Dissertation
15 credits

Alternative Learning Materials in the Subject of English
– an investigation among pupils in secondary school

Alternativa läromedel i ämnet engelska
– en undersökning bland elever i grundskolans senare år

Christine Carlson

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Modern languages English
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Examiner: Björn Sundmark
Supervisor: Bo Lundahl
Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English through an action research project in year nine, secondary school. The aim is to investigate the participating students’ engagement and comprehension of the texts used in the project. Some of the goals of the syllabus for English presuppose that pupils should be able to use various types of materials and sources of information in their learning. The goals also require a way of working characterised by variation and the use of different types of learning materials in English.

In this particular study, data were collected continually during the process through questionnaires, observation notes and individual interviews with four pupils. A majority of the participants found working with the materials both engaging and enjoyable. Significant factors were mainly the varied nature of the texts, the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary and the texts’ relevance for the pupils. Regarding language development, the primary outcomes of the project were improvement of vocabulary as well as increased knowledge about various types of texts.

Keywords and concepts:
Learning materials, English, alternative learning materials, authentic texts, engagement, language development, education.
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1 Introduction

The syllabus for English for secondary school clearly states that pupils should “develop their ability to read different types of texts for pleasure and to obtain information and knowledge” and “have the ability to understand and to assimilate texts of various shapes and degrees of difficulty” (www.skolverket.se).

Several studies performed recently reveal that textbooks and printed learning materials are the dominant teaching aids in schools in Sweden. The textbook has been given such a substantial function in teaching since it is expected to realize the goals of the curriculum. In addition, research has shown that textbooks provide both teachers and students with a sense of coherence, entirety and security in teaching. Nevertheless, the role that printed learning materials play in education varies depending on the teacher and the subject matter (Farrell, 2003: 2553). Some researchers are against the use of materials intended for language teaching and declare that textbooks “do not prepare [learners] for the reality of language use”, whereas more authentic texts give learners exposure to the more typical usage of the language (Tomlinson, in Carter and Nunan, 2001: 68). Research carried out in wealthy nations demonstrates that, although there are now a number of alternative learning materials available, the textbook is still relied upon to a great extent and it also functions as the core teaching resource among a vast majority of teachers around the world (Farrell, 2003: 2553).

During my teaching practice I have encountered teachers who use English textbooks to a large extent in their teaching as well as those who try to implement alternative learning materials in the classroom. In the beginning of my education I perceived textbooks as something familiar, secure and time saving, and further on I have come to see them as a secure foundation on which I can base additional ideas and exercises. Gradually, by combining textbook material and other types of learning materials, I have begun to use more authentic texts in my lessons in order to achieve variety in materials. Apart from the experience I have gained from my teaching practice, the topic of using various types of learning materials has been highlighted several times during my education. For that reason I find it both interesting and relevant to investigate the matter further.
Thus, in this dissertation, I will answer three essential questions that are closely connected to this matter.

- How did the students engage with the texts used in an action research project in the subject of English?
- To what extent were the students able to comprehend the texts used in the action research project?
- To what extent did the students find these texts useful for their language development?

The concepts “engage” (engagement), “comprehend” (comprehension) and “useful” (usefulness) stated above are not precise constructs. Due to this, I am aware of the fact that they are difficult to use. Yet in my action research, the terms signify some particular aspects to which I decided to pay attention during my observations. Engagement in the materials involves actions such as poor/high concentration, activity/passivity, interest/indifference and the display of negative/positive comments. The concept of comprehension implies to what extent the pupils have the ability to do the tasks and discuss the texts, as well as to what extent they need to have texts explained, need to ask questions and need to use a dictionary. The final term, to what extent the texts are useful for the pupils’ language development, is obviously difficult to fully define. However, in this dissertation it involves what the pupils learn from using alternative texts as well as what the positive outcomes of the project are in regard to the pupils’ language development.

1.1 Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English through an action research project in year nine, secondary school. The aim is to investigate the participating students’ engagement and comprehension of the texts used in the project.

During three weeks of my final teaching practice, I did action research when I introduced alternative learning materials in two different groups. In addition to my action
research, I carried out interviews with pupils to explore whether they found alternative learning materials useful and possible to comprehend.

1.2 Definitions

Some significant concepts need clarifying: learning materials, alternative learning materials and textbook.

In the Swedish National Encyclopedia online, the term learning materials is defined as a “pedagogical aid in teaching, earlier more or less synonymous to textbook”. In addition, it is stated that “the concept of learning materials has increasingly broadened, and mainly everything can be used as a foundation for teaching”. Yet the author argues that it is “reasonable to delimit the term to the type of materials produced and intended for teaching” (my translation, www.ne.se).

According to a report carried out by The National Agency for Education in Sweden, there is no official definition of the term learning materials. It is solely stated in the curriculum from 1980, Lpo 80, that learning materials are the type of materials that “teachers and pupils decide on using to attain stated goals”. This type of explanation does not appear in our present curriculum, Lpo 94. Neither are there any definitions of the term in the other policy documents (Skolverket, 2006).

Ingela Korsell (2007: 26) defines learning materials as “objects shaped by the human being that are used in teaching to facilitate learning”, and she states that learning materials can be divided up into primary and secondary pedagogical materials. The former were produced to be used in teaching whereas the latter were not intended for teaching but can nevertheless be used in that type of context.

Since this dissertation examines the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English, it is essential to provide the reader with a clarification of the concept. I am aware that the concept is broad and can include a great variety of materials of all shapes. However, in this context alternative learning materials refer to types of textual material that were not originally intended for teaching, but have a suitable degree of difficulty to be used in a classroom setting. The materials used in this particular research could probably be referred to as authentic texts in a sense, but since the term authentic is
rather problematic to define I will solely use the terms alternative learning materials or alternative texts when discussing the materials. Yet, I find it difficult to exclude the term authentic totally, since the literature available on the topic of authentic materials is fairly extensive and includes aspects that can be linked to this dissertation.

In the *Encyclopaedia of Education* (2003: 2553), a *textbook* is defined as a “printed and bound artefact with which one was provided […] for each year and course of study. It contained […] the core content and all sorts of exercises and study questions at the end of sections or chapters”. In addition, it is stated that textbooks are “commissioned and written by authors or firms who are hired to write to specifications set by whatever authorities develop the standard curriculum for a system of schools”.

In recent years, the borderline between textbooks and other types of learning materials has become increasingly blurred. Owing to the advancement of a wealth of technology, a variety of learning materials has found its way into classrooms, and this has often made it difficult to differentiate between textbooks and other forms of learning materials (Farrell, 2003: 2553).
2 Literature review

This section introduces literature on learning materials and other important concepts connected to learning materials. To begin with, it presents an historical background to the use of learning materials in educational settings. It also introduces diverse views concerning the use of different learning materials in the language classroom. In addition, this section shows how alternative learning materials relate to the Swedish steering documents for school.

2.1 Learning materials in educational settings

The use of learning materials in teaching was expanded in Sweden as a result of industrialisation in the nineteenth century. At this time, the nature and use of textbooks was highly dependent on timetables and syllabuses. After the Second World War, teachers often created learning materials in collaboration with colleagues and more and more packages of learning materials were produced as well (Korsell, 2007: 17). In connection with the changes in the curriculum taking place in the 1960s, it was difficult to carry on evaluating the quality and pedagogical features in textbooks. As a consequence, the regulations regarding what learning materials could be utilized in schools began to loosen up, and at this time the old concept of textbook was replaced by the broader term learning materials (Skolverket, Rapport 285, 2006: 8).

Between 1970 and 1980, some major changes took place in education, including more learner involvement as well as the use of newspapers, journals and pictures in the classroom. Today, the concept of learning materials has broadened even further, as a result of the entry of modern technology such as the Internet (Korsell, 2007: 17).

In former days, the Swedish government attempted to control the use of learning materials in schools and this was done through different contributions in the area of learning materials. Today the public steering documents do not specify what learning materials ought to be utilized by teachers and pupils. Thus, today’s decentralised school system emphasizes the professional responsibility of the teacher and the liberty of independently choosing learning materials and ways of working (Skolverket, 2006: 11).
2.2 Studies published by the National Agency for Education

The National Agency for Education in Sweden has carried out research on learning materials in education titled *Läromedlens roll i undervisningen* (2006). In this investigation, the use of learning materials in three subject areas is presented, and the study was conducted through a national survey intended for teachers in grade five and nine teaching Art, Social Science or English. In addition, interviews with teachers in year three, five and nine teaching the subjects above were carried out (Skolverket, 2006: 28 ff.). Basically all teachers participating in the survey stressed the importance of using a variety of learning materials, since “different learning materials have different purposes and together they contribute in e.g. giving pupils essential knowledge of facts, current, deepened or concretized information, an interest in the topic, variation and different perspectives” (Ibid: 130).

