3. Good vocabulary knowledge is crucial to understanding texts written in a foreign language.

(Sanaston hallinta on keskeistä vieraskielisten tekstien ymmärtämisessä.)

4. Good oral communication skills are more important than good written skills.

(Hyvä suullinen kielitaito on tärkeämpi kuin kirjallinen kielitaito.)

5. Students can use the same reading strategies they use when reading texts in their L1 when they are reading texts written in foreign languages.

(Oppilaat voivat käyttää samoja lukustrategioita sekä äidinkielistä että vieraskielisiä tekstejä lukiessaan.)

6. I teach reading strategies to my students.

(Opetan oppilailleni lukemisstrategioita.)

7. Practicing reading comprehension in the classroom is mostly based on the teaching materials provided by textbooks.

(Luetunymmärtämisen harjoittelu oppitunneilla tukeutuu pääsääntöisesti oppikirjan materiaaleihin.)

8. Teaching materials help students understand texts.

(Oppikirjan materiaalit auttavat oppilaita ymmärtämään tekstejä.)

9. It is important that students are able to "read between the lines" and make inferences based on the texts.

(Oppilaiden on tärkeää kyetä päättämään teksteistä asioita, joita ei sanota suoraan; ikään kuin lukemaan rivien välistä.)

To summarize, the statements include assessments of the respondent's view on the importance of teaching L2 reading (statements 1 and 4), possible explanations to good L2 reading skills (statements 2 and 3), points related to reading strategy instruction (statements 5 and 6) and the role of teaching materials (statements 7 and 8), as well as a general statement related to the importance of critical reading skills (statement 9).

Participants' profiles

The profiles were built according to the participants' answers to the questions and statements provided in the background information form. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect the informants' identities: Throughout the present study, the teachers are referred to with their assigned names in order to differentiate the answers of the interviewees. The results collected from the background form are first presented in graphic form, each individual's responses are then explained in detail as parts of their profiles.

Table 4 below shows the answers of all 5 participants to the statements, S1-S9, on a scale of 1 to 5.

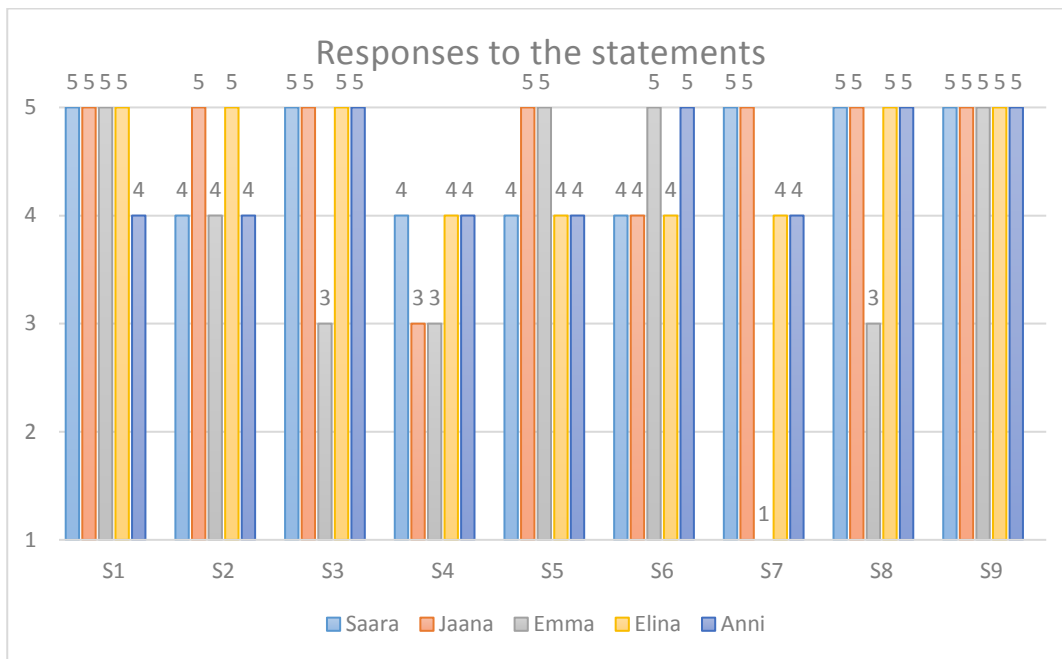
Table 4. Summary of responses.

Table 4 illustrates that there were differences among the responses, but in general the differences were quite subtle. The most notable difference can be seen with statement 7, where one of the respondents had an entirely opposing view concerning the helpfulness of teaching materials. Even though the differences were not that significant, none of the respondents' answers match perfectly either so it is possible to attempt to build each respondent her own profile.

Profile 1 - Jaana

Jaana has had a long teaching career, over 10 years, and is age-wise in the older end of the spectrum, aged between 50 to 59 years. The book series she has used in teaching English in upper secondary school feature Open Road, In Touch and Blue Planet. When filling in the background data form, she said she could not recall the other teaching material series she had used. Some activities from Open Road - series were used as a prompt for the interviews, so it might have had an influence in her responses to the exercises.

Jaana mostly considered reading comprehension as a key component to teaching foreign languages and she also thought it was important that students know how to make inferences and deduce things not overtly stated in texts. In her view, there was a clear link between L1 and L2 when a student's reading skills and reading strategy were concerned: she agreed with the statements that the students'

reading skills in his or her L1 affect a student's L2 reading skills and that L1 reading strategies can be used when reading texts in L2. In addition to L1 reading skills being a significant factor when considering L2 reading, a student's vocabulary knowledge was also seen as a major factor defining L2 reading comprehension. There were two statements that Jaana did not directly agree with: she was not sure if good oral communication skills were more important than good written skills and she also was not sure if she taught her students reading strategies. Jaana strongly agreed with the statements that practicing reading comprehension in the classroom is mostly textbook dependent and that teaching materials help students to understand texts.

Profile 2 - Saara

Saara is aged between 40-49 years and she has also had over 10 years of teaching experience. During the interviews it turned out that her teaching experience is quite versatile and she has experience of teaching without any ready-made teaching materials as well. She has used Culture Cafe and Open Road-series when teaching in upper secondary school. She was currently using Open Road with her students so this might have an effect on how she perceived some of the activities that were used as prompts.

Saara strongly agreed or mostly agreed with all the statements provided in the form. She strongly agreed that teaching reading comprehension is integral to teaching foreign languages, yet she mostly agreed with the statement that good oral communication skills are more important than good literal skills. She also mostly agreed with the statement related to students reading skills in L1 and L2 being linked with one another, the statement about reading strategies transferring from L1 to L2 and with the statement concerning teaching her students reading strategies. Saara found good vocabulary knowledge and being able to read between the lines as important factors when considering a student's L2 reading abilities. She too found that in the classroom, the role of textbooks is prominent in teaching L2 reading and that teaching materials help students with L2 reading comprehension.

Profile 3 - Elina

Elina is aged between 50-59 years and also has over 10 years of teaching experience in different stages of the education system. She has used different textbooks for teaching English in upper secondary school (Blue Planet, Culture Cafe), but she was the only interviewee who did not have first-hand knowledge of either of the textbooks used as sources for the interview prompts.

Elina strongly agreed with the statement that reading comprehension plays an important part in teaching foreign languages (1), but she also mostly agreed that good oral communication skills are more important than good literal skills (4). When filling in the form, she commented that this may especially be the case with younger learners. Elina strongly agreed with the statement that a student's reading skills in L1 have an impact on his or her L2 reading skills, but only mostly agreed with the statement that reading strategies used in L1 reading are usable in L2 reading. She also mostly agreed that she teaches her students reading strategies. Elina also considered it important for students to be able to read between the lines and that vocabulary knowledge is a defining factor in L2 reading comprehension. Elina mostly agreed that learning L2 reading comprehension is based on resources provided by textbooks and she strongly agreed that teaching materials help students understand L2 texts.

Profile 4- Ulrika

Ulrika was the youngest of the interviewees, aged between 20-29 years. She had completed teacher training, so from a pedagogical viewpoint, she is a qualified teacher. Her teaching experience was mostly based on the training periods obligatory for teacher training. The only textbook series she had used for teaching English in upper secondary school was Open Road.

Ulrika viewed teaching reading comprehension as a crucial part of teaching foreign languages, but she was unsure if good oral skills are more important than good literal skills. She also mostly agreed with the idea that L1 reading skills are linked to L2 reading skills of students. In her view, students are able to use the same reading strategies when reading in L1 and in L2 and she has taught her students reading strategies. She thought it was important that students are able to understand things not overtly stated in texts, but she was not sure if vocabulary knowledge was crucial to L2 reading comprehension. Ulrika was more critical of the statements related to using textbooks as tools for teaching foreign languages: she strongly disagreed with the statement that in the classroom, teaching reading comprehension is based mostly on textbooks and she was unsure if teaching materials actually helped students understand texts.

Profile 5 - Anni

Anni is aged between 40-49 years old and she too has had over 10 years of teaching experience. The textbooks she has used for teaching English in upper secondary school include English United and Open road.

Anni mostly agreed that teaching reading comprehension is an integral part of teaching foreign languages and she also mostly agreed that good oral skills are more important than good literal skills. She thought that to an extent a student's L1 reading skills have an effect on his or her L2 reading skills and that students can mostly use the same reading strategies in L1 and L2 reading. Anni strongly agreed with the statement that she taught reading strategies to her students (6) and she found both vocabulary knowledge and the ability to make inferences as important aspects of L2 reading. In Anni's view, practising reading comprehension was mostly based on textbooks and she strongly felt that teaching materials helped students comprehend texts.

5.2 Teachers' perceptions of reading activities

The data below is organized according to the research questions presented in the previous chapter. The main objective of the study was to examine how teachers perceive L2 reading activities provided in textbooks and if they use the activities differently or have other own ideas of useful activities. In the first part of this section, the focus is on teachers' views on activities, whereas the second part is more pragmatic by nature and revolves around modification ideas as well as teachers' own ideas of usable reading activities. All subsections include Tables which illustrate the categories used to sort the data, and some relevant Examples are discussed in more detail. The data Examples include both the original comments in Finnish and translations done by the author. Even though the present study is qualitative by nature, the number of each Example type is given in the Table. The numbers do not aim to provide any generalization as the sample was so small, but they only serve as a way of reporting how many similar Examples there were present in the data.

5.2.1 How do teachers perceive L2 reading activities provided in textbooks?

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the focus of this section is to discuss teachers' views of reading activities that were presented to them: the overview of the activities used is provided in Tables 1-3, p. 27-29. The section is divided into three subsections: activities that teachers favor or would prefer to include in their classroom, activities that teachers dislike or would prefer to exclude in their classroom and finally, perceived usefulness of teaching materials in teaching L2 reading.

Activities that teachers favor or would prefer to include in their classroom

The activities that teachers favored or would have wanted to include as classroom activities and their reasons for these choices are presented in the following Tables 5-8. It is crucial to note that even though the interviewees were asked to select their favorite exercises by the interview structure,

the numbers and conclusions are based on the comments made during the interviews as the method of analysis is content analysis.

The activities are divided into four distinct categories: (1) combining reading with other language skills, (2) techniques, (3) focus of the activities, (4) language of the activities and (5) suitability for differentiated instruction. In addition, a sixth category, other positively viewed characteristics of activities, was included as there was no clear common nominator for these comments. All categories are then broken down into subcategories and in the most common subcategories several relevant Examples are given to highlight different views on why certain types of activities are more favorable than others.

Table 5. Combining reading with other language skills.

Combining reading with other language skills		
Combine reading with speaking	9	"mut mun mielestä se on hyvä ja sit ku siinä on kuitenkin suullista siis kaikki." "but I think it's a good one, and it's an oral exercise."
Combine reading with vocabulary instruction	6	"..ku aatellaan että on uusia sanoja siinä tilanteessa että samalla ne tulee sitte opiskeltua. Ja katottua sieltä lauseyhteydestä myöskin. " "The words encountered are new so they need to be studied at the same time, also on a sentence level"
Combine reading with grammar instruction	1	"Ja pikkusen ovelasti tulee vielä jotain tollasta artikkeli-asiakaan tuolla ja muuta nii.." "And I think I can spot some article instruction embedded in the activity"
Combine reading with writing	1	"No tämä oli tää nelonen ihan hyvä elikkä ainaki sillä tavalla et se ohjaa myös tähän omaan tuottamiseen ja kirjottamiseen " "Well I liked activity number 4, I mean it also facilitates students with producing their own texts, even in writing"

Table 5 provides data Examples of combining reading with speaking. Several mentions were made of combining reading with speaking and of combining reading with vocabulary instruction, and as there were multiple reasons why this was considered a positive characteristic, several Examples are given of the same category. Combining reading with grammar instruction and writing, however, did not receive as many positive comments and this is why only one Example is given of each category.

Most commonly teachers wanted to include activities that combined reading with speaking. All answers reflected, to an extent, the importance of spoken language and practicing speaking skills in general, as shown in Example 1:

Example 1

”aina sitte mä tykkään suullisesta paljon itte että ku se on varmaa loppupelis sillei että varmaan ihmiset 90-prosenttisesti puhuu.”

“I personally always like oral activities because after all, people speak 90% of the time.”

The strong notion of the importance of spoken language expressed in Example 1 was a concurring theme in all answers. Personal preference also plays a role in this selection, as the interviewee states that this type of activity is what she favors generally. This view of speaking as the main mode of communication is interesting, as one might assume that the increase in the use of electronic communication would more likely favor written mode of communication, in a new form though.

However, there were also other reasons for choosing activities that combined speaking and reading. For instance in Example 2, reading and speaking are combined to deepen the comprehension of the text and to link written and spoken language together:

Example 2

”se tiivistetty pätkä ja tota ni niin sitte ku täs tulee tää että et kerrotaan suullistetaan se sama asia ni se.. mä pidän sitä tosi tärkeenä myöski että paitsi että pään sisällä tapahtuu sitä ajattelua siellä lukiessa (mm) ni sitte sen perään nii ni tota.. tai mun mielestä puhumisen harjottaminen on myös tosi tärkeätä ni että tekstit ei oo aina erillisiä.. erillisiä juttuja ja puhuminen erillistä vaa että ne voiaa yhdistää myöski. ”

”The summarized part.. I mean and when you also need to say the same thing.. I think it’s really important that even though there are thinking processes going on in your mind while reading that after reading..

In my view, it’s also important to practice speaking skills so that texts are not entirely separate from speaking, but that reading and speaking can be combined.”

In Example 2, the general assumption is that the thought process of reading can be expanded by combining it with speaking. What the interviewee also points out that it is important to establish a connection with written and oral mode of communication, which would possibly refer to a more holistic view of learning a language.

The idea of linking written and spoken texts was present in other comments as well: another reason for combining reading with speaking was the aspect of working together with a partner, as shown in Example 3:

Example 3

”ite mä suosin varmaan nimenomaan niinku semmosia että parin kanssa yritetään luetaan yhdessä ja silleen että yritetään yhdessä ymmärtää sillei että autetaan toisia. ja sitten niitä että selitetään omin sanoin toiselle.”

”I personally favor activities where you need to read together with your partner and try to understand the text together, by helping others. And by explaining things in your own words to one another.”

Combining reading and speaking was thus seen as a way for collaborating with another student and to understand the text better. The importance of being able to convey the meaning of the text in one's own words was also emphasized. Collaboration and working with a peer is often seen as a perk in activities that include speaking and this kind of exercise would naturally fit in the classroom setting, as it brings out possibilities that cannot, necessarily, be fulfilled if working alone at home.

Example 4, on the other hand, focuses on the utility of speaking instead of writing:

Example 4

"Joo (lukee tehtävänantoa) joo tää on taas näitä suullisia tehtäviä jotka mun mielest on kivempi tehdä suullisesti kun alkaa kirjottaa näihin vastauksia (joo) eli tota tässä tulee nopeesti käytyy se asia läpi sinäänsä ja taas näkyy tuolla sitten oikeet vastauksetkin"

"yeah.. so this is one of these oral activities which I think is better than starting to answer these in writing.. I mean you're able to quickly cover the text and then you can also see the right answers here"

The utility in the task is based on time-efficiency. Speaking is less time consuming than writing and thus, considering the limited time available in classroom settings, it makes sense to use the little time available as efficiently as possible.

The reasons for favoring exercises that combine reading with vocabulary instruction were mainly those of convenience: when reading new texts, students will necessarily encounter new words, which are often included in reading exercises. The importance of vocabulary in general was reflected in all of the Examples. In Example 5, the fact that new vocabulary is included is mentioned as a positive attribute of the exercise:

Example 5

"Tässä on niinku tämä hyvä puoli et siinä on kuitenkin nuo uudet sanat et se auttas tuota sanojen oppimista"

"The good thing here is that the new words are included and it helps learning vocabulary "

The comment in Example 5 says very little about the reasons why vocabulary should be combined with teaching texts and this same notion could be said about most other data excerpts. Potentially the link between text comprehension and vocabulary is considered obvious.

However, in Example 6 the connection between learning vocabulary and reading is covered, as text provides the opportunity to study new words in their context:

Example 6

"..ku aatellaan että on uusia sanoja siinä tilanteessa että samalla ne tulee sitte opiskeltua. Ja katottua sieltä lauseyhteydestä myöskin. "

”And when you think that you encounter new words and study them as well. And you also see them in their context.”

In the previous Example, the reading exercise mostly provides a beneficial setting for learning new vocabulary. The comment shows the assumption that the student views the text more carefully by focusing on new vocabulary, which might indeed be the case.

The same sentiment of reading activity as a setting for learning vocabulary is also echoed in Example 7, but in addition the potential need to practice vocabulary learning strategies is seen as a bonus for the exercise:

Example 7

”Ja sit tässä tulee varmaan sit aika kivasti samalla varmaan niitä uusien öö termien tai uusien sanojen treeniä että joudut ehkä muutaman sanan tarkistaa sanastosta ennenku pystyt.. tai päättämään sieltä lauseista ehkä niitten merkityksen ”

”And it’s nice that you get to practice new words and terms at the same time and you might have to check a few words from the word list before you can.. or figure out the meaning from the context”

To summarize, as the previous Examples show, reading exercises mostly provide the setting for learning new vocabulary and practicing vocabulary learning strategies, but the importance of understanding vocabulary to understand texts goes seemingly unnoticed.

Only one comment in the data (Example 8) addressed the usefulness of combining reading instruction with grammar instruction as a positive feature:

Example 8

”Ja pikkusen ovelasti tulee vielä jotain tollasta artikkeli-asiakin tuolla ja muuta nii..”

”And I think I can spot some article instruction embedded in the activity”

The Example says very little of how teaching grammar and reading can be combined together, it merely states that grammar instruction was embedded and it was a positive feature. However, Example 8 still illustrates that reading activities not only focus on meaning, but also serve as a way to integrate focus on form into teaching.

Exercises that combined reading with writing were generally not favored, but there was one Example (Example 9) in the data that focused on the utility of combining reading with writing:

Example 9

”No tämä oli tää nelonen ihan hyvä elikkä ainaki sillä tavalla et se ohjaa myös tähän omaan tuottamiseen ja kirjottamiseen ”

"Well I liked activity number 4, I mean it encourages students with producing their own texts, in writing as well"

The particular activity was considered as a way to encourage students to produce their own pieces of writing. Generally, in higher education in particular, reading is very closely related to producing new texts and for this reason it is surprising that only one comment viewed teaching reading in combination with writing positively.

Table 6. Favored techniques.

Techniques		
Guided summary	3	"Nonii täs on tota hyvä aihe sinänsä – letter to the editor – ja sitte että pitää löytää tosiaa se paino tai se pääargumentti ja vielä noita esimerkkejä. ja lopuks sitte vielä että taas sitte tiivistetään tää englanniks." "So the topic, in general, is good: Letter to the editor. And you have to find the main argument and Examples, and eventually summarize in English"
Multiple-choice activities	1	"mut että varmaan sellasia tavallaan yksinkertasempia keskeiset asiat tiivistäviä monivalintoja ni on tullut käytettyä " "but yeah, I think I have used simple multiple-choice activities that summarize the key points of the text"
Pre-reading activity	1	"Lämpärehtävä ykstoista tää ni ni aina kiva että ennenku hypätään suoraan tekstiin ni saa pikkasen lämmitellä että kyllähän sitä iteki ku tarttuu vaikka johonki uuteen tieteelliseen opukseen ni ensin selailee sitä vähä, kattelee kuvat ja miettii että mitäs mä tästä jo tiedän tai lukee sisällysluetteloo." "It's always good to be able to do some kind of warm-up activity before getting to know the text. I mean, when you need to read for example a new scientific book, you first browse for a while, check out the images and try to figure out what you already know about the topic. Or then read the contents."

Techniques, in general, seemed to weigh relatively little when deciding whether an activity was something the interviewee would favor in the classroom. However, guided summaries, multiple-choice activities and pre-reading activities did have some characteristics that made them good choices for reading instruction.

The technique that elicited a few positive comments was guided summary. The reasons why guided summary was deemed suitable had more to do with having a text that benefitted from that technique than with having an actual preference for guided summaries, as illustrated by Example 8:

Example 8

”Sitte taas tossa kymmissä nii mun mielestä täs on tosi hyvin aateltu sitä tekstityyppiä et kun on mielipidekirjoituksia ni niitten keskeiset pointit pitää löytää ja sitte esimerkit ja vielä toi että pitää ne osata sitte suullistaa ja tiivistää omin sanoin niin se oli hyvä jatko.”

”Then again in exercise 10, I think the genre of the text, letters to the editor, has really been taken into consideration. I mean, you need to first find the main points, then the Examples and moreover you also need to be able to put it into words and summarize with your own words. That wraps it up nicely”

In Example 8, the text type, letter to the editor, is considered to be the kind of text where guided summary is a useful technique. The link between the text and the suitable technique of the exercise was mentioned in all the comments that favored guided summaries. Another positive characteristic of this particular guided summary was that it was finally conducted orally, after some preparation phases. Thus, what was seen as a positive characteristic was the combination of an exercise that fit the given text type and an exercise that provided enough support for the students to successfully manage an oral summary.

Multiple-choice activities and pre-reading activities also evoked favorable comments from some interviewees, as shown in Examples 9 and 10:

Example 9

"mut että varmaan sellasia tavallaan yksinkertasempia keskeiset asiat tiivistäviä monivalintoja ni on tullut käytettyä "

"but yeah, I think I have used simple multiple-choice activities that summarize the key points of the text"

Example 10

"Lämpärehtävä ykstoista tää ni ni aina kiva että ennenku hypätään suoraan tekstiin ni saa pikkasen lämmitellä että kyllähän sitä iteki ku tarttuu vaikka johonki uuteen tieteelliseen opukseen ni ensin selailee sitä vähä, kattelee kuvat ja mieltii että mitäs mä tästä jo tiedän tai lukee sisällysluetteloo."

"It's always good to be able to do some kind of warm-up activity before getting to know the text. I mean, when you need to read for example a new scientific book, you first browse for a while, check out the images and try to figure out what you already know about the topic. Or then read the contents."

The reasoning behind why a multiple-choice activity was selected in Example 9 was based mostly on previous experience, as well as on the idea that multiple-choice activities sum up the main points of the text. Thus, familiar techniques and techniques that focus on main ideas of the text can be said to be favored.

In Example 10, one's personal previous experience also has an effect on choosing a technique. However, in the latter Example the experience is not based on teaching experience per se, but also on the interviewees own thoughts and experiences on how to tackle new, possibly problematic texts.

To summarize, there were two main reasons to choose particular techniques: firstly, the text type had a significant impact on what was considered suitable. Secondly, one's personal experience of teaching and reading difficult texts affected the decisions of the interviewees.

Table 7. Focus of the activity.

Focus of the activity	
Focus on main ideas 6	"ku täs on vaa tollel että tota perusasiat et tavallaan ihan se basic juttu että mitenkä mitenkä tuota niinku on sen ymmärtänyksen tekstin " "this only focuses on the basics, the main thing is how you have understood the text"
Focus on reading strategies 6	"sillei jos harjotellaan nimenomaan skannausta tai jotain tällasta vastaavaa poimimista ni sillon tää vois olla tällei hyvä tehtävä. mm. sit ku tosiaan on tärkeetä oppia eri tekniikoita " "if you need to practice scanning in particular, or other similar skills, this could be a good activity. It is really important to learn different (reading) techniques."
Focus on further processing of the text 2	"ni oppilaan pitää vielä käyttää vähän aivokapasiteettia ja miettiä et mikä siinä todella oli se pointti et miten päin, onks tää myönteinen vai kielteinen asia ja muodostaa siitä sitten sitte tosiaan taas lauseita, kertoo se teksti uudestaan. " ".. Students need to think and consider what the point was, and how was it in the text: is it a positive or a negative statement, form their own sentences and retell the text."

The focus of the activity was commented quite often. Several favorable comments were given to activities where the focus was on main ideas or reading strategies. Activities where the focus was on further processing of the text were also given positive feedback.

The activities where focus was on main ideas were favored for a couple of reasons: mainly, it was considered that understanding the gist of the text was more important than understanding details in texts, as shown in Example 11:

Example 11

”että selitä lauseet suomeksi vielä et se todella niinku sen asian ymmärtäminen on tärkeempää ku se et osaat sanasta sanaan kääntää jonku lauseen. ”

“So explain the sentences in Finnish, I mean understanding the actual meaning is more important than knowing how to translate a sentence, word to word.”

In Example 11, the interviewee states that understanding meaning is more important than being able to translate the text carefully. Thus, the interviewee seems to claim that in reading activities, the focus should be on meaning rather than on form.

Another reason for favoring exercises with focus on main ideas was that these kinds of activities were suited for students with different language proficiencies, as shown in Examples 12 and 13

Example 12

“Like here it’s that the main things – I mean the “basic” thing that how you have understood the text.. I think it’ suited for less proficient language learners as well if it’s not too difficult that they can understand how it (the text) goes.“

”ku täs on vaa tollel että tota perusasiat, et tavallaan ihan se basic juttu että mitenkä mitenkä tuota niinku on sen ymmärtänyksen tekstin et varmaan niille heikommillekin käy jos tai olettasin näin että jos se ei oo kauheen vaikee se teksti et ne pystyy niinku hahmottamaan miten se menee”

Example 13

“Well, this is a good activity to skilled students, I mean they have had to understand the key thing in the text.”

”no, tämä on ihan hyvä tehtävä semmosille jotka on niinku tuota mm taitavia opiskelijoita elikkä sillälaililla et siinä on pitäny ymmärtää se keskeinen asia siitä kappaleesta.”

In Example 12, the key idea is that those with lesser language proficiency are able to complete the activity and understand the actual text better. However, in Example 13 the logic behind choosing a task that focuses on main ideas is reversed: the interviewee thinks that finding key ideas requires more skill, and for this reason the activity is favored but might be suited for those with more language proficiency.

All comments related to reading strategies were connected to one particular exercise, where students had to only read the first sentences of each paragraph of the text. The general consensus in all comments was that reading first sentences or titles helps students understand texts as shown in Examples 14 and 15:

Example 14

“Just for training reading strategies.. it’s a great activity. I mean to help students see how longer texts are built and that really, it’s usually the first sentence or fist two sentences that summarize the key ideas I mean when you think of newspaper articles or scientific articles.. –“

”Ihan tekstinyymmärtämisstrategioita harjotellessa esimerkiks ni ihan mainio mun mielestä että. Et opettaa oppilaita näkemään se että miten niinku pitkät tekstit rakentuu et todella useimmiten niissä on se et ensimmäinen lause tai pari ensimmäistä virkettä on niitä keskeisiä sitte et jos aatellaan et ne lukee vaikka sitte olkoon nyt vaikka sitte pidempää sanomalehtiartikkelia tai jotai tällasta tieteellistäki artikkelia nii .. –”

Example 15

”And then this is just technically good so that students understand why it’s crucial to understand titles and first sentences of each paragraph.”

“Ja tää on sitte vaa hyvä teknisesti että oppilaat ymmärtää et miksi on tärkeetä ymmärtää otsikot tai sitte nää ekat virkkeet kustaki kappaleesta.”

In Example 14, the usefulness of learning reading strategies was taken a bit further with related real life connotations, whereas in Example 15, the reason why this particular reading strategy was good to know was not as explicit, as in the other comments related to the same exercise. In Example 15, however, the interviewee comments that students also need to understand why skimming is a good way of getting to know texts, which implies that the interviewee finds it important that students gain knowledge about reading strategies that they can use independently.