According to the report, the use of textbooks is particularly predominant in the subject of English. Three quarters of the teachers of English interviewed in the report stated that they use textbooks on a daily basis. Thus, the textbook has an exceptional position among learning materials in the subject of English and it often functions as a basis in teaching. However, the report reveals that teachers of English also use a number of other types of learning materials in their teaching more or less frequently, such as newspapers, fiction, television programs and the Internet (Ibid: 91).

Several of the English teachers participating in the survey considered textbooks to be the most important learning material. They claimed that textbooks guarantee that the teaching is consistent with the aims of the curriculum and the syllabuses. Additional reasons for the use of textbooks revealed in the interviews are that is it comfortable since it does not require a great amount of planning and preparation, and that the books contain exercises for both high achieving pupils as well as weaker pupils. Some teachers also expressed that there are certain disadvantages in using textbooks. On the one hand they can be perceived as rather boring and monotonous, since there is a continuous repetition of certain patterns, and some teachers also stated that the textbooks are fairly slanted and not particularly inspiring for pupils or teachers. In conclusion, the report reveals that many teachers feel that the textbook is an important basis in teaching, and that it is important to
use a mixture of learning materials to achieve variation and engagement, as well as to help pupils attain the goals of the curriculum (Ibid: 72-74).

2.3 Research on authentic materials in language teaching

According to Guariento & Morley (2001: 347), a general attitude in language teaching at present is that the use of authentic materials in the classroom enhances the process of learning. Thus, the advantage of applying such materials rather than purpose-written materials is generally accepted by the teaching community, and benefits can be based upon aspects such as the high level of cultural and linguistic content in authentic texts, the possibility to choose materials that are relevant and suitable for certain groups of learners, as well as “the motivational aspect of learning from authentic rather than didactic material” (Mishan, 2004: 219).

Kramsch (1993) believes that pupils need to be exposed to as many authentic texts, oral and written, as possible; such materials will result in an increased understanding of both the target language and the culture where the language is spoken. If the learner faces more authentic communication, he or she will get a better understanding of speaking customs and lifestyles in the country where the target language is spoken (1993: 185).

Research that resembles my own dissertation was performed by Peacock (1997), when he observed and performed interviews with pupils who studied English as a foreign language at beginners’ level using both learning materials and authentic materials. The study took place during a seven-week period with twenty lessons, and the aim was to examine whether authentic materials increase learner motivation. Similar to me, Peacock defines motivation as interest, endurance, activity, attention and enjoyment. The authentic materials in Peacock’s study consisted of poems, TV programs, newspaper articles, pop music and commercials, and the study revealed that the motivation possible to observe was notably higher when using authentic materials. Yet, the pupils themselves expressed that their motivation increased at the earliest during the twelve latter lessons out of twenty lessons altogether (Peacock, 1997: 150).

The notion that authentic materials would increase pupils’ motivation is further shared by Guariento and Morley (2001: 347), who assert that the use of authentic materials is a
way to maintain or even increase learners’ motivation to learn the target language. In addition, they state that authentic materials give the learners a sense of the “real” language, that is, how the target language is used by its native speakers.

An additional scholar advocating the use of authentic texts before adapted texts is Gilmore, who highlights the importance of preparing students for the language they will encounter in “real life”. He states that:

If our goal in the classroom is to prepare learners for independent language use, then surely we are obliged at some stage to present them with realistic models of discourse, messy and unpredictable as it is (Gilmore, 2004: 367).

Despite the positive attitudes to authentic materials that appear to govern the linguistic arena, there are also researchers who are critical towards an altogether positive attitude to authentic materials. Widdowson states that an uncritical attitude can result in unwanted consequences, and that the advantages of using materials intended for teaching should not be disregarded. In addition, he proclaims the danger of uncritically accepting the need of providing learners with authentic materials, since it might result in the teacher avoiding his or her pedagogical responsibility (Widdowson, 1979, in Kramsch, 1993: 179). Language learning tasks that pupils encounter in their textbooks and which can be perceived as artificial do not necessarily have to be something bad. Widdowson (1998) highlights this issue and states that these tasks are specially designed for teaching, and owing to this “they do not have to replicate or even stimulate what goes on in normal uses of language”. An additional disadvantage of using authentic texts is that some peripheral information can be distracting and might confuse pupils, and this can detain language acquisition (Widdowson, 1998: 714, in Gilmore, 2004: 363).

2.4 The National Curriculum and Syllabuses for English

As mentioned above, the steering documents for the Swedish school system do not specify what learning materials to be used in school, neither are there any instructions on how teachers are to teach or what lessons should contain. However, the documents contain guidelines and specific goals, and these goals presuppose that pupils should be able to use
various types of materials and sources of information in their learning. The goals also require a way of working characterised by variation and the use of different types of learning materials in English.

When examining the syllabus for English in secondary school, it is clearly stated that pupils should “develop their ability to read different types of texts for pleasure and to obtain information and knowledge”. Additionally, regarding “goals that pupils should have attained by the end of the ninth year in school”, pupils should “be able to read and assimilate the contents of relatively simple literature and other narratives, descriptions and texts putting forward argument in subjects they are familiar with”. Further on in the syllabus, underneath the headline “assessment in the subject of English”, it is stated that pupils should have the ability “to understand and to assimilate texts of various shapes and degrees of difficulty”. When assessing pupils’ reading ability, one should also explore “to what extent pupils, with the help of different strategies, can adapt their reading to the nature and purpose of the text (www.skolverket.se).

To conclude this section, I would also like to emphasize the importance of engagement and motivation, since these aspects are the main focus of this dissertation:

The teaching shall have a meaningful and interesting content as starting-point. Pupils develop their language proficiency by listening to and reading about issues that concern them and which are engaging, and by using the language to express their own thoughts in speaking and writing (Kursplaner för grundskolan, 1994: 16f.).
3 Method

This dissertation has two dimensions. To begin with, action research was carried out in year nine, secondary school, during a three-week period when alternative learning materials were used instead of the existing textbooks and exercise books. Secondly, data were gathered from interviews with pupils participating in the action research project in regard to the topic of alternative learning materials. The lessons and the additional evaluation function as the centre of this dissertation. In the following section I will include a detailed description of the lessons, since this research could not have been carried out without them.

3.1 Selection

This investigation was conducted at a secondary school located outside a large city in the south of Sweden. I found it appropriate to perform my action research at this school since I have several contacts at the school and also because I am familiar with several of the pupils. This is due to the fact that I have been teaching at this school during my teaching practice. According to Hatch (2002: 99), this method of letting people who are easy to access participate in a research study is referred to as convenience sampling. I addition, I found it suitable to carry out my research during my final teaching practice.

In the selection of a suitable grade in which to perform my teaching, I had decided beforehand that I wanted to carry out my action research in year nine. Due to the fact that the teaching of English in the school is divided between two teachers in several of the teams of teachers, and that every age group therefore consists of approximately 13-17 pupils, I decided to conduct my lessons and investigations in two groups. These groups come from two different classes and consist of 29 pupils altogether. As an introduction to the lesson series, I distributed questionnaires to be answered by the pupils to explore their familiarity with alternative learning materials before we started working with the new texts. When the lessons were carried out, I performed data collection through evaluation questionnaires.

Apart from questionnaires and observation notes connected to the action research, this dissertation is based on interviews with pupils. In the sampling process of pupils for
additional interviews, my intention was to select interviewees with regard to the answers and comments given in their questionnaires. My belief was that pupils who expressed more comprehensive opinions and thoughts regarding this matter were most likely to be talkative during the interviews. According to Kent Adelmann, questionnaires can function as a screening method to gain a qualitative selection of informants (2008-02-04). Regarding the interviews, my ambition was to make it possible for the students to express their own views on alternative learning materials.

3.2 The lessons and the materials

During the last three weeks of my final teaching practice, starting at the end of February, alternative learning materials were used in the subject of English in two groups in year nine. I was responsible for the planning of the lessons, for collecting suitable materials to be used in the classroom and the actual teaching. My supervisor was present during most of the lessons and had the role of observer. During this three-week period I had ten lessons at my disposal, five lessons in each of the two groups, each lesson being 60 minutes long. The first three lessons had the same content and the same materials were used in both groups, but the two final lessons were designed in different ways in the groups. The five lessons had the following content:

Table 1: Description of the lessons and the materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Content/Activities</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group work – music vs. Mp3</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Read an article together, discuss and look up unfamiliar vocabulary, discuss content, compile own presentations of the article. Every member of the group writes down the essential parts of the article in connection with the discussions.</td>
<td>Collaboration and working together as a group, learning new vocabulary, making a compilation of a text in your own words.</td>
<td>Articles: Nelly Furtado and Mp3 music¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work – music vs. Mp3</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Same as above + present the main points of your article to a friend who has read another article.</td>
<td>Same as above + give oral presentation, speak as freely as possible.</td>
<td>Articles: Nelly Furtado and Mp3 music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### News articles – Unusual incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: Music</th>
<th>Group 2: Story writing</th>
<th>Listening comprehension, vocabulary/synonyms, oral discussions</th>
<th>News articles: Best party ever, Pilot killed as plane crashes into house, Fast food fingertip mystery²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Listen to three short news articles being read out aloud, answer questions about the content and working with exercises connected to the news articles.</td>
<td>[---]</td>
<td>[---]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Group 1: Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: Music</th>
<th>Group 2: Story writing</th>
<th>1. 60 minutes 2. 45 minutes</th>
<th>1. Listen to the song and do various exercises connected to the lyric while the song is playing, discuss the text, the exercises and certain issues in class. 2. Listen to an extract of a novel and discuss the characters and the setting in class, let the pupils write their own individual ending to the story from given instructions.</th>
<th>1. Listening comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, oral discussions 2. Discuss content, characters and setting, improve writing ability with free writing, use your imagination.</th>
<th>1. Music and music lyric: <em>Ironic</em> by Alanis Morisette 2. Extract from the novel <em>Zodiac</em> by Robert Graysmith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Group 2: Story writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: Music</th>
<th>Group 2: Story writing</th>
<th>1. 60 minutes 2. 60 minutes</th>
<th>1. Listen to the song and do various exercises connected to the lyric both while the song is playing and afterwards, discuss the exercises and the texts in class. 2. Continue to write the ending to the story.</th>
<th>1. Listening comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, oral discussions. 2. Improve writing ability with free writing, use your imagination.</th>
<th>1: Music and music lyric: <em>Angels</em> by Robbie Williams, article about Robbie Williams. 2: Extract from the novel <em>Zodiac</em> by Robert Graysmith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 3.3 Action research

According to Costello (2003: 5), *action research* has a number of definitions and explanations, and from these different varieties, the author suggests his own definition, namely that:

> [Action research] has a practical, problem-solving emphasis, it is carried out by individuals, professionals and educators, it involves research, systematic, critical reflection and action. [---] Action is undertaken to understand, evaluate and change. Research involves gathering and interpreting data, often on an aspect of teaching and learning.

In addition to this explanation, I would like to demonstrate more specifically what action research means in this context. Action research is closely related to the concept *teaching attempt*, where the latter implies carrying out a project and evaluating the result. Action research, on the other hand, implies that the researcher has an aim of changing something

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and that the researcher herself, as well as the people being explored, participate. Another significant difference is that the test subjects (the pupils) of the action research are fully involved in the implementation of the attempt (Johansson & Svedner, 2006: 74).

In this dissertation, I have used alternative learning materials in the subject of English to explore how pupils engaged with texts other than the textbook, to what extent they were able to comprehend the texts, and finally whether they found these texts useful for their language development. During the three-week period when the lessons were carried out, I served both as a teacher and as a researcher. Considering the nature of my study, I being responsible for the realisation of the teaching and the observations, and also because I brought in other materials into the classroom instead of the more traditional textbook, I feel that my study clearly fits into the concept of action research.

Something that needs to be emphasized is that the choice of learning materials is only one factor among many. Teachers in Sweden have the right to choose materials and how to teach, but their choices must be connected to a number of different factors, such as students’ abilities, expectations, the task requirements, the established ways of working and the social atmosphere of the classroom. In my action research, I am not interested in the area of materials evaluation as such, nor am I trying to show that alternative learning materials are in any way superior to textbooks. The main reason for my interest in bringing in alternative texts in the subject of English is rather that I want to introduce the pupils to texts which I assume will enhance their interest and engagement. Additional reasons are that I find it interesting to bring in texts with a certain higher level of difficulty to find out how they are received by the pupils, and also to explore possible benefits as well as disadvantages in using this type of material in the English language classroom.

Stensmo (2002: 53-56) describes action research as a “cyclical process” which undergoes four different phases: planning, action, observation and reflection, and this type of research can go on over a long period of time. In the planning process, you often feel that you would like to abandon old and well-tried routines and instead try out something new. In addition, you formulate goals and strategies for your project, e.g. what you want to achieve and how you will go about achieving these goals. In the action phase you put the plan of action that was constructed during the planning phase into practise. A negative aspect of changing action strategies and a familiar way of working is that it can be a painful
process since you leave something safe for something new and untested. The third phase, observing, is something that is in progress during the whole action phase. Observations can have either a structured nature including schemes of observation, be unstructured and consist of running notes, or they can be recorded on either video tape or tape recorder. The fourth and final phase is based on reflection and involves evaluating your results. When you reflect, you examine and assess the process as well as the result and put your documentation in relation to your initial plan of action (Stensmo, 2002: 53-56).

3.4 Data collection

For this dissertation, three different methods for data collection were used: questionnaires, observation notes from the action research project and interviews. As an introduction to the lesson series, the pupils in the two groups answered a questionnaire during approximately thirty minutes of their first lesson. The questionnaire contained aspects such as the pupils’ familiarity with English outside of the school environment and their views regarding the use of alternative learning materials in the subject of English (see appendix 1).

During my teaching, I carried out continuous note taking throughout all of the ten lessons. To be able to perform the lessons and to manage to register as many relevant incidents as possible, my supervisor noted down her observations as well. When a certain lesson was completed, I typed out a more detailed description of the lesson on the computer where I compared both of our sketches. I soon realized that it would be difficult for me to both teach the lesson and to succeed in registering incidents at the same time. For that reason, I made the decision of letting my supervisor function as my assistant to a certain extent.

Two weeks after the final week at the school, I returned to the school to perform an evaluation of the three week period. In this questionnaire, the pupils were asked e.g. to define what they had learnt during the lessons and how they perceived the different elements (see appendix 2). The data collected from my action research, that is, the pre-questionnaire, the observation notes and the evaluation questionnaire, will function as the centre of the dissertation.

The interviews with the pupils were carried out individually and had a semi-structured
character, e.g. the questions I had prepared for the interviews were guiding questions. Hatch refers to these as “questions […] prepared in anticipation of the interview and […] designed to guide the conversation” (2006: 101). Depending on the answers given by the informants and the aspects being highlighted during the interviews, other interesting questions in regard to the research might arise from the guiding questions. The interviews with the pupils consisted of three different typologies, namely: differences between the use of textbooks and alternative learning materials, pupils’ engagement and language learning, and positive versus negative aspects.

The four interviews were carried out approximately three weeks after the action research project and took place in a quiet group room located at the school. Each interview lasted for thirty to forty minutes and was recorded on tape and later transcribed by myself.

Regarding the action research mentioned above, I served both as a teacher and a researcher during the lessons. The intention was to take notes during the lessons and try to register as much as possible, and this aim was possible to attain owing to the collaboration between me and my supervisor. The observation schedule attached below illustrates how I tried to capture what happened during the project phase and what was my specific focus, namely engagement and comprehension.

**Table 2: Observation schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement in the materials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• indifference-interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• passive-active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• poor-high concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• negative-positive comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to comprehend the materials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to do the tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to discuss the texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to have texts explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to use a dictionary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Procedure

The questionnaires were handed out to the pupils on two separate occasions, as an introduction to the three-week period of my teaching and as an evaluation approximately two weeks after the teaching period. I was alone responsible for this administration. Regarding the questionnaire, the pupils were asked to write their names on it but they could also choose to be anonymous.

Before I could carry out any interviews, a certain notification was given to the pupils participating in the lesson, and this sheet of paper had to be brought home and signed by a parent before their child could be interviewed. From the signed agreements as well as the answers given in the evaluation questionnaires, I selected four pupils to interview. As mentioned above, I wanted to attain a variety in informants regarding their views on alternative learning materials and therefore I selected two pupils who expressed clearly positive attitudes towards the materials, one pupil who was fairly neutral as well as one pupil who expressed a more negative view on the materials. In addition, this group of informants had various skills in the English language, two being high achievers and two being average learners, as well as a balance in gender with two female pupils and two male pupils. The informants have all been given new names in this dissertation, and will be referred to as Alice, Karin, Niklas and Erik.