There were only two comments, shown in Examples 16 and 17, that could be seen to view exercises that require further processing of the text favorably:

Example 16

“So the student needs to use his or her brain capacity and think about the text, what was the point and how was it, is it positive or negative and then form sentences and retell the text.”

”ni oppilaan pitää vielä käyttää vähän aivokapasiteettia ja miettiä et mikä siinä todella oli se pointti et miten päin, onks tää myönteinen vai kielteinen asia ja muodostaa siitä sitten sitte tosiaan taas lauseita, kertoo se teksti uudestaan. ”

Example 17

”But I have used simpler multiple-choice activities.. I mean if they are not that obvious and get students thinking, true or false questions and such”

”mut että varmaan sellasia tavallaan yksinkertaisempia keskeiset asiat tiivistäviä monivalintoja ni on tullut käytettyä

ja ja tota siinäki jos ne ei oo sellasia nii ihan itsestäänselviä simppeleitä et jos ne herättää vähän ajattelua tai oikein väärin väittämät ja semmoset. “

Example 16 was related to the need to think of the text and then make your own sentences – the comment leads to think that when one needs to retell the text, it requires more processing which is a positive characteristic. In Example 17 however, it was considered that even true-false statements or multiple-choice activities might require further processing of the text, if they were not too simplistic.

To summarize, the interviewees seemed to favor activities that focused on main ideas or on teaching reading strategies. There were several reasons why activities that favored main ideas were recommended, but the reason behind teaching reading strategies, skimming in particular, was not always as clear. Some also viewed focus on further processing as a positive characteristic, and two different techniques, guided summaries and multiple-choice activities, to achieve this end were mentioned.

Table 8. Language of the activity.

Language of the activity	
L1 to clarify meaning	1 <p>”no täs on niinku se että luetaan tekstiä englanniks mut sit saa kuiteki selittää suomeks ...</p> <p>..mä nyt ymmärtäsin että miks nää o näin ni saa selittää niinku suomeks ettei se mee sit välttämättä siihen että ihan suoraan sillei kopioi”</p> <p>“I think it's good that you need to read in English but then you get to explain in Finnish. I think the reason is that you won't just directly copy the answers.”</p>
L2 to strengthen understanding	1 <p>tää oli mun mielest hyvä tää että tota retell using your own words.</p> <p>et vaikka on sillei periaatteessa kirjoitettu niinku suomeks ni sitte pitääkin niinku kertoo ite englanniks.</p> <p>et se on mun mielestä ihan toimiva. ja nimenomaan using your own words ni ehkä se ei mee siihen et kattos suoraa sieltä kirjasta. (h2)</p> <p>I think it's good to retell using your own words. In a way that it's written in Finnish but you need to explain in English.</p> <p>I think it works, especially when you need to use your own words instead of looking at the answers from the textbook.</p>

Both the use of L1 and L2 were seen as positive factors for facilitating understanding, as illustrated in the following Examples:

Example 18

”no täs on niinku se että luetaan tekstiä englanniks mut sit saa kuiteki selittää suomeks.. mä nyt ymmärtäsin että miks nää o näin ni saa selittää niinku suomeks ettei se mee sit välttämättä siihen että ihan suoraan sillei kopioi. ”

“I think it's good that you need to read in English but then you get to explain in Finnish. I think the reason is that you won't just directly copy the answers.”

Example 19

”tää oli mun mielest hyvä tää että tota retell using your own words. et vaikka on sillei periaatteessa kirjoitettu niinku suomeks ni sitte pitääkin niinku kertoo ite englanniks et se on mun mielestä ihan toimiva. ja nimenomaan using your own words ni ehkä se ei mee siihen et kattos suoraa sieltä kirjasta. ”

“I think it's good to retell using your own words. In a way that it's written in Finnish but you need to explain in English. I think it works, especially when you need to use your own words instead of looking at the answers from the textbook.”

In Example 18, the use of L1 is considered to help clarify the meaning, whereas in Example 19, use of L2 is seen to help strengthen the students understanding. Even though the Examples favor different languages, they share one key idea: both interviewees think that it is important to use your own words when answering questions, instead of finding direct citations from the text.

Table 9. Suitability for differentiated instruction.

Suitability for differentiated instruction
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Visual aids as support	<p>4</p> <p>"visuaalinen puoli on itellä ollu aina vähä heikompi ja tota mä oon sitä opettajana ollessani nii tavallas opetellu koska mä oon huomaan että monet oppilaista taas sitte hahmottaa tosi selkeästi sillä tavalla jotenki niinku kuvien avulla.. "</p> <p>"Visual side has always been a bit weaker for me personally and as a teacher I have tried to train myself. Because I realize that many students can understand texts more clearly with the help of visual aids.</p>
Key words provided	<p>3</p> <p>" Tää on hyödyllinen sikäli että annetaan avainsanoja ja sitte ku siin on vielä se et ne näkee tolta et ne voi tarkistaa. "</p> <p>"This is useful because keywords are provided and then they can also see and check them here."</p>
Text summarized in a way that helps students understand it	<p>2</p> <p>mut että tää on mun mielestä kuitenkin sillei hyvin hyvä että tulee varmistettua että se pääjuu kustakin kappaleesta on sit selvä kaikille.</p> <p>ne voi olla aika vaikeitkin virkkeitä välillä ja ne parhaat joutuu tekee hommii siinä sen takia ja sitte taas ne jotka on heikompia pääsee jotenki siihen tekstii sisälle suomeksi edes. but I think is good, because it helps make sure that the main ideas of all paragraphs are clear to everyone.</p> <p>The clauses can be difficult at times and this might be a challenge even for the most proficient students, but then again even the less skilled ones can get something out of the text</p>
Students have the freedom to choose	<p>2</p> <p>"Että tää on sillei että tää on eriyttävä myöskin että täs on niinku voi sitten näppärämpi löytää hyvinkin paljon siihen sanoja ja joku sitten jotkut perussanat joka on jolla on haasteellista tuo opiskelu. "</p> <p>"So this is suited for differentiated instruction - a more able student might find a lot of vocabulary here and someone who has more challenges with studying languages might only find a few basic words"</p>
Use of L1 allowed	<p>1</p> <p>Tehtävä kolme ois sitten taas sitä semmosta joka eriyttäs sitten näille.. helpottas niille joilla on lukemisessa haastetta kun täällä on niinku kysymykset kuitenkin suomeks.</p> <p>Että tätä niinku kaikki kyllä pystyis helposti tekemään.</p> <p>Activity 3 would be suited for differentiated instruction.. for those students who have difficulties with reading, the questions are in Finnish so it's easier. Everyone can do this.</p>

It was evident that suitability for differentiated instruction and additional support to the students embedded in the activity were seen as beneficial characteristics by the interviewees. Especially the role of visual aids was notable in the comments made by the interviewees, but also keywords as vocabulary related aids, summarization of the text, students' freedom to choose and use of L1 were mentioned. One instance of mentioning the importance of visual aids is shown in Example 20:

Example 20

"visuaalinen puoli on itellä ollu aina vähä heikompi ja tota mä oon sitä opettajana ollessani nii tavallas opetellu koska mä oon huomaan että monet oppilaista taas sitte hahmottaa tosi selkeästi sillä tavalla jotenki niinku kuvien avulla"

"Visual side has always been a bit weaker for me personally and as a teacher I have tried to train myself. Because I realize that many students can understand texts more clearly with the help of visual aids.

In addition to considerations of usefulness of visual aids to students, the interviewee also comments on his or her own limitations and coming to terms with them: In addition to being an Example of teachers preferring activities that contain visual aids, it is an Example of a teacher using her knowledge of students' needs for differentiated instruction.

The usefulness of keywords is illustrated in Example 21:

Example 21

".. tää on sit niinku sellanen nopea tapa taas tota harjotella suullista ja kuitenkin on apusanoja ni et ei tarvii ihan tuulesta temmata ja alkaa niinku kertoo tekstiä omin sanoin ilman mitää apuja et ihan mun mielestä taas hyväki tehtävä"

".. so this is a fast way to practice oral skills, but with the help of keywords, students don't have to start from scratch and struggle without any support.. so in my view, a good activity."

What Example 21 shows is that keywords not only help students complete the activity faster, but they also help students organize and remember the text when explaining it to their partners. The interviewee also seems to consider keywords as a useful technique of facilitating reading comprehension, not only as a means of training vocabulary.

In Example 22, the idea of differentiated instruction achieved by students being able to choose how they complete the task is addressed:

Example 22

"Että tää on sillei että tää on eriyttävä myöskin että täs on niinku voi sitten näppärämpi löytää hyvinkin paljon siihen sanoja ja joku sitten jotkut perussanat joka on jolla on haasteellista tuo opiskelu. "

"So this is suited for differentiated instruction - a more able student might find a lot of vocabulary here and someone who has more challenges with studying languages might only find a few basic words."

The activity in question gave students free hands on how to complete it and thus it was seen as an activity for differentiated instruction. Most comments made by interviewees related to differentiated instruction, 8 in total, were very similar.

Table 10. Other positively viewed characteristics of activities.

Other positively viewed characteristics of activities		
Conducted in pairs	5	" Tässä on tää parityö, että se on senkin takia hyvä ja sit luetaan ääneen eli se on tää tuottamisen kannalta ja sitten ne voi yhdessä hh jos toinen ei onnistu ni toinen siinä auttaa " "This is a pair activity, so that's good and also when you read outloud it helps production. And they can practice together, if one doesn't succeed the other one can help out."
Assumed appeal to students	4	"Elikkä tässä on ni tää nuoret yleensä tykkää että on näitä kuvatehtäviä että se on varmaanki ihan mukava siinä. " " Young people usually like visual activities, so I guess this would be good."
Time-efficient	4	".. että tota se on aina se myöskin et kuinka paljon on aikaa, jos on semmonen selkee tehtävä ja jos ei oo paljon aikaa ni se sitte on ihan tavallaan helppokäyttönen " " it depends on how much time you have. If the activity is clearly structured and you don't have that much time, then it is, in a way, easy to use"
Variety	4	"Ja sitte nää oikeestaa mä valitsin vähän niinku sellaks arsenaaliksi että vaihtelu virkistää tyyppistä koska nää on erilaisia mun mielestä kaikki, hyviä. " "I've selected these activities to be a kind of a tool kit - variety brings the spice in life. I thought all of these were good."
Suited for silent, independent work	1	"no tämä on niinku semmonen tehtävä joka kyllä tämmöseen hiljaseen työhön...että mutta tähä luetunymmärtämiseen ihan ihan hyvä. " "This is an activity that could be used for silent independent work.. For reading comprehension, it's okay"
Have clear goals	1	"Ja tota sitte niinku oppilaan kannalta on aina selkeetä ku tääl o tämmösii jotai mainitse neljä syytä mainitse viisi asiaa, mainitse vähentää viisi niin, nii nii se ehkä sitte taas semmosia vähä vähemmän motivoituneita tai sanotaanko laiskoja oppilaita (nii hehe) ni sitte innostaa käymään sen ku heil on niinku joku semmonen tavote." "For students it's always easier to have clear goals: for example, here we have "mention four reasons, or at least five things.. So I guess it might help the less motivated or dare I say lazy students, to go through the text when they have a certain goal."
Modifiability	1	"tää oli se mitä mä olin käyttäny pohjana sille yhdelle tehtävälle minkä mää olin tehny. että silleen hyvä pohja ja tällasia mä nimenomaan käytän niinku pohjana. " "I used this activity as a basis for one task I made for my students. So this is a good activity to use as a basis for modification"
Clear layout and positioning of the activity	1	"Ja sitä paitsi täs on aina sanasto näkyvissä yläpuolella ni sekin on näppärä et ne pystyy tarkistaa. (T:Joo). Tommonenki on aika tärkeetä, tää nyt ei ehkä liity tähä asiaan mut että miten oppikirjassa on niinku aseteltu ne tehtävät siellä. " "And the wordlist is located straight above the activity, which is good because then students can check the words more easily. (Yeah.)"

Maybe it's not really related, but I think it is also important how the activities are positioned in the teaching materials."

Several comments were not classifiable under a main theme and thus, a more random category was established. In this random category, there were, however, certain concurring comments: activities that consisted of pair work and would assumedly appeal to students, were time-efficient and provided variety were mentioned more than once. Other features included suitability for silent, independent work, having clear goals, modifiability and clear layout and positioning of the activity.

A characteristic that was important to the interviewed teachers was that the activity included pair work. Pair work was mentioned in a positive light several times, as in Example 23:

Example 23

" Tässä on tää parityö, että se on senkin takia hyvä ja sit luetaan ääneen eli se on tää tuottamisen kannalta ja sitten ne voi yhdessä hh jos toinen ei onnistu ni toinen siinä auttaa "

"This is a pair activity, so that's good and also when you read out loud it helps production. And they can practice together, if one doesn't succeed the other one can help out."

Working in pairs was favored, because it was seen as a chance for students to help each other figure out the meaning of texts and also it was considered a chance to practice oral skills and production. Thus, reading is not seen as a solitary activity, at least not entirely, but rather as a chance for students to work together to understand texts.

Interviewees also commented activities they assumed would appeal to students positively, as illustrated in Example 24:

Example 24

"Elikkä tässä on ni tää nuoret yleensä tykkää että on näitä kuvatehtäviä että se on varmaanki ihan mukava siinä. "

" Young people usually like visual activities, so I guess this would be good."

Perceived appeal to students was addressed directly and was based on the opinions and experiences of teachers. However, it was clear that teachers wanted to consider the wishes of their students when selecting activities suited for their classroom.

Time-efficiency was also mentioned in several instances: activities that were deemed as time-efficient were given positive comments, as in Example 25:

Example 25

".. että tota se on aina se myöskin et kuinka paljon on aikaa, jos on semmonen selkee tehtävä ja jos ei oo paljon aikaa ni se sitte on ihan tavallaan helppokäyttönen "

" it depends on how much time you have. If the activity is clearly structured and you don't have that much time, then it is, in a way, easy to use"

In Example 25, clear structure makes the activity easy to use and for this reason, the interviewee decided that he or she would want to include it in the classroom setting. Structure, simplicity and time-efficiency are thus created by good design of the activity.