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Johansson & Svedner (2006), a dissertation must be based upon respect for the people who participate, and this implies certain aspects to be accounted for. Firstly, the participants must be informed about the purpose of the dissertation and also give their own approval of involvement. They should also be informed that they can leave at any time during the interviews and ask any questions regarding the investigation. In addition, it is essential to stress the importance of anonymity in this dissertation. Before I carried out my interviews, I informed the pupils as well as their parents that no information mentioned in my final text could reveal the informants’ identities.
3.7 Trustworthiness

Regarding sampling strategies, i.e. how to select appropriate informants, Hatch (2002) states that *convenience sampling* is the most common of all the strategies but also the least desirable. In addition, a close relationship between the researcher and the informants could affect the outcome. For this dissertation, I decided to carry out my action research as well as the subsequent interviews at the secondary school where I did my teaching practice. This was done mainly because I found it suitable to perform the research as part of my ongoing teaching practice. Since the relationship between me and the pupils who participated in my research is rather close, this can affect the trustworthiness of this dissertation. Concerning the selection of appropriate pupils to interview, my intention was to achieve what Hatch refers to as “maximum variation samples”, which implies “individuals with different perspectives on the same phenomenon (Hatch, 2002: 98). This selection was done with the preceding questionnaire as a starting point, and I also tried to achieve a balance in gender.

In addition, there is another aspect that needs to be accounted for regarding the trustworthiness of this study. Since the dissertation is based upon my action research, where I introduced texts other than the regular textbook in the subject of English, this is what my informants relate their answers to. For that reason, the materials used in the classroom as well as the design of the lessons might have influenced the pupils’ views on the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English. That is, if the pupils did not consider the materials used as interesting or rewarding, it is possible that the views expressed in the questionnaires and during the interviews regarding alternative learning materials reflect this opinion.
4 Results of the action research

The aim of this dissertation has been to investigate the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English through an action research project carried out at a secondary school. The data consist of observation notes from the action research, questionnaires and interviews. In this section, the results from the action research, e.g. observations as well as interviews and questionnaires, are presented.

Apart from the data gathered during the lessons, I carried out questionnaires among the pupils as part of the action research; a pre-questionnaire as an introduction to the three-week period and an evaluation questionnaire. The latter was conducted two weeks after the action research project was finalized and answered by 27 pupils, whereas the pre-questionnaire was answered by 26 pupils. To begin with, I will present the results from the pre-questionnaire. For a complete overview of the questionnaire, see appendix 1.

4.1 Pre-questionnaire

Regarding the four different aspects of the English language: reading, writing, speaking and listening, a majority of the pupils stated that they find reading, speaking and listening very easy (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Del</th>
<th>Mkt. lätt</th>
<th>Lätt</th>
<th>Svårt</th>
<th>Mkt. svårt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Läsa</td>
<td>61 % (16)</td>
<td>31 % (8)</td>
<td>8 % (2)</td>
<td>4 % (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skriva</td>
<td>11 % (3)</td>
<td>62 % (16)</td>
<td>23 % (6)</td>
<td>4 % (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tala</td>
<td>50 % (13)</td>
<td>42 % (11)</td>
<td>8 % (2)</td>
<td>4 % (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyssna</td>
<td>46 % (12)</td>
<td>42 % (11)</td>
<td>8 % (2)</td>
<td>4 % (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great majority of the informants, 92 % or 24 pupils, stated further that they perceive reading and speaking as either very easy or easy. When it comes to writing, a majority of the pupils (62 %) were of the opinion that this aspect of English is easy, but there were also a number of pupils (27 %) who stated that writing is difficult, alternatively very difficult. Regarding the question what characteristics are most important when reading and working
with a text, certain aspects were noticeable. A majority of the pupils, 81 %, stated “interesting” as the most essential characteristic, whereas approximately 1/3 of the pupils were of the opinion that “amusing”, “exciting” and “instructive” are the most important features. A vast majority of the informants, 85 % perceived “modern” as the least important characteristic of a text (see table 2).

Table 2: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”När du ska läsa/arbeta med en text på engelska, vilka egenskaper hos texten tycker du då är viktigast?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egenskap</th>
<th>Viktigast (1-2)</th>
<th>Medel (3-5)</th>
<th>Minst viktigt (6-8)</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intressant</td>
<td>81 % (21)</td>
<td>19 % (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolig</td>
<td>36 % (9)</td>
<td>40 % (10)</td>
<td>24 % (6)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spännande</td>
<td>29 % (7)</td>
<td>54 % (13)</td>
<td>17 % (4)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lärorik</td>
<td>27 % (7)</td>
<td>54 % (14)</td>
<td>19 % (5)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagom lång</td>
<td>22 % (5)</td>
<td>48 % (11)</td>
<td>30 % (7)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lättläst</td>
<td>9 % (2)</td>
<td>52 % (12)</td>
<td>39 % (9)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 % (4)</td>
<td>85 % (22)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When zeroing in on the opportunities for the pupils to encounter English in their leisure time, a majority of the informants stated that they frequently meet the language through media such as music, movies, TV-programme and the Internet. In comparison to other media, the opportunities to encounter English through news-papers/news articles or books were limited, with twelve and eleven informants stating that they read these types of texts either sometimes or seldom (see table 3).

Table 3: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”På vilket sätt och hur ofta möter du engelska på din fritid/hemma?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Ofta</th>
<th>Ibland</th>
<th>Sällan</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyssnar på musik på engelska</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ser på engelska/amerikanska filmer</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ser på engelska/amerikanska TV-program</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besöker engelska websidor på Internet</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelar data-/TV-spel med engelskt tal/text</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat/MSN på Internet</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Läser engelska tidningar, artiklar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Läser engelska böcker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andra sätt</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25
Regarding the pupils’ experience in reading and working with texts other than the textbook in the subject of English, there was a wide range in answers. A majority of pupils (57%) stated that they have encountered other texts on a few occasions. 8% of the informants were of the opinion that they have never worked with texts other than the textbook, whereas the same amount of pupils stated that they had done so on many occasions. Approximately ¼ of the pupils stated that they have encountered other texts on few occasions (see table 4).

Table 4: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”Har du i ämnet engelska i skolan läst och arbetat med andra typer av texter eller övningar än de som finns i din engelska lärobok?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Answers in percentage</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vid många tillfällen</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vid ett par tillfällen</td>
<td>57 %</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vid få tillfällen</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldrig</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owing to the fact that 24 pupils (92%) stated that they have encountered texts other than the textbook in English, it is interesting to see what types of texts and materials these pupils have come across. The texts which the pupils have met mostly consist of books and music lyrics. 79% of the pupils stated that they read books sometimes or seldom, and 75% stated that they have worked with lyrics either often, sometimes or seldom. Yet, music lyrics and films/TV-programme are the only texts which the informants stated they have encountered often (see table 5).

Table 5: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”Vilka andra texter och material än läroboken har du läst och/eller arbetat med?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Ofta</th>
<th>Ibländ</th>
<th>Sällan</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musiktexter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75 % (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmer, TV-program</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67 % (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Böcker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>79 %</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidningar, artiklar</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dataprogram</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenciler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faktatexter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the final question of the pre-questionnaire, whether the pupils find it important to read and work with other materials than the textbook in the subject of English, a vast majority of the pupils were positive. A little more than half of the informants stated that working with other materials is important, whereas approximately 1/3 of the pupils were of the opinion that it is very important. 11 % or three pupils stated that alternative materials are not that important (see table 6).

Table 6: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”Tycker du det är viktigt att läsa och arbeta med annat material än läroboken i ämnet engelska?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Answers in percentage</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mycket viktigt</td>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktigt</td>
<td>54 %</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inte så viktigt</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inte alls viktigt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, some of the pupils supplemented their answers with comments such as “If you solely read the texts in the text book you adapt yourself to texts that are designed to be rather easy, but if you vary the materials you get a glimpse of the real world” and “To be able to develop you skills in English, you need to do other things than just read and do exercises in the textbook”.

4.2 Observations

As mentioned in the method section above, I tried to capture what happened during the project phase in the two groups by noting down everything that could be connected to the students’ engagement and comprehension. In this section, I will present and discuss essential aspects that caught my attention during the lessons. The two groups will be referred to as group A and group B.

4.2.1 Engagement in the materials

The pupils’ engagement in the materials was in general good, but certain differences among the various lessons could be discerned. To begin with, regarding the music and lyrics in
group B, all pupils initially uttered positive comments when being introduced to the two
different songs and lyrics, *Ironic* by Alanis Morisette and *Angels* by Robbie Williams.
When the songs were playing, the pupils listened carefully and their interest was clearly
visible, both through their positive comments and by the fact that many of them were
humming along with the songs. The two lessons had the songs as starting-points and each
song had a compendium belonging to it, with various exercises connected to the song. All
pupils demonstrated a clear willingness to do the exercises in the compendiums and they
worked either individually or in pairs. When a certain exercise was finalized we discussed
and corrected it together in class, and during these discussions the pupils were very
talkative and gave proof of great interest in the task. There was a continuous dialogue
between me and the group, and many of the pupils wanted to express themselves in class.
It was almost as if the pupils were competing with one another, but the atmosphere in the
classroom was nevertheless friendly and positive.

Regarding the two initial lessons, when two articles were handed out in two smaller
groups, I soon realised that engagement and interest in the task and the materials differed
between the smaller groups in group A. While one group was in particular high spirits and
demonstrated a sense of fellowship, the other group contained one or two negative students
that influenced the whole group. Some of the pupils in this group lost their interest and
forgot about the task on several occasions, and I frequently had to remind them to focus on
the text and the task. In the other group, the members often silenced one other when
discussions turned too loud-voiced. Yet, they lost their attention now and then as well and
the girls in particular often had to steer the group back on the right course if they lost their
focus. Regarding group B, I noticed two clear group leaders in both of the two smaller
groups. In one of the groups the atmosphere was rather chatty, when a male pupil suddenly
took responsibility for the task by presenting explanations to certain words and leading the
rest of the group forward. A similar situation was visible in the other group as well, when a
female pupil took the lead and put forward her ideas and suggestions in a very pedagogical
way to the rest of the group.

When it comes to the story-writing task carried out in group A, some aspects are
necessary to highlight. To begin with, the initial lesson started later than usual on account
of the behaviour of a particular pupil, so the students did not have that much time to work
with the writing task in the first lesson. However, when the pupils were asked to come up with their own ending to a given extract and began writing, there were noticeable differences among the students regarding concentration and interest in the task. Some pupils in the group initially had a clear focus on the task and placed themselves individually to come up with writing ideas. Two or three pupils had noticeable difficulties in getting going, and therefore I tried to discuss the text and possible conclusions with them. Despite of this, some of the students occasionally uttered negative comments and pointed out to me that they did not have any ideas whatsoever, nor the energy or motivation to do this task. In addition, these particular pupils constantly discussed issues other than the writing task and demonstrated an unwillingness to sit and write individually. In the following lesson on the same theme, I initially noticed a somewhat higher level of motivation among the pupils and almost the whole group seemed to put more energy and concentration into the task. Yet, the pupils who previously had difficulties focusing on the task gradually started discussing other matters and uttering negative comments regarding the task. Afterwards, I can conclude that, in this particular writing task, there were large and noticeable differences in motivation and interest as well as in activity among the pupils in this group.

4.2.2 Ability to comprehend the materials

Concerning the students’ comprehension of the materials, I first would like to focus on the materials and the task connected to the group work. Among the four different groups, the ability to do the task was in general very high. In the initial part of the first lesson, all pupils started to read the texts together in their groups without any noticeable difficulties. In group B, one of the smaller groups needed more time than the other group to finish their reading, and this can possibly be explained by the fact that the group demonstrated carefulness concerning pronouncing some words correctly. As mentioned in the section above, a female pupil took the role of group leader and I also noticed that she helped her peers when they came across problematic issues. This was also the case in the other group, when a male pupil had the role of group leader and frequently explained words. Yet, the pupils in this group were initially somewhat uncertain about the task and asked me several questions.

Regarding the students’ ability to discuss the articles, all groups had a tendency to use Swedish in their conversations to a great extent unless they were reminded to use English.
This was particularly the case during the discussions within the larger groups, and especially visible in one of the two groups. On account of this, I frequently had to highlight the importance of using the target language instead of Swedish. On the other hand, the ability among the pupils to use English in the pair discussions was noticeably higher. A number of pupils, both in group A and B, had lively discussions and they seemed to make an effort to speak English as freely and correctly as possibly. Some discussions were even so intense that I had to ask the pupils to be quiet at the end of the lesson.

In general, the students’ ability to discuss texts was very high when I introduced the pupils to news articles. As mentioned in the method section, I initially let the pupils listen to three articles being read out aloud. When the pupils had listened to one story, they were asked to answer questions regarding the content of these texts, and later to work with various exercises connected to each article. When the pupils had finished a certain exercise, my aim was to create opportunities for the pupils to discuss certain aspects from the texts in class, and I wanted them to be as talkative as possible. During the discussions in both group A and group B, a majority of the students were eager to speak their minds and they constantly used English when they spoke in class. In group B, there were certain students who clearly dominated the discussions and they often stated reasons for their views using detailed explanations.

Regarding the news articles, I also find it important to highlight the fact that the pupils in both group A and B demonstrated a very high capability to grasp their content. When I had carried out this particular lesson in group B and had discovered that almost all pupils managed to answer the True or false-questions without difficulties, I decided to make some changes in these questions before giving them to the pupils in group A. Therefore, I handed out more opened questions without any given alternatives to choose from. Despite my aim to make the task somewhat more difficult for the students, they gave me correct as well as comprehensive answers to all the questions. Since the pupils were only allowed to listen to every article once and then, after they had had the article being read out aloud, were given questions on the content without any alternatives to choose from, I can conclude that the pupils’ ability to comprehend the texts was very high.

When it comes to the story-writing task carried out in one of the groups, I introduced the pupils to the extract of the novel Zodiac by letting them read it individually at first and
then I read it out aloud while the pupils were reading along. When I had finished reading, I posed the pupils some questions regarding content and characters, but their ability to discuss the text was not so high. Some students raised their hands and gave some information to the rest of the group, but the students’ general ability to discuss the text was limited. Since the pupils did not ask any questions to demonstrate e.g. a possible lack of understanding, it is difficult to establish whether the unwillingness to discuss the text was due to their inability to understand the content or to lack of interest. During the writing process, some of the pupils used dictionaries and looked up words occasionally. Two pupils were not willing to use dictionaries, and instead they frequently wanted me to give them the English equivalents to certain Swedish words. Other pupils asked questions as well, and these questions mainly touched upon aspects such as what definition to use when the dictionary provided several suggestions, and they also wanted me to read through their first drafts and give them feedback. When reading through their texts, I noticed that a number of pupils were able to make their own text fit well together with the draft, and this probably means that they managed to grasp the gist of the extract from the novel.

**4.3 Evaluation questionnaire**

In this section, I will present the results from the evaluation questionnaire. For a complete overview of the questionnaire, see appendix 2.

The views among the informants regarding working with alternative texts in the subject of English were in general very positive (see table 1).

**Table 1: Result of the informants’ answers to the question ”Vad tyckte du om att arbeta med andra texter än läroboken i ämnet engelska?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Answers in percentage</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mycket bra</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bra</td>
<td>41 %</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindre bra</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dåligt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mycket dåligt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost ½ of the pupils (13 pupils) stated that working with alternative texts was very good, and these pupils supplemented their answers with comments such as “Variation makes it more interesting” and “If you vary the learning materials, you learn the most”. Three pupils, or 11 %, were of the opinion that working with these texts was not that good, and gave explanations such as “There were more things to keep track of” and “The textbook is better”.

Regarding the questions what material used during the three-week period the pupils perceived the most enjoyable, boring, easy and difficult, the results were varied. When it comes to most enjoyable, music and lyrics had the highest result with 75 %, or 12 pupils out of 16, and story-writing the lowest with 18 %, or 2 pupils out of 11. Despite this result, a majority of the pupils, 59 % or 16 pupils, perceived the group work as the most boring text and task, and story-writing came second with the result of 36 %. Only 2 pupils out of 16 (13 %) found the music and lyrics the most boring of the texts used. Regarding the easiest versus the most difficult materials used, half of all the pupils perceived the news articles as the easiest texts and approximately 1/3 of the pupils found music and lyrics the easiest. The results among the students were most diverse on the aspect of difficulty. To begin with, 7 pupils or 26 % stated that they found no text as particularly difficult. In addition, story-writing and music and lyrics had the highest result, with 36 % versus 31 %.

When it comes to the differences in using the materials that was part of the project instead of the textbook in the subject of English, the informants provided many detailed and extensive explanations. A number of these touched upon the aspect of variation with comments such as “There was variation in all of the tasks” and “The textbook contains the same type of texts and with these handouts you get more variation which is more fun”. Other comments were “Many tasks have been oral, like the group discussions, and I really like that” and “The texts were shaped differently and contained much new vocabulary”.