Sometimes interviewees had a difficult time choosing particular activities for use as they wanted to include as many types of activities as possible, as in Example 26.

Example 26

"Ja sitte nää oikeestaa mä valitsin vähän niinku sellaks arsenaaliksi
että vaihtelu virkistää tyyppistä koska nää on erilaisia mun mielestä kaikki, hyviä"

"I've selected these activities to be a kind of a tool kit - variety brings the spice in life. I thought all of these were good."

The positive comment above was related to all the activities in general, but it reflected well the general perception shared by all the comments related to variety: teachers wanted activities that were different in some way and would bring variety to teaching.

In addition, suitability for silent independent work, having clear goals, modifiability and clear layout and positioning of the activity were also mentioned as positive characteristics of activities as shown in the Examples 27-30 below:

Example 27

"no tämä on niinku semmonen tehtävä joka kyllä tämmöseen hiljaseen työhön...että mutta tähä luetunymmärtämiseen ihan ihan hyvä. "

"This is an activity that could be used for silent independent work.. For reading comprehension, it's okay"

Example 28

"Ja tota sitte niinku oppilaan kannalta on aina selkeetä ku tääl o tämmösii jotai mainitse neljä syytä mainitse viisi asiaa, mainitse vähentää viisi niin, se ehkä sitte taas semmosia vähä vähemmän motivoituneita tai sanotaanko laiskoja oppilaita ni sitte innostaa käymään sen ku heil on niinku joku semmonen tavote."

"For students it's always easier to have clear goals: for example, here we have "mention four reasons, or at least five things.. So I guess it might help the less motivated or dare I say lazy students, to go through the text when they have a certain goal."

Example 29

"tää oli se mitä mä olin käyttäny pohjana sille yhelle tehtävälle minkä mä olin tehny. että silleen hyvä pohja ja tällasia mä nimenomaan käytän niinku pohjana. "

"I used this activity as a basis for one task I made for my students. So this is a good activity to use as a basis for modification"

Example 30

"Ja sitä paitsi täs on aina sanasto näkyvissä yläpuolella ni sekin on näppärä et ne pystyy tarkistaa. Tommonenki on aika tärkeätä, tää nyt ei ehkä liity tähä asiaan mut että miten oppikirjassa on niinku aseteltu ne tehtävät siellä. "

"And the wordlist is located straight above the activity, which is good because then students can check the words more easily. Maybe it's not really related, but I think it is also important how the activities are positioned in the teaching materials."

In Example 27, it is apparent that this type of activity that encourages students to work silently and independently would not likely be favored for training other language skills. It is thus possible to say that reading comprehension is taught differently than other language skills.

Example 28, however, illustrates a very pragmatic reason for selecting a particular type of activity: clear goals help students complete the task. Nevertheless, the main perk of the particular activity in teaching reading comprehension is that the interviewee assumes that even less motivated students would actually read the text.

The potential of using the activity for further development of new activities was also mentioned as a positive characteristic, as shown in Example 29. Thus, interviewees not only viewed activities as something that needed to be used as they are, but as a resource for creating activities of their own.

Finally, in Example 30, the activity itself was not necessarily considered useful, but the layout and positioning made it appealing to the interviewee. It could be said that activities were not necessarily just separate entities, but a key part of the teaching material set. Their compatibility with the materials as a whole had an impact on how positively they were reviewed.

As a conclusion for the entire section, it could be stated the reasons for choosing activities to be used in the classroom were versatile. However, generally activities that helped students understand the gist of the text were favored, but teachers also paid attention to technical aspects and task modes, keeping in mind the practicality of activities and the need for training oral skills in particular. Affective factors were also mentioned: both assumed student preferences and teachers own experiences and preferences played a role in the selection of the activities.

Activities that teachers dislike or would prefer to exclude in their classroom

The activities that teachers disliked or would have excluded as classroom activities and their reasons for these choices are presented in Table 2. The activities are divided into five categories: combining reading with

other language skills, types of reading, techniques, personal preferences and other unfavored characteristics of activities.

Combining reading with other skills

The interviewees' comments on combining reading with other skills are presented in the following Table 11:

Table 11. Combining reading with other skills.

Combining reading with other skills	
Combine reading with writing (2)	nonii eli kolmonen oli mä siinä aluiks jo sanoinki et mää nyt en lähtis näi paljo kirjojuttamaan mitää suomeksi edes lukiotasolla vihkoihin (h3) So activity three.. As I said in the beginning I wouldn't ask students to write this much in Finnish even in upper secondary school.
Activities related to general language proficiency (2)	mut että se on niinku musta semmosta näpertelyä että ei välttämättä niinku. et yritetään tavallaan sitä niinku alkuperäsen kielen taitoo ottaa siihen. että tuota ehkä se tulee sit niinku, mun mielestä pitäs tulla vasta tuolla yliopistossa. semmonen oikeesti semmonen lyhenteleminen ja siis tämmönen tekstin lyhentäminen, siis summar- mikäs se on suomeksi But in my view it is a bit overdoing it I mean, trying to integrate authentic language use to it.

Generally combining reading with other skills was not a recurring reason for disliking or excluding activities. Exercises that combined reading with writing received negative comments, as did activities that required general language proficiency in addition to reading skills.

However, in the previous section it was noted that interviewees rarely favored activities that combined reading with writing. This conclusion is further strengthened by comments made on the activities they would exclude or dislike as shown in Example 31:

Example 31

”nonii eli kolmonen oli mä siinä aluiks jo sanoinki et mää nyt en lähtis näi paljo kirjojuttamaan mitää suomeksi edes lukiotasolla vihkoihin.”

“So activity three.. As I said in the beginning I wouldn't ask students to write this much in Finnish even in upper secondary school.”

In addition to unwillingness to utilize activities that require writing, the comment also shows reluctance to ask students to write in Finnish in particular. In the previous comment, the interviewee mentioned that asking students to write in Finnish in upper secondary in particular seems pointless, which might suggest that this kind of activities might be suited for other groups.

Activities which combined reading and writing received slightly negative feedback, but also activities that combined reading with general language proficiency were considered problematic, as shown in Example 32:

Example 32

”se rokottaa tavallaan niitä jotka ei osaa sitä kieltä et se ei välttämättä sitä tekstin ymmärtämistä niinku sitten mittaa loppujen lopuks vaan että se mittaa sitä yleistä kielitaitoa myöskin enemmän.”

”it hinders those who don’t know the language, it doesn’t really necessarily measure reading comprehension but general language proficiency”

The previous Example illustrates how reading comprehension is seen as an entity separate from general language skills, as something that can be measured on its own. The comment also shows a concern for fairness of evaluating a student’s performance in a particular area of language assessment: validity seems to be a criteria when selecting or deselecting activities.

Techniques

The techniques that were not preferred by teachers for activities used in classroom setting are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Techniques.

Techniques	
Multiple-choice activities (2)	<p>täs on nyt a b tavallaan ehkä ihan hyvä että on vaa kaks sitte kuitenkin toki tän tyylisessä sitten se arvaaminen alkaa olla liian suuri rooli sillä koska osa ja ne jotka ei jaksa paneutua ni ne todennäköisesti arvaa (joo). Mut sama se on oikeestaan abc tehtävissä sitten. Vaik ois kui hyviä ne esimerkit ja vaihtoehdot ni, ni on niitä jotka haluaa mennä sieltä missä aita on matalin.</p> <p>so the options are A and B so in a way it's good that there are only two alternatives. However, with this type of activities guessing plays a big part because those who don't want to make an effort will just guess (yeah). But it's the same with abc-activities. No matter how good the Examples and options are, there are always those who just want to take the easiest route.</p>
Open-ended questions (2)	<p>Öö varmaan ihan hyvä ite taas kaipaisin tähän edelle vielä sellasta ihan niinku yleisemmän tason kokoavaa kysymystä että what was the point, mikä oli tekstin aihe. Että niinku mikä juoni, mitä tapahtu tässä ruvetaan tota sitte kyselemään aika yksityiskohtasia kysymyksiä että että mitä olisi tapahtunut ja niin poispäin.</p> <p>Hmm I guess it's okay but I'd want a more general question in the beginning, like what was the point, what was the text about. To kind of clarify the plot before going into detailed questions such as what would have happened and so on.</p>
Translations (2)	<p>Mutta siis nää tällaset käänösjutut niin ku aika paljon on kielissä semmosta et ei voi kääntää niinku kunnolla.</p>

	<p>Tai niinku esimerkiks poke ni sörkkiä, ni kyllä se vähä sillei et se ei kuitenkaan välttämättä iha ehkä tarkota sitä samaa</p> <p>.</p> <p>But these translation, often it's not possible to translate well from one language to another. Like “sörkkiä” does not exactly mean the same as poke.</p>
<p>True-false statements (2)</p>	<p>(keskustelua siitä mitkä harjoitukset jäisivät valitsematta) mut jos ois ollu niitä oikeen väärin väittämiä ni oisin voinu ottaa semmosen niinku heti koska se riippuu siitä että minkälainen se on se minkälaisia väittämiä et se niinku kun se on kaikkein vaikein tavallaan, toisaalta.</p> <p>If you had had true false statements I would have selected one straight away.</p> <p>Because it depends on the type of the statements, they are the most difficult ones in a way.</p>
<p>Summaries (1)</p>	<p>nii tiivistäminen. että tota en mä tiedä onks se niinku kokeena. koska siinä aina kumminkin semmosta jos se arvioidaan niin tota semmosta sitä subjektiivista et miltä se tuntuu.</p> <p>summarizing.. As an exam I don't think.. Because there's always a subjective side to assessing the summaries.</p>

Several techniques had characteristics that made interviewees dislike or want to exclude them. The reasons were varied, and an Example is given for each category. Comments were made about multiple-choice activities, open-ended questions, translations and true-false statements, and one of the interviewees also strongly commented on the negative aspects of summaries.

As for multiple-choice activities, the main reason for disliking them seemed to be the possibility to answer without reading the text as shown in Example 33:

Example 33

Täs on nyt a b, tavallaan ehkä ihan hyvä että on vaa kaks sitte kuitenkin toki tän tyyliässä sitten se arvaaminen alkaa olla liian suuri rooli, sillä koska osa ja ne jotka ei jaksa paneutua ni ne todennäkösesti arvaa. Mut sama se on oikeestaan abc tehtävissä sitten. Vaik ois kui hyviä ne esimerkit ja vaihtoehdot ni, ni on niitä jotka haluaa mennä sieltä missä aita on matalin. (h3)

So the options are A and B so in a way it's good that there are only two alternatives. However, with this type of activities guessing plays a big part because those who don't want to make an effort will just guess (yeah). But it's the same with abc-activities. No matter how good the Examples and options are, there are always those who just want to take the easiest route.

In Example 33, the interviewee discusses the possibility of guessing as a strategy to complete the exercise. The interviewee states that even though the activity and possible choices would be carefully thought out, the chance of students not really reading the text or the options is considerable. This consideration may be based on teaching experience or an assumption of students' behavior but obviously the risk is a realistic one.

True-false statements share similar risks of guessing as a completion strategy as multiple-choice questions.

Example 34

mut jos ois ollu niitä oikeen väärin väittämiä ni oisin voinu ottaa (kysyttäessä mitä ei valitsisi) semmosen niinku heti. koska se riippuu siitä että minkälainen se on se minkälaisia väittämiä et se niinku kun se on kaikkein vaikein tavallaan, toisaalta.

If you had had true false statements I would have left that one out straight away. Because it depends on the type of the statements, they are the most difficult ones in a way.

Even though the same negative aspects of multiple-choice questions could have been applied to true-false statements, the Example 34 reflected on the difficulty of true-false statements. In addition to the interviewee commenting the difficulty of activities using this technique, she also commented that the way the statements are formulated is important.

The comment on the role of forming the exercises as an important factor that came up in Example 4 was also noted when commenting on another technique: the technique that arouse similar criticism was open-ended questions, as illustrated in Example 35:

Example 35

Öö varmaan ihan hyvä ite taas kaipaisin tähän edelle vielä sellasta ihan niinku yleisemmän tason kokoavaa kysymystä että *what was the point*, mikä oli tekstin aihe. Että niinku mikä juoni, mitä tapahtu tässä ruvetaan tota sitte kyselemään aika yksityiskohtasia kysymyksiä, että että mitä olisi tapahtunut ja niin pois päin.

Hmm I guess it's okay but I'd want a more general question in the beginning, like what was the point, what was the text about. To kind of clarify the plot before going into detailed questions such as what would have happened and so on.

The criticism in Example 35 is not necessarily aimed at all open-ended questions per se, but at questions that are too detailed. In open-ended questions the manner in which the questions have been formulated seems to be the main factor in whether the interviewee would or would not select the activity. This conclusion seems reasonable, as activities may shape interpretations of a text.

Translations were also received some negative feedback, as shown in Example 36:

Example 36

Mutta siis nää tällaset käänösjutut niin ku aika paljon on kielissä semmosta et ei voi kääntää niinku kunnolla. Tai niinku esimerkiks poke ni sörkkiä, ni kyllä se vähä sillei et se ei kuitenkaan välttämättä iha ehkä tarkota sitä samaa.

But these translation, often it's not possible to translate well from one language to another. For example "poke" could be translated as "sörkkiä", but it still doesn't mean exactly the same thing.

The characteristic that is considered problematic is derived from the problematic aspects of translations in general: the interviewee does not see translating as a meaningful activity, as the meanings cannot be carefully translated from one language to another.

Finally, summary as a technique was also not favored by an interviewee, as illustrated in Example 37:

Example 37

Nii tiivistäminen. että tota en mä tiedä onks se niinku kokeena. koska siinä aina kumminkin semmosta jos se arvioidaan niin tota semmosta sitä subjektiivista et miltä se tuntuu.

Summarizing.. As an exam I don't think.. Because there's always a subjective side to assessing the summaries.

The problem seen by the interviewee is the nature of summaries as a specific text type: evaluating and assessing the accuracy and success of summaries is seen as too subjective and this might leave students at a disadvantage. The interviewee does not clearly say whether summarizing might be beneficial to students, but mainly focuses on whether assessing them is fair to students. Potentially the interviewee also recognizes the value of the individual's reading experience and this is what may cause problems in assessing the summaries.

Other unfavored characteristics of activities

Table 13 shows other unfavored characteristics of activities that the interviewees mentioned throughout the interviews.

Table 13. Unfavored characteristics.