Regarding language learning, a majority of the pupils stated that their language skills had improved during the three-week period with alternative learning materials in the subject of English (see table 6).
Table 6: Result of the informants’ answers to the question “Har du lärt dig någon engelska under dessa tre veckor?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Answers in percentage</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Väldigt mycket</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mycket</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lite</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Väldigt lite</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inget alls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 pupils, 63 %, stated that they had learnt a great deal, alternatively a lot, while 10 pupils, 37 %, stated that they had learnt a little or very little during the lessons with alternative texts. In the sub title “Give examples”, some pupils supplemented comments, such as “To understand lyrics and to learn new vocabulary in a different way” and “Improved my vocabulary and my reading ability”. The pupils who chose the alternative “Very little” explained further that he already knew almost everything that we worked with.

In the last question, whether the students would like to work with texts other than the textbook in the future, the results were very positive since a large majority, 24 pupils (89 %), stated that they would like to do so, and only 3 pupils (11 %) stated that they would not.

### 4.4 Interviews

As part of the action research, a further aim of this dissertation has been to collect data from interviews regarding pupils’ perceptions on the use of alternative materials in the subject of English. Specifically, my aim has been to investigate engagement and comprehension among the pupils who participated in the lessons. Thus, in this chapter the collected data from the interviews are presented. The pupils who were interviewed are referred to as Alice, Karin, Niklas and Erik, where Alice and Erik are high achieving pupils and Karin and Niklas are average performing pupils. Similar to the previous chapter, the data from the interviews are presented in different categories representing the typologies mentioned in the method section, e.g. differences between the use of textbooks and alternative learning materials, pupils’ engagement and language learning and positive versus negative aspects.
4.4.1 Differences between the use of textbooks and alternative learning materials

According to Alice, the most significant difference between textbooks and alternative learning materials is that the latter consist of “texts that are more foreign in nature and, compared to textbooks, not constructed to be understood instantly”. When using these types of texts, the vocabulary is enlarged to a greater extent since the texts contain many unfamiliar words. In addition, the texts in the textbook often focus their attention on a certain event whereas these texts are more wide-ranging and deal with practically everything. Both Karin and Niklas expressed that the exercises and questions connected to the texts in the textbooks often have the same structure, and Niklas were of the opinion that this often results in monotonous lessons. Karin said that texts in the textbook often are “adapted to pupils” whereas alternative texts are “more ordinary”, have a somewhat higher degree of difficulty and “contain foreign expressions that are not to be frequently found in textbooks”.

According to Erik, there is no significant difference between textbooks and alternative learning materials, but he found the textbook to be “more well-thought-out and more concentrated on pupils” compared to the alternative materials. Erik also said that this material has a more jumbled nature since it consists of separate pieces of paper in comparison to the more practical and concise textbook.

Regarding differences between textbook texts and alternative texts when it comes to difficulties, the informants were of different opinions. Erik stated that textbook texts and alternative texts are on the same level and contain similar difficulties. When working with the articles in the group, Erik expressed that “the knowledge was always within the group” and that they managed to achieve understanding almost without using any teaching aids. Karin said that “different texts have different types of difficulties” and that “some texts are harder than others”. This is the same regarding both textbooks and alternative materials. She highlighted that the articles connected to the group work contained unknown vocabulary and several foreign expressions, but that the group often could figure out meaning from the context although they did not always decide on any absolute translation. Niklas was of the opinion that the texts in the textbook are somewhat more difficult compared to the alternative texts, since they comprise unfamiliar vocabulary. Alice found the textbook easier than the materials used in the action research project, but said that the
latter were not too difficult. She admitted that she enjoyed the challenge in meeting and learning new vocabulary. The article in the group work was the most difficult text, but she perceived it as manageable since “difficult vocabulary often reoccurred in the text and could be understood from the context”. Karin highlighted that content is more important than the level of difficulty, and said that she does not loose her interest due to the occurrence of difficult vocabulary in a text, unless the text does not contain too many unknown words.

All the informants agreed on the value of using the type of texts or materials they normally meet in their leisure time or at home. Alice found this material valuable because:

> [it] prepares you for the real word, since you will not encounter textbook texts in reality when you leave school. In real life, people do not consider whether you are a native English speaker or not, they write in their own way (2008-04-15).

Niklas also stated that alternative texts are valuable since they deal with real life and he can relate to the content. Karin explained that the value of using alternative texts is that it results in variation and she added that working with media such as music and films can enhance motivation and make the subject of English more interesting.

### 4.4.2 Pupils’ engagement and language learning

Regarding engagement and interest, Alice started out by saying that she found working with alternative texts both engaging and enjoyable. She also highlighted that to perceive texts as interesting, it is crucial that they “have fun and interesting content” and “relate to your own life” to some extent. Alice and Karin both expressed that the engagement with the texts was somewhat reduced when working with the articles in the groups. However, this was mainly due to the design of the task rather than the actual text, since they both claimed that the problems depended on collaboration difficulties between the group members. In contrast to these views, Niklas stated that the collaboration in his group was characterized by interest and engagement, where everyone wanted to take part in the task. Erik had found all the texts and exercises interesting and engaging, and he thought they were similar to the textbook materials he normally encounter. He did not feel that this material was either more or less interesting than the ordinary textbook.
When it comes to language learning, all the pupils came up with various ways in which they found the alternative materials rewarding to their improvement of English. Alice perceived the improvement of vocabulary as the primary outcome from working with alternative texts. In addition, she stated that the material “gives you the opportunity to encounter texts you have not met before”, such as news articles. Both Karin and Niklas felt that they had improved their ability to read and listen. This was particularly owing to the music lyrics and the news articles. Working with this these alternative texts, Karin explained, has given her the opportunity to learn new things as well as improve and repeat more familiar aspects at the same time. Niklas also said that he has gained more experience in working together in smaller groups, and that that type of method is both rewarding and contributes to language improvement. Erik stated that he has mostly improved his language proficiency when it comes to writing, and he consequently found the story writing exercise as most rewarding of all the tasks connected to the different texts.

Regarding the contact with English in more casual settings, e.g. at home or in their spare time, all the participants exemplified several contexts in which they meet English, and they also agreed that these opportunities more or less result in language improvement. Karin stated that her teacher has advised her to read English books in her leisure time and that these books can be interesting since they “contain slang and more everyday language”. Another important source of language improvement according to Karin is music and television, and the importance of these two media was highlighted by Alice as well.

### 4.4.3 Positive aspects

According to Alice, a great advantage of using alternative learning materials is that you encounter new vocabulary and new texts, and also that the subject of English becomes “more enjoyable with a variation in learning materials”. She defined this material as something new and “not just the same old textbooks”, and said that it might be suitable for pupils who normally dislike the subject of English as well as other languages. Both Karin and Niklas emphasized the value of achieving variation in lessons and learning materials and found these texts very suitable to attain this variation. Karin also stated, similar to Alice, that pupils who do not normally have a great interest in English might increase their engagement when working with alternative texts.
According to Niklas, another aspect that is positive with this material is that you do not separate grammatical issues from the actual texts; instead the grammar is embedded in other exercises. He stated that he has difficulties in learning grammar when it appears in certain sections, and with this material it feels more natural. He was also of the opinion that using alternative materials result in a different type of reading- as well as listening comprehension. The materials require you to be focused and to pay attention, and he stated that this was something he experienced mostly with the songs. According to Erik, the greatest advantage of this material was that it contains contemporary texts and deals with more current topics compared to the textbook.

### 4.4.4 Negative aspects

Erik felt that a negative aspect of using alternative learning materials in the subject of English is that it can be difficult to keep track of different sheets of papers in comparison to using a textbook, where everything is structured. When the material is structured, he said, “you are always aware of what texts and exercises you are going to come across, and therefore it is inappropriate to jump from one text to another that frequently”.

According to Karin, there are no particular negative aspects of using alternative learning materials in English, but she said that this opinion can probably differ among people. One aspect she perceived as a bit problematic with this material was that it does not give you the foundations or the “exceptions” that you encounter in textbooks. Neither Niklas nor Alice could come up with any negative aspects of using alternative learning materials. Alice mentioned that the materials could be somewhat negative if the teacher forgets to put focus on certain aspects, such as grammar, but she was convinced that such a problem can be easily avoided.

All the informants expressed a clear opinion of not leaving out textbooks totally when teaching English, but rather trying to mix textbook materials with alternative materials. Alice stated that the textbook should be used as a first step since it contains relevant vocabulary and useful texts. Karin shared this opinion and added that it is very important that everyone can understand the material that is being used. Another disadvantage of using alternative texts too often is, according to the pupils, that the material might lose its enjoyable character after a while.
5 Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, I will analyse the data collected during the action research project and discuss the findings with regard to previous research in the area of learning materials.

5.1 Pupil’s engagement

During my observations of the pupils during the action phase of the project, I noticed that the level of engagement differed to a great extent depending on the materials and the design of the task. Engagement among the pupils was particularly visible when it comes to the materials used in connection with the songs, as well as the news articles. Some noticeable aspects connected to engagement was that basically all students uttered positive comments, displayed a high degree of concentration during the listening as well as the discussion exercises, and demonstrated a great interest in the tasks as well as a clear willingness to do the exercises.

When I compared my observation notes with the results of the evaluation questionnaire and the interviews, certain connections could be clearly established. To begin with, I noticed that a majority of the pupils (75 %) considered music and lyrics to be the most enjoyable materials, whereas the news articles had the second highest result (33 %) among the students. Positive attitudes to these texts were also displayed during the interviews with the pupils, when three of the informants clearly expressed they found the songs and the news articles as most enjoyable and interesting. The reasons for their views were based upon aspects such as the texts’ connections to the pupils’ own lives, the variation in the tasks and the presence of new and unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions.

The four interviewees in this dissertation provided various descriptions of their engagement with and interest in the tasks and the materials used in the project. Among the interviewees, I had unintentionally chosen members representing all four different groups and I found this both interesting and rewarding, particularly in regard to the group work. In general, all interviewees found working with the materials both engaging and enjoyable. One pupil explained that the value of using these texts was that they gave rise to variation, and she added that they enhanced motivation and made the subject of English more
interesting. Another pupil stated further that she found the news articles and the materials connected to the music most engaging, and she explained this by saying that it demanded her to pay absolute attention.

The pupils’ views very much support the results from previous research. A number of writers are of the opinion that authentic materials enhance learner engagement and motivation since these texts are more interesting and stimulating than materials intended for language learners. In addition, these texts can also provide learners with the feeling that they meet the “real” language, i.e. the English used in countries where it serves as mother tongue or language for communication (Guarento & Morley, 2001: 347).

Peacock (1997) recommends teachers who meet both beginners and adult ELT learners to try authentic materials in their teaching. Yet, he emphasizes it is necessary the materials are suitable and motivating as they then could enhance pupils’ level of concentration and involvement in the task to a larger extent than materials intended for teaching. If the aspect of motivation is not accounted for, the levels of learners’ interest may as well be reduced on account of authentic materials (Peacock, 1997: 144 ff.).

Regarding the group work in the project, two of my interviewees highlighted some negative aspects in regard to engagement. One pupil said that the level of motivation in her group had a tendency to decline, since some of the members discussed issues other than the text and constantly lost focus on the task. The other two pupils described the group work task as positive and stated further that all members of the group were mostly focused on the task and had about the same engagement in the text. However, one pupil stated that the engagement in his group was the same as if they had studied the text book, and he was also of the opinion that the result had been the same regardless of the text.

Similar to two of my interviewees, I perceived that some of the negative aspects in regard to engagement mainly concerned the group-work task and the story-writing task. When observing the action phase in the group-work, as stated earlier, I noticed that there were clear differences in regard to collaboration and engagement within the four different groups. Three of the groups demonstrated a willingness to work with the article together and as a consequence they had a clear focus on the text. The other group had more problems with collaboration and they also had a tendency to discuss other issues than the text at hand. This matter was confirmed by some of the pupils, and they expressed that the
lack of engagement within the group was more due to collaboration difficulties than the design of the text.

If I compare the answers from the interviews and my observation notes with the results from the evaluation questionnaire, I can conclude that a majority of the pupils (59%) found the group work to be the most boring task. Some comments given by the pupils were: “I found it hard to present my article to a person who had read another one” and “The group did not collaborate and it became too noisy in the classroom”. Regarding the story-writing, a number of pupils (36%) perceived story-writing a boring task, and a majority of the students (36%) expressed in the evaluation that they also found this task the most difficult. Some pupils supplemented their answers with comments such as: “It’s difficult to come up with an ending to a story you have not begun yourself” and “You have to pay attention to spelling and to use the right words, and you also have to have imagination”.

5.2 Comprehension and pupil’s language development

When examining the data from the evaluation questionnaire, the results among the students were most diverse on the aspect of difficulty. To begin with, 7 pupils or 26% stated that they found no text as particularly difficult. In addition, story-writing and music and lyrics had the highest result, with 36% versus 31%. Since the story-writing task was more focused on the pupil’s own writing than the actual text they were introduced to, there is a possibility that the results were due to aspects such as concentration difficulties in the task and a lack of imagination. The latter is plausible since it was expressed by some of the pupils in the evaluation questionnaire.

According to some of my interviewees, the texts used in the action research project were more foreign in nature and, compared to textbooks, not constructed to be comprehended instantly. In addition, the pupils stated that the texts had a somewhat higher degree of difficulty and contained unfamiliar expressions that are not to be frequently found in textbooks. On the contrary, some pupils were of the opinion that the texts used in the project and texts found in the textbook were on the same level and therefore contained similar difficulties. Although the texts enclosed unknown vocabulary, some pupils stated that they enjoyed the challenge in meeting and learning new vocabulary.
Some of my interviewees found the articles used in the group-work to have the highest level of difficulty among the materials used in the project. However, the pupils found the texts manageable since difficult vocabulary often reoccurred in the text and could be understood from the context. Other pupils stated that the knowledge was always within the group and that they managed to achieve comprehending almost without using any teaching aids. One pupil said that different texts have different types of difficulties, some texts are harder than other, and that this is the same regarding both textbooks and alternative materials.

Regarding the news articles, all pupils demonstrated a very high capability to grasp the content of the articles. Since a number of pupils in one group managed to answer the True or false-questions without difficulties, I decided to make the task somewhat more difficult for the pupils in the other group by given them more open questions. Despite this, the pupils’ ability to comprehend the texts and find answers to my questions was very high in this particular context. My own observations during this particular task go well in hand with the results from the evaluation questionnaire. Approximately half of all the pupils perceived the news articles as the easiest texts among the materials used in the project.

When it comes to the prospects of developing pupils’ skills in the English language by using alternative texts, the general belief in today’s language teaching is that the use of authentic materials promotes the learning process (Guariento & Morley, 2001: 347). In the evaluation questionnaire, a majority of the pupils (63 %) participating in the project stated that they had improved their English a great deal alternatively a lot, while 37 % meant that their improvement in the English language had been little or very little during the lessons with alternative texts.

All my interviewees provided examples of ways in which they found the materials used in the project rewarding to their language development. One pupil perceived the improvement of vocabulary as a primary outcome and stated that, when using alternative text, the vocabulary is enlarged since the texts contain a number of unfamiliar words. This pupil also stated that the materials gave her the opportunity to encounter text she had not met before, such as news articles, and this gave her insights into aspects such as differences in design among various types of texts. Two of the pupils perceived that the materials to a certain extent had improved their ability in reading and listening.
6 Conclusion

My intention with this dissertation has been to explore the possible role of alternative learning materials in the subject of English through an action research project carried out at a secondary school. More specifically, the aim has been to examine how the pupils engaged with the texts used in the project, to what extent they were able to comprehend the texts, and to what extent they found the texts useful for their language development.

As mentioned above, the selection of learning materials are connected to a number of factors. Whether certain materials are effective or not depends on aspects such as the requirements of the tasks, the social atmosphere of the classroom and students’ abilities. It is important to stress that the results from this research cannot be generalised and discussed in terms of alternative materials versus textbooks. My investigation concerns the particular tasks and the materials I decided to use, as well as the particular students whom I selected to be the participants of the project.

At this point, and with the above considerations in mind, I can conclude the following:

- The pupils’ engagement with the texts differed to a great extent depending on the materials and the design of the task. Engagement among the students was particularly visible when it comes to the materials used in connection with the songs, as well as the news articles. Some of the negative aspects in regard to engagement mainly concerned the group-work task and the story-writing task. The level of engagement could be linked to aspects such as the texts’ connections to the pupils’ own lives, the variation in the tasks and the presence of new and unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions.

- In general, the students’ ability to comprehend the texts used in the project was high and particularly visible in connection with the news articles. Some pupils stated that the texts used in the project had a somewhat higher degree of difficulty compared to textbooks, whereas others found the texts used in the project to be on the same level as textbook texts. According to the questionnaire, ¼ of the pupils stated that they found no text particularly difficult.
Regarding language development, the primary outcomes of the project were improvement of vocabulary as well as increased insights into aspects such as differences in design among various types of texts. A majority of the participating students stated in the evaluation that they had improved their English a great deal, alternatively a lot, during the project.