Unfavored characteristics of activities	
Activities that do not require enough processing of the text (7)	<p>I think it should be something that's done in higher education, like in the university. What do you call it? Shortening the text, summar-- what is it in Finnish?</p> <p>mulle tuli tästäkin semmone tunne että tästä on kyllä varmaan tosi helposti löytää sieltä kirjasta silleen suoraan että ei tarvii oikeesti hirveesti mieltii jos ei halua.</p> <p>This made me feel like it's really easy to find the answers straight from the books without too much thinking.</p>
Activities viewed as too difficult for students (6)	<p>Sitte toi seiska nii se tosiaan mun mielestä ää vaatii jo niin parempaa kielitaitoa että nytku mä aattelen lukiolaisia vaikka ykkös-kakkosvuotisia ja ensimmäisiä tekstejä niin ni mieluummin mä ottasin jonku sellasen tehtävän aluks</p> <p>missä missä ei ihan näin yksityiskohtasesti pitäis vielä tehtävässä lukee joitain juttuja vaan saisi mieltii kokonaisuutena sitä tekstiä. Eikä oikeen väärin väittämän ahdistusta vielä siinä vaiheessa.</p>

<p>Detail oriented (6)</p>	<p>toi taulukko tosta ehkä noi numerot vie sitte taas vähä liian yksityiskohtasiin asioihin mun mielessäni niinku ainaki sitä tekstiä. (h4) that table there.. Maybe the numbers reduce the text to details.</p>
<p>Lacking in technical aspects (5) (layout, positioning, prompt phrasing etc.)</p>	<p>Ja sitten toi kuutostehtävä, muuten ihan hyvä mutta.. just nää on monesti nää kuvaviittaukset voi olla jossakin epäselviä taikka huonoja kuvia ni sen takia tuo kuutonen ei aina oo niinku.. välipalana on hyvä ja semmosena ehkä tuntiharjotuksena mutta esimerkiks kokeessa ni ei oo .. en pitäs hyvänä tämmöstä. And exercise six, it's good otherwise but often these image references can be unclear if the images are bad so that's why activity six.. For a change of pace or as an exercise to be done in class it might be fine but in an examn for instance I don't think it'd be good.</p>
<p>Time consuming</p>	<p>nii tiivistäminen. että tota en mä tiedä onks se niinku kokeena. koska siinä aina kumminkin semmosta jos se arvioidaan niin tota semmosta sitä subjektiivista et miltä se tuntuu. että mä en sitä koe ainakaa et se ois kauheen hyvä. voihan sitä välillä harjotella mut että ei kannata paljon siihen aikaa, ku kumminkin tuntia on nii vähän. Summarizing as a test, I don't know because it's always subjective assessing them. So I don't think it's that good. It's okay to practice a bit every once in a while but there's so little time that it doesn't make sense to use so much time with it.</p>

The comments could be labeled into the following subcategories: Activities that do not require enough processing of the text, activities considered too difficult for students, detail-oriented activities, activities lacking in technical aspects such as poor positioning, prompt phrasing etc., and time-consuming activities.

The first subcategory, activities that do not require enough processing of the text, got multiple comments from the interviewees. Generally, teachers wanted the activities to require deeper thought than just quickly browsing the text for short answers, or scanning, as shown in Example 8:

Example 38

mulle tuli tästäkin semmone tunne että tästä on kyllä varmaan tosi helposti löytää sieltä kirjasta silleen suoraan

että ei tarvii oikeesti hirveesti miettii jos ei halua. skannaukseen se on tosi hyvä mut sit ku miettii sitä että jos se teksti pitäs oikeesti yrittää ymmärtää ni se ei välttämättä siihe niin... hyvä ole

This made me feel like it's really easy to find the answers straight from the books without too much thinking. For scanning, it is really good but when you really should understand the text, then it's not really that great.

In Example 38, the negative feedback is based on the simplicity of the activity: the interviewee does not recognize that the activity could be used for scanning, but feels that it is insufficient for understanding the text as an entity. Interviewees hoped to have exercises that would ask the student to interact with the text as a whole, which is on one hand understandable, but on the other hand reading techniques are one of the most important things students need to master according to the national curriculum.

Another recurring category was activities that were considered too difficult for students. There were multiple reasons why certain activities were seen as more difficult than others, but a lot of the comments had to do with perceived lacking language proficiency of students, as illustrated in Example 39:

Example 39

Sitte toi seiska nii se tosiaan mun mielestä ää vaatii jo niin parempaa kielitaitoa että nytku mä aattelen lukiolaisia vaikka ykkös-kakkosvuotisia ja ensimmäisiä tekstejä niin ni mieluummin mä ottasin jonku sellasen tehtävän aluks, missä missä ei ihan näin yksityiskohtasesti pitäs vielä tehtävässä lukee joitain juttuja vaan sais miettii kokonaisuutena sitä tekstiä. Eikä oikeen väärin väittämän ahdistusta vielä siinä vaiheessa.

Then number 7.. I think it requires more language proficiency.. Now that I think of upper secondary school students, in their first or second year, and the first texts then I'd rather have an activity in the beginning where you wouldn't have to focus so much on the details but to think of the text as a whole. Without the anxiety caused by the true-false statements at that point.

In Example 39, the interviewee considers the role of language proficiency in detail oriented questions and comments that activities that would require a more holistic understanding of a text would be better and cause less anxiety for students. This comment is in line with the point presented in Example 2: teachers see general language proficiency and reading skills as something that can be separated and want reading activities to reflect students' text comprehension skills. Students' possible negative sentiments are also taken into consideration: if students are given reading activities that are too demanding, they might cause anxiety.

Orientation to details was noted in the previous examples, but there were several comments made exclusively about activities that were, in the teachers' view, too detail-oriented (see Example 10).

Example 40

”toi taulukko tosta ehkä noi numerot vie sitte taas vähä liian yksityiskohtasiin asioihin mun mielessäni niinku ainaki sitä tekstiä.”

”that Table there.. Maybe the numbers reduce the text to details.”

In Example 40, the interviewee states that when filling in a table, students only focus on the details and do not grasp the complete text. This example is, in a way, is very similar to previously presented comments: teachers would rather prefer activities that ensure a more general understanding of the text instead of using activities that require students to study details.

The contents and aims of the activity were mostly commented on, but teachers also paid attention to the technical aspects, such as layout, positioning, and phrasing, of the exercises. In Example 41, the layout, particularly the imagery, was under scrutiny:

Example 41

Ja sitten toi kuutostehtävä, muuten ihan hyvä mutta.. just nää on monesti nää kuvaviittaukset voi olla jossakin epäselviä taikka huonoja kuvia ni sen takia tuo kuutonen ei aina oo niinku..

And exercise six, it's good otherwise but often these image references can be unclear if the images are bad so that's why activity six..

In Example 41, the interviewee comments on the possible confusion the images might create. Even though in some earlier comments visual aids were seen as helpful, an activity strongly based on visual clues was seen problematic.

Finally activities that were considered time-consuming also were given negative feedback: activities with multiple phases and summaries, as illustrated in Example 42, were commented negatively.

Example 42

(viitaten tiivistystehtäviin)”.. että mä en sitä koe ainakaa et se ois kauheen hyvä. voihan sitä välillä harjotella mut että ei kannata paljon siihen aikaa, ku kumminkin tuntia on nii vähän. ”

(Referring to summarizing tasks)” ..So I don't think it's that good. It's okay to practice a bit every once in a while but there's so little time that it doesn't make sense to use so much time with it.”

In Example 42, the interviewee points out that there is too little time and summarizing tasks take up a considerable amount of time. Taken into consideration the possibility for students to prepare their summaries independently, time-consumption would not necessarily be such a problematic characteristic, but this possibility with writing summaries was not discussed by the interviewees.

Personal preferences of teachers

The last subcategory of activities teachers would like to exclude or dislike presented in Table 13 was based on the interviewees' personal preferences.

Table 14. Personal preferences.

Personal preferences	
Personal negative experiences (1)	<p>Öö vaikka oon ite aina tykänny kielistä ni mua heti ahdistaa jo tässä tämä et täs on niinku paljo enemmän tekstiä ja jos olis huono hahmottamaan tai ehkä mä oon sitte huono hahmottamaa ni heti jo hengitys sitte kiihtyy et auts, tää on vaikee tehtävä.</p> <p>Oh even though I've always liked studying languages I start feeling anxious straight away because there's so much text</p> <p>I mean if you have difficulties understanding - and I guess I might then - you're breathing starts to go heavier and you start thinking that man this is a difficult one.</p>
Difficulty of assessment (1)	<p>nii tiivistäminen. että tota en mä tiedä onks se niinku kokeena. koska siinä aina kumminkin semmosta jos se arvioidaan niin tota semmosta sitä subjektiivista et miltä se tuntuu.</p> <p>Summarizing as a test, I don't know because it's always subjective assessing them</p>

The subcategories found were personal negative experiences and experienced difficulty of assessment, which was previously commented on in Example 7. Personal negative experiences influenced the teacher's selection of activities in the following extract:

Example 43

Öö vaikka oon ite aina tykänny kielistä ni mua heti ahdistaa jo tässä tämä et täs on niinku paljo enemmän tekstiä ja jos olis huono hahmottamaan tai ehkä mä oon sitte huono hahmottamaa ni heti jo hengitys sitte kiihtyy et auts, tää on vaikee tehtävä.

Oh even though I've always liked studying languages I start feeling anxious straight away because there's so much text. I mean if you have difficulties understanding - and I guess I might then - immediately your breathing starts to go heavier and you start thinking that ouch, this is a difficult one.

The teacher's feelings of anxiety of trying to figure out the statements is the key reason why she chose to exclude the particular activity. Even though in previous Examples there is some rationale behind the teachers' choices of least favorite activities, this choice is mostly based on sentiment and personal negative experiences. Teachers use several resources when choosing activities that would best suit their students and naturally own personal history and preferences, consciously or subconsciously, have an impact on the activities selected.

Based on the data presented, it could be said that the teachers' reasons for disliking or rejecting activities mirrored pretty well their reasons for preferring certain activities over others: practical reasons, such as notable time-consumption or poor design of activities, and personal preferences were mentioned. The key difference was that techniques were not a huge factor for selecting

particular activities, but they played a major part when considering the activities they specifically would not use.

Usefulness of teaching materials

The usefulness of teaching materials from the point of view of interviewees is presented in this section. The interviewed teachers did generally view teaching materials as a useful resource, but there were also few hesitant comments. The comments have been divided into two tables, table 14 presents the positive comments whereas Table 15 includes the more hesitant views expressed by teachers.

Table 15. Materials viewed as useful.

Materials viewed as useful	
Generally useful (6)	<p>Kyllä noi pääsääntöisesti on aika käytettäviä et ei voi aina niinku pyörää keksii uudestaa ja uudestaa että sinänsä aika monipuolisia on sitte kuitenkin ku aattelee tehtävyytyyppejä ja sit jos on joku huonompi ni jättää pois.</p> <p>Generally they are pretty usable, I mean you can't always keep reinventing and when you think of the activity types, they are versatile.. And if there is a bad one in the bunch, it's easy to just leave it out.</p>
Useful, used as the main material for instruction (3)	<p>kovasti oon tykänny näistä kirjasarjoista mitä oon käyttäny ite, et hyvin paljon niiden mukaan mennään.Hyvin vähän ehtii mitään ylimäärästä.</p> <p>I have really liked the textbook series I have used, teaching is very much based on them. There is little time for anything extra.</p>
Useful as well though-out cohesive course materials (1)	<p>Et kylhän oppikirjoissa tietysti on aina koira haudattuna jo niihin luetunymmärtämistehtäviin mitä on myöhemmin luvassa vaikka sanastoharjoitteiden tai kielioppiharjoitteiden puolella.</p> <p>There is always a catch in reading comprehension activities in textbooks, they are related to the things that are covered later in vocabulary or grammar activities.</p>

Table 15 shows examples of positive reviews on the general usefulness of reading activities.

Several comments were of the opinion that activities are generally useful, some comments showed that teaching materials form the basis of instruction and one comment pointed out that the usefulness of teaching materials is based on cycling same themes in several exercises and thus forming a cohesive material package.

Example 44 highlights quite clearly one of the reasons why teaching materials were considered useful:

Example 44

”Kyllä noi pääsääntöisesti on aika käytettäviä et ei voi aina niinku pyörää keksii uudestaan ja uudestaan että sinänsä aika monipuolisia on sitte kuitenkin ku aattelee tehtävityyppejä ja sit jos on joku huonompi ni jättää pois.”

”Generally they are pretty usable, I mean you can't always keep reinventing and when you think of the activity types, they are versatile.. And if there is a bad one in the bunch, it's easy to just leave it out. “

The interviewee states that exercise types are versatile enough so there is no need for teachers to come up with new ones. What this might suggest is that the expertise of teacher is based on the ability to select the ones that are the most useful.

Example 45, on the other hand, shows that teachers are quite attached to ready-made teaching materials:

Example 45

kovasti on tykänny näistä kirjasarjoista mitä on käyttäny ite, et hyvin paljon niiden mukaan mennään. Hyvin vähän ehtii mitään ylimäärästä.

I have really liked the textbook series I have used, teaching is very much based on them. There is little time for anything extra.

The interviewee comments that she has chosen textbooks that she likes to use and they form the majority of course content. She also brings out the issue of time limitations: using teaching materials leaves too little time for other activities, which are considered an extra effort.

Lastly, in Example 46 the interviewee considers the positive effect of having a cohesive instruction package when using ready-made teaching materials:

Example 46

Et kylhän oppikirjoissa tietysti on aina koira haudattuna jo niihin luetunymmärtämistehtäviin mitä on myöhemmin luvassa vaikka sanastoharjoitteiden tai kielioppiharjoitteiden puolella.

There is always a catch in reading comprehension activities in textbooks, they are related to the things that are covered later in vocabulary or grammar activities.

The possibility of combining vocabulary instruction and grammar instruction with reading comprehension is considered a positive thing by the interviewee, but only because they are a prepping the student for other exercises to come - in previous examples activities that combined reading comprehension with grammar and vocabulary were not favored.

The following Table covers the more hesitant comments made by interviewees about the usefulness of activities in textbooks. It is important to note that most comments did show some appreciation for ready-made materials, but also included some criticism.

Table 16. Limited usefulness.