With reference to the above findings, I find it essential that we as teachers try to introduce our pupils to texts other than the textbook in the subject of English. Even though alternative text might be a challenge for students, since they may contain a larger amount of new and unfamiliar vocabulary and thus may be on a higher level of difficulty compared to textbook text, the benefits are many. As explained by one of my interviewees:

In my future adult life, I will not encounter the type of texts that is present in textbooks. People do not take into consideration whether you are a native English speaker or not, they write in their own way. Therefore it is good to know “this is the way it might look like”, so that you are prepared for that the English language is not always as easy as it is put in the textbooks (“Alice”, 2008-04-15).
List of references

Literature


**Electronic Sources**


**Oral Sources**

Seminar held by Kent Adelmann at Malmö University, 2008-02-04.

Interview with “Karin”  2008-04-14.  
Interview with “Niklas”  2008-04-14.  
Interview with “Alice”  2008-04-15.  
Interview with “Erik”  2008-04-15.
Appendix 1: Enkätundersökning - alternativa läromedel i engelska

Kön: Man Kvinna

1.) Hur lätt eller svåra tycker du att följande delar av ämnet engelska är?

- Läsa (mycket lätt) 1 2 3 4 (mycket svårt)
- Skriva (mycket lätt) 1 2 3 4 (mycket svårt)
- Tala (mycket lätt) 1 2 3 4 (mycket svårt)
- Lyssna (mycket lätt) 1 2 3 4 (mycket svårt)


lättläst intressant rolig lärorik lagom lång modern spännande (annat?)

_____________________ (viktigast)
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________

_____________________ (minst viktigt)
3.) På vilket sätt och hur ofta kommer du i kontakt med engelska på din fritid/hemma? 
Kryssa i ett eller flera alternativer.

- [ ] Läser engelska böcker [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Läser engelska tidningar, artiklar [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Ser på engelska/amerikanska filmer [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Ser på engelska/amerikanska TV-program [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Spelar data-/TV-spel med engelskt tal/text [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Lyssnar på musik på engelska [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Besöker engelska websidor på Internet [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Chat/MSN på Internet [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] (Annat sätt) ________________________ [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig

[ ] Jag kommer inte i kontakt med engelska hemma

4.) Har du i ämnet engelska i skolan läst och arbetat med andra typer av texter eller övningar än de som finns i din engelska lärobok?

- [ ] Vid många tillfällen [ ] Vid ett par tillfällen [ ] Vid få tillfällen [ ] Aldrig

5.) Om du inte har svarat aldrig, vilka andra texter och material än läroboken har du läst och/eller arbetat med i ämnet engelska i skolan? Kryssa i ett eller flera alternativer.

- [ ] Böcker [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Tidningar, artiklar [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Musiktexter [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Filmer, TV-program [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] Dataprogram [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
- [ ] (Andra) ______________ [ ] Ofta [ ] Ibland [ ] Sällan [ ] Aldrig
6.) Tycker du det är viktigt att läsa och arbeta med annat material än läroboken i ämnet engelska?

☐ Mycket viktigt       ☐ Viktigt       ☐ Inte så viktigt       ☐ Inte alls viktigt

Varför?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Tack för din medverkan!


Namn: ______________________________
Appendix 2: Utvärdering - alternativa läromedel i engelska

Kön: Man  Kvinna

1.) Vad tyckte du om att arbeta med andra texter än läroboken i ämnet engelska?

Mycket bra  1
Bra        2
Mindre bra 3
Dåligt     4
Mycket dåligt 5

Varför?
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

2.) Under dessa 3 veckor har vi arbetat med följande:

- Grupparbete kring artiklar (Nelly Furtado/Mp3 Controversy) - Presentera artikel för kompis.
- Nyhetsartiklar ("Best Party Ever" m.fl.) - Hörförståelse, läsförståelse, övningar, diskussion.
- Musiktexter (Alanis Morisette/Robbie Williams) - Hörförståelse, textförståelse, diskussion.

– Av de texter och det material vi har arbetat med, vad tyckte du var: Roligast:

__________________________________________________________

Varför?
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Tråkigast:
_________________________________________________________________________
Varför?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Lättast:
_________________________________________________________________________
Varför?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Svårast:
_________________________________________________________________________
Varför?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. Vad tycker du har varit den största skillnaden mellan att arbeta med detta material istället för läroboken i ämnet engelska?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
4. Har du lärt dig någon engelska under dessa tre veckor?

Välldigt mycket 1  
Mycket 2  
Lite 3  
Välldigt lite 4  
Inget alls 5

Ge exempel:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Kan du tänka dig att arbeta med andra texter än de som finns i din lärobok även i framtiden?

JA  NEJ

Varför? (Ge exempel):

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________


Namn: ____________________________
Hej

Mitt namn är Christine Carlson och jag går på lärarhögskolan i Malmö. För några veckor sedan gjorde jag min slutpraktik med årskurs 9, där er son/dotter går, och jag var ansvarig för deras undervisning. Det speciella med undervisningen var att vi under denna period inte alls arbetade med läroboken i engelska, utan istället användes andra texter såsom artiklar och musiktexter. Denna undervisning var en del av det examensarbete som jag nu skriver, vilket behandlar användandet av alternativa läromedel i engelska. Min tanke är att skriva om vad eleverna tycker om detta sätt att arbeta. Vad är deras tankar och funderingar kring att arbeta med andra läromedel än läroboken?

Jag skulle uppskatta om ni tillät er son/dotter att medverka i detta arbete. De elever som kommer att medverka i min undersökning har när som helst möjlighet att ställa frågor om undersökningen och de kan även när som helst välja att avböja eller avbryta sin medverkan. Elevernas anonymitet kommer att skyddas då jag kommer att ge dem fingerade namn, och det kommer därför inte vara möjligt att identifiera vilka som har deltagit. Under arbetets gång är det endast jag, Christine, som kommer att ta del av materialet. När arbetet är slutfört kommer allt material att förstöras, såsom anteckningar och inspelningar med eleverna.

Om ni har några frågor angående detta arbete får ni gärna kontakta mig:

Christine Carlson
Tfn: 040-12 57 91    Mob: 070-656 9598

Med vänliga hälsningar

Christine Carlson

Klipps ut och lämnas till Maria Olsson i enhet 2

Jag godkänner att ______________________________________ (namn på eleven) får medverka i denna undersökning.

______________________________    ______________________________
Signatur (målsman)                     Namnförtydligande (målsman)
Appendix 4: Story-writing instructions

Finish the story - Instructions

Now, I want you to think about what will happen next in this story. Please write your own ending. I want you to use your imagination when you write! Remember that this is your own ending, anything can happen – you decide it. Nothing is right or wrong. However, there are some things that you could think about when you decide what will happen:

- Who is Darlene and who is Mike?
- Who is the person in the car? Is it a person that Darlene or Mike knows/ is it a stranger?
- Why is he/she following the couple? What does he/she want?
- Is he/she a nice or a bad person? What characters (egenskaper) does he or she have?

You don’t have to answer all these questions, but I think some of them are important for you to explain in your story.

There are also some important things you need to pay attention to when you write:

- Make sure you use the same tense (form) in verbs (present, past)
  The couple sat in the darkness, Darlene stopped, Mike thought, the car raced
- To make the story interesting it is a good idea to sometimes use adjectives and adverbs.
  Adjectives: when you describe nouns (substantiv): light-colored car, the bronze Corvair.
  Adverbs: when you describe how you do something: gestured impatiently, Darlene nervously turned right.
- The use of dialogue (people are speaking to each other) makes the story interesting:
  “We’re being followed”, Mike said. Finally Mike said, “Just go this way.”

I want you to write a story that is 1-2 pages long. You have two lessons to finish your story, and you may also use IST- (Individuell Studietid) time on Tuesday.
Appendix 5: Intervjuguide för elever

Typologies: Differences between the use of textbooks and alternative learning materials, pupils’ engagement and language learning, positive and negative aspects.

• Skillnader mellan användandet av lärobok och alternativa material

1. Vilka är skillnaderna mellan att lära sig engelska med hjälp av detta material jämfört med läroboken i engelska?

2. Hur bedömer du svårigheten att arbeta med detta material jämfört med läroboken?

3. Vad anser du om att i engelskan använda texter du kan möta på fritiden, t.ex. musiktexter, filmer, tidningar eller Internet?

• Elevers engagemang och språkinlärning

4. Beskriv ditt intresse och engagemang under de tre veckorna med alternativa läromedel i undervisningen!

5. Ge exempel på sådant som du har lärt dig genom att använda olika typer av material i engelskan!

6. Hur tycker du att fritidsengelskan hjälper dig att förbättra och utveckla din engelska?

• Positiva och negativa aspekter med användningen av alternativa läromedel

7. Kan du beskriva några fördelar med att arbeta med olika typer av material i engelskan?

8. Kan du beskriva några nackdelar med att arbeta med olika typer av material i engelskan?