Limited usefulness	
Useful, but activities might need improvement or modification (3)	<p>No siis, mul on tosiaan ollu niinku kaks lukioryhmää ja ne on molemmat käyttäny open roadia ja open roadissa on ihan suhteellisen hyviä tehtäviä.</p> <p>silleen ku niitä vähän muokkaa ni niistä saa oikeesti ihan kivoja.</p> <p>Well, I have had two groups of upper secondary school students, both groups have used Open Road-series, which has pretty good exercises - with some modification they are nice.</p>
Some activities provide limited options for differentiated instruction (3)	<p>Mutta jos siellä on sitte sellasta haasteellista sitte tai on niinku mm jollai semmosia vaikeuksia siitä tekstin ymmärtämisestä ja tuottamisesta</p> <p>ni sitte tällaselle tää voi olla liian vaikee että monelle se oma tuottaminen on vielä vaikeeta. Vähä ryhmästä riippuen mutta sinäänsä toi tehtävä on iha hyvä. (h5)</p> <p>But if there are students with difficulties in understanding and producing texts, it might be too difficult because production is too difficult for many students. Depending on the group, it's a generally good exercise.</p>
Useful for specific purposes (2)	<p>Ei tää nyt periaatteessa sillei huonoa tehtävää oo mut silti tuntuu että ite en käyttäs tällasta, enemmän vaikka sillei et selitä parillesi tää tummennettu tai boldilla oleva lause et selitä se sun parilles ja parin pitää arvata mistä on kyse tai jotai tollasta.</p> <p>Kylhän täs sillei että periaatteessa oppii sanomaan sen saman asian eri tavalla et sillee tää on ihan hyödyllinen</p> <p>Basically it's not a bad exercise, I wouldn't use it - rather explain the sentence written in bold to your partner and he or she needs to guess what's going on or something like that. But you learn to say the same thing in a different way, so in that sense it is useful.</p>
Not always useful (1)	<p>Mutta joissakin oppikirjoissa on sitten sillälaila että ne kuvitukset on vähän sillei että ei oo välttämättä hyviä et törmää siihen että se kuvittaja ei oo saanu siihen tarpeeks sitä sillälaila selkeesti esille että saa tai voi olla että joku ymmärtää sen kuvan väärin ja sen takia tulee sitten virheitä.</p> <p>Tai jos on joku sanasto jossa on niinku vaa pelkkä kuva ni sillon saattaa ymmärtää sen sanan väärin koska jos se kuva saattaa johtaa harhaan. Että semmonen ongelma tässä voi tulla..</p> <p>But in some textbooks the images aren't really that good, I mean you might find that the editor hasn't been able to put it out clearly.. and might be that someone misinterprets the image and that causes errors. And if there is a vocabulary section with only an image you might get the word wrong, if it's misleading.. So that might be the problem.</p>

What Table 16 shows is that activities were often considered useful, but might need some improvement or modification, were slightly limited considering the need for differentiated instruction, or that they were useful for a particular purpose, even though they might not be used at all times. Only one comment expressed more severe criticism towards the activities, but even in this case the criticism was aimed at technical aspects, not at using materials per se.

Example 47 illustrates the interviewee's idea of using the materials as a good basis:

Example 47

No siis, mul on tosiaan ollu niinku kaks lukioryhmää ja ne on molemmat käyttäny open roadia ja open roadissa on ihan suhteellisen hyviä tehtäviä. Silleen ku niitä vähän muokkaa ni niistä saa oikeesti ihan kivoja.

Well, I have had two groups of upper secondary school students. Both groups have used textbooks of Open Road-series, which has pretty good exercises - with some modification they really are nice.

In Example 47, the teacher comments that the activities in textbooks are good as they are, but with modification they can be even better. The interviewed teachers, in general, were prepared to modify the activities to better suit their teaching purposes even though they were more hesitant to create their own activities. Their modification ideas are later on discussed in a separate section (see Table 17).

In the previous example the interviewees expressed their willingness to modify activities. In the following extract, one possible reason for the need for modification, limited options provided by activities for differentiated instruction, is addressed:

Example 48

Mutta jos siellä on sitte sellasta haasteellista sitte tai on niinku mm jollai semmosia vaikeuksia siitä tekstin ymmärtämisestä ja tuottamisesta ni sitte tällaselle tää voi olla liian vaikee että monelle se oma tuottaminen on vielä vaikeeta. Vähä ryhmästä riippuen mutta sinäänsä toi tehtävä on iha hyvä.

But if there are students who struggle with understanding and producing texts, it might be too challenging because production is too difficult for many students. Depending on the group though, it's a generally good exercise.

In Example 48, the interviewee points out that activities that require students to generate longer sentences and pieces of text might be too difficult for some students, even though the activity itself would be useful. The suitability of activities for differentiated instruction was a concern for several interviewees and as differentiated instruction is a key theme in language teaching in Finland, this concern is very relevant.

The limitations of activities and the possibility to only use them for specific purposes is covered in Example 49:

Example 49

”Ei tää nyt periaatteessa sillei huono tehtävää oo mut silti tuntuu että ite en käyttäs tällasta, enemmän vaikka sillei et selitä parillesi tää tummennettu tai boldilla oleva lause et selitä se sun parilles ja parin pitää arvata mistä on kyse tai jotai tollasta. Kylhän täs sillei että periaatteessa oppii sanomaan sen saman asian eri tavalla et sillee tää on ihan hyödyllinen. ”

”Basically it's not a bad exercise, I wouldn't use it - rather explain the sentence written in bold to your partner and he or she needs to guess what's going on or something like that. But you learn to say the same thing in a different way, so in that sense it is useful.”

In Example 49, the interviewee first explains why she would not use the activity as it is and also mentions how she would *modify* it. The activity in question was considered to be useful only for vocabulary training, even though from the point of view of the interviewee the activity itself was not ideal. This comment illustrates the point that even though teachers would not like an activity, they are ready to analyze the potential benefits of an activity and reconsider using it.

Lastly, in Example 50 the interviewee discusses why activities might not always be useful:

Example 50

Mutta joissakin oppikirjoissa on sitten sillälaila että ne kuvitukset on vähän sillei että ei oo välttämättä hyviä et törmää siihen että se kuvittaja ei oo saanu siihen tarpeeks sitä sillälaila selkeesti esille että saa tai voi olla että joku ymmärtää sen kuvan väärin ja sen takia tulee sitten virheitä. Tai jos on joku sanasto jossa on niinku vaa pelkkä kuva ni sillon saattaa ymmärtää sen sanan väärin koska jos se kuva saattaa johtaa harhaan. Että semmonen ongelma tässä voi tulla..

But in some textbooks the images aren't really that good, I mean you might find that the editor hasn't been able to put it out clearly.. and might be that someone misinterprets the image and that causes errors. And if there is a vocabulary section with only an image you might get the word wrong, if it's misleading.. So that might be the problem.

Example 50 mainly focuses on the technical problems that activities might have: poor design in teaching materials might lead to misinterpretations and hinder understanding. Interestingly the only comment that directly addressed problems with using teaching materials focused only on technicalities and visual design rather than the contents of the activities. Thus, even though teachers are able to analyze teaching materials if asked to do so they rarely criticize textbooks per se, but rather focus on details that could be changed.

5.2.2. Teachers' ideas of modification and creation of activities

The previous section focused on teachers' views on the activities presented to them. This section, however, is more pragmatic: the focus is on what could be done to the activities to modify them and on what kinds of activities not presented in the interviews teachers use to teach reading comprehension.

Modification of activities

In the previous sections the focus has been on how teachers view activities presented to them. The possibility to alter ready-made activities was approached in several Examples, but the aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which teachers modified the activities in more detail.

Table 17. Modification of activities.

Modification of activities	
Changing the language of the activity	5 <p>Se vois olla kyllä niinku tässäki että olis sitte että englanniks kirjoteltas sitte että.. sitte ne vois vaikka parille suomentaa mutta että sitä kuitenkin käytettä sitä alkuperäiskieltä aika paljon</p> <p>It might be better here to write in English.. They could then translate to their partner in Finnish, but it'd be good to use the target language quite a lot.</p>
Clarification / modification of the instructions	5 <p>Hmm emmä tiä siis iha tekninen juttu että nää vois olla vaikka numeroitui ku tää että sitten.. että sitte varmaan auttas joitai hahmottamaan sen sitten</p> <p>Hmm, I don't know.. Just a technical thing, these could be numbered so that it would help some students grasp the idea of the activity better.</p>
Using the activity to train some other language skill	4 <p>Tää vois olla hirveen hyvä kuunteluna ehkä kuitenkin jotenki ku että tekstin ymmärtämisenä.</p> <p>joskus tuleeki tehtyy niitä tehtävii nii että kokeillaanpas nii että ainaki jos haluatte että kuuntelette vaan ja sitte tehää jo tää eka tehtävä tästä.</p> <p>I think this might work better as a listening task rather than a reading comprehension activity..</p> <p>sometimes I actually ask students to complete the activities so that the only listen to the text when doing the first activity.</p>
Expanding the activity	3 <p>Ja tostahan vois laajentaa vaikka öö jonkinlaisen mindmapin vaikka sitten muutenki, tehä vaikka ipadille tulee tässä mieleen. Kuva ja siihen vielä sanoja ja sitten sanoista lauseita ja kaikkee tällasta.</p> <p>It'd be possible to expand the activity into a mind map, doing it on an Ipad for instance. Images, words, then sentences and so on.</p>
Simplification	2 <p>Mut sit siihe mä luulen että tääl on ehkä tää key words ni sil o yritetty vähä sitä välttää ettei ne opiskelijat vaa kato niitä pääjuttuja vaan että jokaisesta et jos jotai vähä ees yrittäs mut tota ehkä ite käyttäs in niin että ottasin ton keywords pois ja tekisin siitä sillei nimenomaan skannauksen. sitä kun harjotellaan.</p> <p>But I think that these key words here are meant to help students pay attention to details, as well as the main ideas.</p> <p>So that they'd try something a bit more but I think I'd use this activity so that I'd take away the keyword-part</p>

		and turn it into a scanning activity as that's what I think this activity is for.
Using technology	2	Mää oon sitte tehny usein nii että tän tyyllisissä tehtävissä ni on näkyny tuolla power pointti slide että ne pystyy sitte tarkastaa et on se asia menny sillei hyvin että ei menis koko aika siihen et ne etsii mitä on tekstissä että ne pystyis jotai muotoilee itse suullisesti I've often done so that in activities like this I've shown a power point slide the students can use to check if they've understood so that the entire time wouldn't be spent on trying to find the things from the text and so that they could form the sentences independently
Increasing the difficulty	1	Sekin vois olla että poimii ite vaikka niitä keywordsejä ja sitten tota sanoo oppilaille että niiden pitää selittää se parille. käyttää niitä omia sanoja sillei että kirjat kiinni. -- tai jotain ehkä että jotain vähän vaihtelua tai haastetta siihe. (h2) Maybe it could be that you pick the keywords and ask students to explain them to their partner, using their own words with books closed.. To have something a little different or more challenging.
Utilizing some elements of the activity as a basis for a new activity	1	En käyttänyt, tosin tän pohjalta mä tein niille semmosia raivaustehtäviä. näistä kirjoitin niille väittämiä, ja niiden piti sitten selvittää ja selittää että miksi tämä väittäjä on sitten totta tai väärin. I didn't use this activity but I used this as a basis for an activity... I wrote the students statements and they had to figure out and explain why the statements are true or false.
Adding more interesting elements	1	ja sitten tästä vielä sanon että (T:joo okei)että ne kysymykset mitä mä sitten tein ni mä tein niistä vähän sellasii hullunkurisii ja hauskoja et sekin saattaa sit auttaa muistamaan. nää on niinku jotenkin niin tota niinku serious, ni sillei se voi olla et se sillei jää niin hyvin päähä And I'll say about this one that the questions I made.. They were kind of funny and strange to help students remember. These originals are so serious, it might be that the students won't remember them so well.

Table 17 shows the types of modification detected in the data. The ways of modification commented on by the interviewees were changing the language of the activity and clarification or modification of the instructions, Using the activity to train some other language skill, Expanding the activity, simplification, using technology, Increasing the difficulty of the activity, utilizing some elements of the activity as a basis for a new activity and finally, adding more interesting elements.

One reason behind changing the language of the activity is shown in Example 51:

Example 51

Sitä mää täs just niinku ajattelin että.. että tässä tää ku ne suomeks laitetaa ni siitä ei oo niinku hyötyä tämän tekstin kannalta sitten. Että se ois voinu olla vaikka juuri nii että ne ois ollu sitte englanniks ja sitte ois vielä

vaikka parin kanssa yhdessä mietitty että mitä ne ovat sitte suomeks ja sen jälkeen sitte niitten avulla ois tietysti helpompi tehdä tämä suullinen osuus. **Että tätä määh just mietin tässä että tästä ei oo niinku hyötyä siihen tekstiin eikä sanaston oppimiseen kun ne suomeks laitetaan eikä sanaston kirjottamisen opetteluun että koska se jos sä kirjotat ne sitten vielä englanniks ni sä opit sitte ne sanat kirjottamaan sitte myöskin.** Että se on tässä sitte ongelma totta. Ja sitte tää kertominen ois helpompi.

That's what I was just thinking.. that when you write the words in Finnish it doesn't really help with the text. It could have been better if they were in English and then you'd figure out with your partner what they would be in Finnish. **It would be then easier to do the oral part. I was thinking that it isn't really useful for learning the text or vocabulary, when you write in Finnish, because if you write in English you will learn to spell the words.** So that's the problem here. And it would also be easier to explain the text.

In Example 51 the interviewee points out that it would be better to use the target language instead of Finnish. Most suggestions about modifying the language of the exercise were related to using the target language more: it seems that the interviewees preferred to use L2 in the classroom and this was also portrayed in the way they wanted to change the exercises. In the previously presented Example, the interviewee also considers the usefulness of writing down words in Finnish versus writing down words in English: She states that using the target language would help learning vocabulary as well as the text. The reluctance to have students write in Finnish was also mentioned in the previous data examples, but in this case, a clear reason is given.

As for clarification or modification of instruction, there were several ways in which the instructions were modified but the aim was the same: the teachers wanted to make sure that students would be able to complete the exercises without getting stuck with technicalities, as illustrated in Example 52:

Example 52

Hmm emmä tiiä siis iha tekninen juttu että nääh vois olla vaikka numeroitu ku tää että sitten.. että sitte varmaan auttas joitai hahmottamaan sen sitten

Hmm, I don't know.. Just a technical thing, these could be numbered so that it would help some students grasp the idea..

In Example 52, the interviewee would have added numbers to the activity so that the students would be able to better realize what the objective was. The example shows that teachers are able to point out possible problematic aspects of exercises and are able to quickly come up with ways that facilitate completion of exercises: this is something that might be utilized by textbook designers.

Comments related to using the activity for training other language skills focused on turning activities more into activities that practiced oral skills. However, in Example 53, the interviewee considers if the activity in question could be used to train some other language skill, i.e. if it would make more sense as a listening activity:

Example 53

Tää vois olla hirveen hyvä kuunteluna ehkä kuitenkin jotenki ku että tekstin ymmärtämisenä. Joskus tuleeki tehtyy niitä tehtävii nii että kokeillaanpas nii että ainaki jos haluatte että kuuntelette vaan ja sitte tehää jo tää eka tehtävä tästä.

I think this might work better as a listening task rather than a reading comprehension activity.. Sometimes I actually ask students to complete the activities so that the only listen to the text when doing the first activity.

What Example 53 shows is that when getting to know new texts, teachers consider listening to it as an important element that facilitates text comprehension. However, activities rarely combine these two skills – perhaps it is assumed that teachers automatically make the connection. Listening and reading were not often mentioned though.

Expanding the activities, as in Example 54, and in contrast, simplifying them, as in Example 55, were also utilized:

Example 54

Ja tostahan vois laajentaa vaikka öö jonkinlaisen mindmapin vaikka sitten muutenki, tehä vaikka ipadille tulee tässä mieleen. Kuva ja siihen vielä sanoja ja sitten sanoista lauseita ja kaikkee tällasta.

It'd be possible to expand the activity into a mind map, doing it on an Ipad for instance. Images, words, then sentences and so on.

Example 55

Mut sit siihe mä luulen että tääl on ehkä tää key words ni sil o yritetty vähä sitä välttää ettei ne opiskelijat vaa kato niitä pääjuttuja vaan että jokaisesta et jos jotai vähä ees yrittäs mut tota ehkä ite käyttäs in niin että ottasin ton keywords pois ja tekisin siitä sillei nimenomaan skannauksen. sitä kun harjotellaan.

But I think that these key words here are meant to help students pay attention to details, as well as the main ideas. So that they'd try something a bit more but I think I'd use this activity so that I'd take away the keyword-part and turn it into a scanning activity as that's what I think this activity is for.

In Example 54, the interviewee thinks about adding a mindmap and incorporating vocabulary training into the original activity, whereas in Example 55, the interviewee considers the additional vocabulary instruction embedded in the exercise as a hindrance. This shows that there are differences in teacher preferences – some prefer reading activities simplified, others see them as a way of integrating training other language skills. Example 54 also illustrates using technology to increase utility of the activity: iPad allows easy expansion of the activity.

Increasing the difficulty of the activity, utilizing some elements of the activity as a basis for a new activity and adding more interesting elements were also mentioned as ways of modifying activities.

These categories overlap to an extent, as all of them use the original activities as a basis, but the Examples and their differences are illustrated in the following examples (56, 57 and 58):

Example 56

Sekin vois olla että poimii ite vaikka niitä keywordsejä ja sitten tota sanoo oppilaille että niiden pitää selittää se parille. käyttää niitä omia sanoja sillei että kirjat kiinni. .. tai jotain ehkä että jotain vähän vaihtelua tai haastetta siihe.

Maybe it could be that you pick the keywords and ask students to explain them to their partner, using their own words with books closed.. To have something a little different or more challenging.

In Example 56 the interviewee gives a concrete suggestion on how to add more difficulty and variation to the exercise. This modification does not require a lot of additional material or effort from the teacher, just the selection of keywords, but instead it gives the students the chance to practice oral skills.

Example 57

En käyttänyt, tosin tän pohjalta mä tein niille semmosia raivaustehtäviä. näistä kirjoitin niille väittämiä, ja niiden piti sitten selvittää ja selittää että miksi tämä väittäjä on sitten totta tai väärin.

I didn't use this activity but I used this as a basis for an activity... I wrote the students statements and they had to figure out and explain why the statements are true or false.

In contrast to the modification in Example 56, in Example 57 the teacher only used the core elements, open ended questions, of the activity as a basis for true false statements. The reason for preferring true-false statements seems to be that the interviewee in question thinks they require more processing of the text and include the possibility to explain why each statement is either true or false.

Example 58

ja sitten tästä vielä sanon että.. että ne kysymykset mitä mä sitten tein ni mä tein niistä vähän sellasii hullunkurisii ja hauskoja et sekin saattaa sit auttaa muistamaan. nää on niinku jotenkin niin tota niinku serious, ni sillei se voi olla et se sillei jää niin hyvin päähä

And I'll say about this one that the questions I made.. They were kind of funny and strange to help students remember. These originals are so serious, it might be that the students won't remember them so well.

Example 58 is directly related to Example 57 – the statements made were, according to the interviewee, built to be as interesting as possible to make it more likely that students would understand and remember the text better. Thus, the teacher considered that the actual contents of the text were important and that reading it was more than just a drill.

Teachers' own examples of activities

In the final section of the presented data, teachers' own Examples of activities they use for teaching reading are discussed. As one of the aims of the present study was to give teachers a chance to share their ideas, Examples are given of all categories. The categories in Table 18 are discussions and collaborative activities. Other ideas are presented in Table 19: as there were several examples that could not be labeled under any particular category, it seemed reasonable to include this subcategory.

Table 18. Discussions and collaborative activities.

The kinds of activities not presented in the examples that teachers use	
Discussion 3	<p>Etä tämmöstä että siitä välillä vois olla nää tekstit vähän sellasiakin et josta vois niinku parin kanssa keskustella et jos on joku kiinnostava teksti. Sometimes it'd be good to have texts that you could discuss with your partner, interesting texts.</p>
Collaborative activities 3	
Sharing own ideas about the text	<p>1 mitä siinä väittämissä olis sellasia asioita mistä oot itse samaa mieltä ja jos on joku tiedeteksti ni ootko sitä mieltä et se on mahdollista ja ja tuota taas vastoin mistä et oo samaa mieltä et oot ihan eri mieltä taikka sitten et miksi epäilet että tuo asia tulevaisuudessakaan ei vois niinku toteutua.(h5) in the statements you could have things you agree on, and with scientific texts you could give reasons why it would be possible and well as for those you disagree on then explain why you doubt it couldn't happen, even in the future</p>
Students share ideas about how to deal with texts	<p>1 Ja joskus tekee nii ihan lukiolaisten kanssa sillei tietoisesti että kerätään niitä, niitä tota erilaisia öö tekstin ymmärtämisen keinoja tai sanaston harjoittamisen keinoja tai mitä tahansa (kyllä) tietoisesti vertaillaan, tekee listoja. And sometimes with high schoolers we consciously gather tools for understanding texts or vocabulary or anything really.. Students compare strategies and make lists.</p>
Students teach one another	<p>1 ja sitten niinku luettamaan ne artikkelit toisillaa ja sit pari vastaa niihi kysymyksiin ni sillanhan se mm.. nonii pointti ei oo tietenkään se että opettajan ei tarviis tehdä nii paljon töitä vaa et se ois nimenomaan tehokasta sitte oppilaille että.. että kun ite opettaa, tekee toiselle tehtävän ni siinä oppii monesti paljo enemmän ku se että vaa lukasee tekstin ja sitte ajattelee että nonii, siinä se, mennää seuraavaan kappaleeseen. And then students give their articles to read for their partner and the partner then needs to answer the questions formed by his/her partner.. The point is not that the teacher avoids extra work, but the point is that students get as much out of it as they can. When you teach and create an exercise for someone else, you learn a lot more than just by reading a text and moving on to the next one.</p>

Table 18 lists the comments related to discussions and collaborative activities. Discussions were mentioned by multiple interviewees as a good way of dealing with texts, as shown in Example 59.

There were different kinds of collaborative techniques that could be used to help students tackle texts together, one of which is discussed in more detail in Example 60.

Example 59

Että tämmöstä että siitä välillä vois olla nää tekstit vähän sellasiakin et josta vois niinku parin kanssa keskustella et jos on joku kiinnostava teksti.

Sometimes it'd be good to have texts that you could discuss with your partner, interesting texts.

Example 60

ja sitten niinku luettamaan ne artikkelit toisillaa ja sit pari vastaa niihi kysymyksiin ni sillonhan se mm.. nonii pointti ei oo tietenkään se että opettajan ei tarviis tehdä nii paljon töitä vaa et se ois nimenomaan tehokasta sitte oppilaille että..että kun ite opettaa, tekee toiselle tehtävän ni siinä oppii monesti paljo enemmän ku se että vaa lukasee tekstin ja sitte ajattelee että nonii, siinä se, mennää seuraavaan kappaleeseen.

And then students give their articles to read for their partner and the partner then needs to answer the questions formed by his/her partner. The point is not that the teacher avoids extra work, but the point is that students get as much out of it as they can. When you teach and create an exercise for someone else, you learn a lot more than just by reading a text and moving on to the next one.

In Example 59, the interviewee not only wishes to use pair discussions as a way of dealing with texts, but also considers using more interesting texts to enable a more meaningful discussion. This idea about more meaningful texts is echoed in Example 60, but it has been taken from the planning stage into action: the interviewee states that students could read, possibly also select, their own articles and then plan activities for their partner. Peer feedback and collaboration lie at the core of this example, and the reason this method is favored by the interviewee is explicitly stated: the interviewee admits the absence of direct instruction from the teacher in this kind of activity, but states that the students benefit more from first doing things independently and then teaching their peers.

Table 19. Other ideas for activities.

Other ideas	
Using additional materials	<p>1 Mut niitä samoja ideoitahan siinä tulee käytettyä oikeestaan. Sitte taas ku aattelee että aina ei tarvi opettajan tehdä sitä tehtävää vaa nimenomaan pistää oppilaat lukemaan se artikkeli ja heidät pistää keksimään sieltä omasta artikkelistaan mihi erikoistuvat ni vaikka sit sisältökysymyksiä You tend to use the same ideas really. The teacher doesn't always have to come up with the task but you can ask students to read an article and make them come up with content questions from their article</p>
Summary	<p>1 Mutta mitäs muuta siellä nyt vois olla, joku tämmönen summary-juttu, joka on aika työläs niinku tarkistaa. In addition you could have a summary, though checking it is a lot of work.</p>

True false statements	1 No niitä hullunkurisia väittämiä ei ollu, niitä sellasia true false väittämiä ei ollu. mut ne on ihan hyviä ja nopeita, etenkin jos niistä tekee vähän semmosia jännittävämpiä I've made funny true-false statements. They are quick to do and good, especially if you spice them up a little.
Underlining	1 ite oon tehny samantapasen, mutta siinä piti kertoa niinku se pääosin se idea ja sitten ku se oli aika negatiivinen ni alleviivaa ne että miten tulit siihen päätökseen että se on negatiivinen. I made a similar activity where you had to explain the main idea and the text was written from a negative point of view. And students had to underline the things that led to the conclusion.
Videos for prereading	1 Et yleensä mä ite tykkään käyttää lämmittelyä just jotai videoo siihen aiheeseen liittyen Hmm usually I like to use a related video as a warmup
Vocabulary activities	1 Me pidettiin sit semmosta niinku vocabulary relay, et me kerrotti sanoja sinne taululle ja ne pelas niinku semmosta et kuka saa nopeiten (T:joo). Et vähän sellasta kilpailutyylisiä. (T: okei?) Et se oli sellasta niinku sanastoo keskittyvää. (h2) We had a kind of a vocabulary relay, we collected words on the smartboard and the students tried to get all of them as quickly as possible A little competition. With focus on vocabulary.
Interviews related to the text	1 ”Ehkä jossai vaiheessa jos on esimerkiks semmonen teksti missä mm on henkilöitä jollain tavalla. olkoon ny dialogi tai sitte vaikka jostai nuorten elämästä kertova teksti, no ne on tietysti ehkä aika helppojaki monesti, niin öö vois käyttää vaikka sellasta että tota tehää pareittain ja toinen, toisella on niinku haastattelukysymyksiä sillälaila että vastaaja sitte asettuu sen tekstin henkilön asemaan ja vastaa sieltä. musta ne on niinku aika kivoja, että hei olet ..olet kalle, mitä vastaisit tähä mun kysymykseen ja sit sen toisen pitää jo niinku ymmärtää se tekstin keskeinen sisältö niin et osaa vastata niihi kysymyksiin ikään kuin ne olis hänen mielipiteitään..” “With a text with characters, like a dialogue or a text about young people.. Well they are usually quite easy but you could work in pairs so that the other has interview questions and then the other student needs to put him- or herself in that person's shoes and answer. I think they're nice.. Like "you are now Kalle, what would you say to this" And you need to understand the contents of the text so that you know how to answer the questions as if they were your opinions.”
Organizing activities	1 ”Joo no tietysti sitte sillälaila lauseina vastaavat että että tota lauseina tai pieninä tekstinpätkinä tiivistettynä jo se teksti ni se on ihan.. joskus käytän sillälaila tota niin niin leikkaan erillisiä lappusia vaikka että saavat sitte pulpetilla tai dokumenttikameralla laittaa oikeeseen järjestykseen. Ja sitte mikäs siinäki että jos on valmiita kuvia tossa ni miksei tietysti voi vaikka piirtämällä tiivistää sitä.. sitä kappaleen sisältöä” “Yeah of course it's possible to answer with sentences or short parts of the text so that the text is already summarized.. Sometimes I cut small pieces of paper and students need to put them (sentences or paragraphs) in the right order, at their desks or on a document camera. And why couldn't you summarize with the help of images.”
Mindmaps	1 ”Tai niinku mä jostai kohi sanoin että tuota vois jatkaa mindmappina.. Että tota, kun niil on ne padit käytössä esimerkiks meidän koulussa ni tosi moni käyttää sitä mind map tai niitä mind map sovelluksia sieltä. Ja sitte vastaavasti sillon ku kirjottaavat ni suunnittelevat niitten avulla.” “And as I said at some point that you could continue that as a mind map.. We use iPads in our school and many students use mind map.. Or the mindmap applications. And when they write, they plan with them.”

Other ideas related to reading comprehension activities are listed in Table 18. Some of the suggestions are discussed further: the ideas related to underlining, vocabulary oriented activities, interviews and organizing activities are presented in more detail, whereas using additional materials or a summary, videos as pre-reading activities, true false statements and mind maps are not. The reason for leaving the latter ones out is that they have been discussed in previous sections, or that the comments do not necessarily bring out anything new.

Example 61 is about using underlining as a way of facilitating reading comprehension:

Example 61

”Itä oon tehny samantapasen, mutta siinä piti kertoa niinku se pääosin se idea ja sitten ku se oli aika negatiivinen ni alleviivaa ne että miten tulit siihen päätökseen että se on negatiivinen.”

”I made a similar activity where you had to explain the main idea, and as the text was written from a negative point of view students had to underline the things that led them to that conclusion.”

While underlining itself is not a particularly new technique, the suggestion presented by the interviewee utilizes the technique in a way that activates the student. In addition, this type of underlining strategy is most likely beneficial to students in their later studies as well.

Example 62, on the other hand, is about using vocabulary relay as a way of helping students with text comprehension:

Example 62

”Me pidettiin sit semmosta niinku vocabulary relay, et me kerrottii sanoja sinne taululle ja ne pelas niinku semmosta et kuka saa nopeiten. Et vähän sellasta kilpailutyylisiä. Et se oli sellasta niinku sanastoo keskittyvää.”

“We had a kind of a vocabulary relay, we collected words on the smartboard and the students tried to get all of them as quickly as possible. A little competition, with focus on vocabulary.”

In Example 62 the interviewee explains how she used vocabulary training as a way to help students understand the text. It seems that incorporating game-like elements is easier for vocabulary related reading activities: however, the idea would be easily applicable to other types of activities as well.

For instance, the organizing exercise described below in Example 63 could also be executed on smartboard, as a competition-like manner.

Example 63

”Joo no tietysti sitte sillälaila lauseina vastaavat että että tota lauseina tai pieninä tekstinpätkinä tiivistettynä jo se teksti ni se on ihan.. joskus käytän sillälaila tota niin niin leikkaan erillisiä lappusia vaikka että saavat sitte pulpetilla tai dokumenttikameralla laittaa oikeeseen järjestykseen. Ja sitte mikäs siinäki että jos on valmiita kuvia tossa ni miksei tietysti voi vaikka piirtämällä tiivistää sitä.. sitä kappaleen sisältöä

“And it's possible to answer with sentences or short parts of the text so that it is already summarized.. Sometimes I cut small pieces of paper and students need to put them in the right order, at their desks or with a document camera. And why couldn't you summarize with the help of images.”

The organizing activity presented in Example 63 is quite a traditional one: putting simple sentences or parts of the text in the correct order to make sense of the gist of text. However, as mentioned previously, the activity could easily be modified by executing it on a smartboard as a competition, if the teacher so wishes.

The last example of this category is related to particular types of texts that give the reader a possibility to take the role of someone else:

Example 64

”Ehkä jossai vaiheessa jos on esimerkiks semmonen teksti missä mm on henkilöitä jollain tavalla. olkoon ny dialogi tai sitte vaikka jostai nuorten elämästä kertova teksti, no ne on tietysti ehkä aika helppojaki monesti, niin öö vois käyttää vaikka sellasta että tota tehhä pareittain ja toinen, toisella on niinku haastattelukysymyksiä sillälaila että vastaaja sitte asettuu sen tekstin henkilön asemaan ja vastaa sieltä. musta ne on niinku aika kivoja, että ”hei olet ..olet Kalle, mitä vastaisit tähä mun kysymykseen” ja sit sen toisen pitää jo niinku ymmärtää se tekstin keskeinen sisältö niin et osaa vastata niihi kysymyksiin ikään kuin ne olis hänen mielipiteitään..”

“With a text with characters, like a dialogue or a text about young people.. Well they are usually quite easy but you could work in pairs so that the other student has interview questions and then the other student needs to put him- or herself in that person's shoes and answer. I think they're nice.. Like: "You are now Kalle, what would you say to this?" And you need to understand the contents of the text so that you know how to answer the questions as if they were your opinions.”

Using role plays as a way of deepening understanding of texts is not necessarily a unique idea, especially with younger students, but as the interviewee points out, with particular text types it might work well even with more mature students. In addition to adding an element of consciously having to process what is overtly stated in the text, the students also need to go beyond the actual text. In the Example this role play is linked to texts with characters. However, it would also be possible to use the same idea for texts that are highly opinionated, for example.

5.3 Discussion

The interviewees had very different backgrounds and varying teaching experience, but this did not stand out in the interviews: regardless of teaching experience, teachers did have ideas on how to use activities and similar views on which activities were more useful than others. The activities selected represented different activity types in terms of techniques in particular, but most were post-reading activities with the focus for reading for general comprehension. However, the interviewees did not comment on the similarity of the activities that much and did not generally analyze them too carefully.

The data collected was divided into two sections: teachers' perceptions of reading activities and teachers' own ideas of modification and creation of activities. The main themes that were found in the first section were *focus on meaning, practicing and deepening understanding through speaking activities and pair work, giving some attention to reading strategies and vocabulary instruction, using L2 as much as possible, positive outlook on usefulness of teaching materials*, with some reservations regarding technical aspects and finally, the effect of *teachers' own experiences*, i.e. their preferences and their skill to select suitable activities considering the group of students and the text type. In the second section, it was apparent that *teachers were generally resourceful* when it came to modification of activities. Some of the themes mentioned in the first section were also present in the second part: Reading activities were also seen as *a chance for peer work and collaboration*, and as *a basis for discussion*. Modification and activity creation revolved mainly around speaking and pair work, but another noted theme was *integrating pre-existing reading activity types with new technologies*. To analyze the themes a bit further, the themes are compared with the theoretical possible approaches to teaching reading presented in Chapter 3. The findings are also compared with previous studies in the similar context and objectives stated in the *National Core Curriculum* (see p. 22-23).

As mentioned previously, one of the key themes that arose from the data was that teachers tended to favor activities that focused on meaning and using reading activities as a framework for training other language skills, specifically speaking. This is in line with a more *holistic approach* to teaching reading: reading per se is assumed to be quite an automatic function that serves as means to facilitate teaching other aspects of language. This may be, to an extent, explained by the emphasis given on oral skills in the *National Core Curriculum* (2004). However, as *vocabulary instruction* and *reading strategies* were also given some thought by the interviewees, it seems that the interviewees did indeed also consider form and explicit instruction that would benefit reading comprehension in particular.

As for teaching materials, textbooks and activities were, generally, viewed as useful resources and the types of activities the teachers in the data sample preferred, pair work with focus on speaking, are the ones that are quite common in textbooks (Karppinen 2013). In addition, teachers had several ideas in terms of modification of activities, for instance including new technologies to increase utility of activities, which suggests that they were capable of using the activities in a way that would better suit them, if needed. Different text types and using authentic materials were not mentioned as such; however, a few interviewees did mention wanting to use texts outside the textbooks. Thus, one might conclude that for the interviewees, textbooks do fulfill their role as content providers and

the books generally reflect quite well the needs of teachers. The reliance on textbooks has also been mentioned for instance by Luukka et al. 2008, and it seems that the results of the present study are in this sense in line with previous findings, but what could be added by this study is that the materials are used innovatively.

What Alderson et al. (2015) found was that teachers seemed to lack understanding of what teaching L2 reading entails. Even though vocabulary and reading strategy instruction were explicitly mentioned by some interviewees, similar findings could be detected in the data collected for the present study: the interviewed teachers were not often able to analyze why particular activities were good or bad from the point of view of teaching L2 reading. Assessing reading comprehension by monitoring completion of reading activities was rarely mentioned and the potential problems were mostly related to the experienced difficulty of assessing summaries: reading activities were not seen as a way of analyzing students' performance, even though they could – and quite likely should – be used as a form of continuous assessment.

When considering the objectives of the National Core Curriculum, it needs to be taken into account that the new curriculum of 2016 was not yet active at the time of the interviews. Integration of English with other subjects was not mentioned at all in the interviews, however, the possibility of independent material search was mentioned. At the time of the interviews, the key objectives provided for upper-secondary school education were that students should be able to comprehend and locate main ideas, details and the writer. In addition, students should also be able to notice whether presented information is factual or based on opinions or attitudes. Reading was also portrayed as a solitary activity, to be conducted independently. In the data sample, teachers did mention focus on meaning several times, but detail-oriented reading was generally disliked, at least in the classroom setting. Furthermore, independent silent reading was not viewed as a positive aspect, but a more social, collaborative way of working with texts was preferred by the interviewees.

6 Conclusions

Good skills in reading in a foreign language, especially in English, are expected of students in the Finnish school system. Reading, and reading in L2, are phenomena that have been researched extensively, but studies in L2 reading instruction in the context of the Finnish school system are relatively few: literacy practices of teachers and students, assessment and diagnosing L2 reading problems as well as reading activities in textbooks have been studied to an extent, but reading activities have not previously been explored from the point of view of the practitioners – the teachers.

The main objective of the study was to conduct an interview study to explore how teachers perceived reading activities in textbooks and what kinds of ideas they had on activity modification and creation. The main research questions were *how teachers perceive L2 reading activities provided in textbooks* and *if they have ideas or concrete suggestions of how to modify existing activities or produce activities of their own*. These questions were divided into subquestions to find out what kinds of reading activities teachers use and don't use and how useful they consider the activities provided in textbook in general. The second main research question was divided into subquestions related to activity modification and creation. The method used to address these questions was qualitative content analysis.

To summarize the findings of the present study, it could be stated that the activities were mostly viewed in a positive light and the interviewees seemed to appreciate the variation of techniques in activities. However, there were several factors that influenced teachers' opinions of why particular activities were better than others: focus on main ideas, using L2 and the chance to complete the activity in pairs were commonly mentioned as positive characteristics, whereas activities that elicited silent, detail-oriented reading and included writing were generally not preferred. As for activity modification and creation, it was apparent that the interviewees were more than capable of using the activities in versatile ways to better suit their needs: multiple ways of modification were present in the data. Teachers also had other suggestions on what kinds of activities could be used to teach L2 reading: even though most ideas were not necessarily entirely new ones, some innovative ways of using pre-existing techniques were provided.

What needs to be taken in to account is that the sample used in the present study was relatively small and the aim is, by no means, to provide universal answers to the research questions presented.

The views presented are those of the interviewees, but as the data was by nature qualitative and the method is thematic organization conducted by the researcher, an element of subjective evaluation and organization is unquestionably present. Another factor worth mentioning is that when providing the interviewees with activity samples, all samples were extracts of textbooks: the nature of teaching materials is also shifting and electronic materials are used more often. This may have had an influence on how teachers perceived the activities.

Despite the evidently limited nature of the study, the main aims, i.e. giving insight on how teachers perceive reading activities in textbooks and what they do to teach L2 reading, were met. What was, in my view, the most valuable finding of the study was the practical applications provided in section 5.2.2. The concrete suggestions and ideas may be valuable especially to new teachers looking for ways to facilitate L2 reading, but naturally it might also provide new ideas to more experienced English teachers as well. The study did also show correlation with previous research: the interviewed teachers used predominantly ready-made materials, were aware of current ideas on how to teach L2 reading and were very capable of using activities to achieve their own ends. However, they What this may suggest is that even though teaching materials may be criticized from several standpoints and they have a significant role as content providers, teachers use their own expertise and experience to make the most of the ready-made materials.

It needs to be noted that as the sample was small, naturally, a larger sample would yield more generalizable results, as well as it might provide more ideas and suggestions on practical applications of how to teach L2 reading. Further studies might also focus on how teachers see L2 reading as a phenomenon, for instance on how L2 and L1 reading differ from one another and whether they see themselves as teachers of L2 reading. It might also be interesting to approach reading in L2 from the point of view of learners: possible research questions might include what kinds of reading activities they find beneficial and why and what kind of texts they expect to be able to read and how this might be achieved.

In conclusion, the data showed that ready-made activities are valued, but teachers do not rely solely on them, instead they modify them and have their own ways of teaching L2 reading. The main research questions were answered, but there are still several opportunities for further studies in this field, which might help discover new ways to help students learn L2 reading more efficiently.

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APPENDIX 1 ESITIELOMAKE

Nimi:

Alleiviivaa sopivin vastaus.

1.Ikä

20-29 vuotta

30-39 vuotta

40-49 vuotta

50-59 vuotta

yli 60 vuotta

2.Opetuskokemus

Toiminut päätoimisena opettajana enemmän kuin 10 vuotta

Toiminut päätoimisena opettajana 5-10 vuotta

Toiminut päätoimisena opettajana alle 5 vuotta

Satunnaisia opetuskokemuksia

3.Mitä kirjasarjoja käytät/olet käyttänyt lukiolaisten A1-englannin opetuksessa?

4.Miten hyvin seuraavat väittämät kuvaavat ajatuksiasi luetunymmärtämisestä ja vieraan kielen opetuksesta? (1=täysin eri mieltä 2=jokseenkin eri mieltä 3=en osaa sanoa 4=jokseenkin samaa mieltä 5=täysin samaa mieltä)

1. Luetunymmärtäminen on keskeinen kielitaidon osa-alue vieraan kielen opetuksessa.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Oppilaan lukutaito omalla äidinkielellä vaikuttaa oppilaan vieraan kielen luetunymmärtämiseen.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Sanaston hallinta on keskeistä vieraskielisten tekstien ymmärtämisessä.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Hyvä suullinen kielitaito on tärkeämpi kuin kirjallinen kielitaito.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Oppilaat voivat käyttää samoja lukustrategioita sekä äidinkielistä että vieraskielisiä tekstejä lukiessaan.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Opetan oppilailleni lukemisstrategioita.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Luetunymmärtämisen harjoittelu oppitunneilla tukeutuu pääsääntöisesti oppikirjan materiaaleihin.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Oppikirjan materiaalit auttavat oppilaita ymmärtämään tekstejä.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Oppilaiden on tärkeää kyetä päättämään teksteistä asioita, joita ei sanota suoraan; ikään kuin lukemaan rivien välistä.

1 2 3 4 5