"We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone"

How to Work with Film and Drama with a Thematic Focus to Improve Students' Oral Proficiency

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English Exam Essay

Halmstad 2017-02-23
Personnummer/ Id nummer / National registration number
930424-4792
901210-1581

Datum / Date
2017-02-23

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Grupparbete / Group Assignment
Ja /Yes ☒
Nej / No ☐

Uppgift / Assignment
Examensuppsats Engelska

Kursnamn / Course Name
Engelska med didaktik för ämneslärare åk 7-9: Självständigt arbete

Lärare / Teacher
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“We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to Anyone”

- How to Work with Film and Drama with a Thematic Focus to Improve Students’ Oral Proficiency

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2017-01-11
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Abstract
This essay is based on a previous study we conducted during our last internship in the teacher trainee program. We have conducted a literature study on alternative and possible usage of movies in classroom environments in the upper secondary school. The goal has been to investigate how you can use film to acquire English as a second language, in Grade Seven at a school located in the southern part of Sweden. Focus has been on improving students’ oral skills, and working with ethical questions, which can be promoted by watching films in school. To do this we have chosen to include drama and role-playing as a part of processing the movies. The films this essay focuses on are Zootopia (2016) and Remember the Titans (2000). In our result and conclusion, we state that including drama together with films in the classroom is a motivating factor for the students and an excellent way to make all the students talk and practice their English oral skills. With the selected themes, racism and xenophobia which are treated in both movies, students are given the chance to discuss and reflect about equality and human rights.

Key words: School, pedagogy, drama, movies, Zootopia, Remember the Titans, language learning
Introduction.
The idea of this essay was born in the fall of 2016. Before the summer break, we had a seminar where we were introduced to the coming semester and its subjects. We would partake in a project to develop a subject of our own choice. Being allowed to select our own subject matter, we thought that it would be a good idea to examine a subject which we could connect to the essay we were expected to write at the end of our teacher education. We have both always had an immense interest in film, and, therefore, felt that including films would make for a fascinating case study. We wanted to find out how you could apply film and motion pictures in school to develop upper secondary school students’ oral proficiency. Therefore, we decided to combine film and drama in our project, since we thought drama would be a fun and easy way to make the students speak. Since the project was to be quite small, only one movie was chosen to work with, Zootopia. The reasons for choosing Zootopia will be detailed later in the essay. The project was conducted in two classes in the seventh grade at an upper secondary school in southern Sweden. In one of the classes, the goal was to focus on the students’ oral skills, and drama played a great part in this project.

Watching a film is a terrific way of introducing a new topic. Films can be used to raise an awareness of subjects that are complicated to discuss, to give inspiration and to explore new and foreign ideas from the comfort of your own home. In school, you can show films at the beginning of a teaching segment to start discussions and introduce new ideas. You may also watch a film at the end of a segment to visualize a point or illustrate how ideas that you have discussed, might look in practise. In “Audiovisual News, Cartoons, and Films as Sources of Authentic Language Input and Language Proficiency Enhancement,” Taher Bahrani and Tam Shu Sim argue that teachers have a great deal to gain from working with films and cartoons in their classrooms. Bahrani and Shu Sim claim that through listening to the dialogues in films and cartoons, you get an audible and visual input of how to use the new language that you are trying to learn.¹ For this essay, we started by selecting which films to include in our study. We decided to keep Zootopia from our previous study because the movie is quite pedagogical and brings up themes like racism and xenophobia in an explicit and smart way. This makes it relevant for school; it has a purpose of educating the students with a focus on the above-mentioned themes. For our second film, we wanted to have a non-animated film in contrast to Zootopia but with the same theme. We decided to go with Remember the Titans. It can be used

¹ “Audiovisual news, cartoons, and films” Taher Bahrani and Tam Shi Sim, s. 56-57 The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – October 2012, volume 11 Issue 4.
as a parallel to *Zootopia*, as we mention in our analysis, although it is somewhat more serious and reality-based which makes an interesting contrast. Since the movies share several comparable aspects, we think they can be interesting to work with.

If you watch a film in school, the potential is not often taken advantage of. You watch it because the teacher needs the time to finish assessing hand-ins or tests. If you do work with the film, it is usually through answering questions or writing a review but you do not really know why you are watching the film in the first place. We thought this attitude was very interesting and wanted to find out more about why you tend to use film as a pastime, instead of applying it in the above-mentioned ways. We wanted to explore this and discover why film is not integrated more in school. Moreover, since we both have English as our main subject we wanted to understand how you might integrate films in the teaching of English to a greater extent and how you could focus more on a wider range of tasks than just writing resumes and answering questions.

In addition to our interest in movies, we both find drama and role-playing an entertaining and interesting element that could be used in several contexts in school. Drama has, for example, been used to increase students’ motivation, and make information more visual.\(^2\) Moreover, it tends to make people speak.\(^3\) Drama is also often applied when dealing with different conflicts or developing democratic attitudes, to show how these might work in the real world.\(^4\)

We found that the process of working with film in school only seemed to include written assignments and the occasional discussion, and we wanted to explore in what other comportments you could use film in education, and by doing this increase students’ oral proficiency. We found that working with drama made the students feel included and safe, whilst improving their oral proficiency through an entertaining method.

**Research Question**

In this essay, we aim to discover how you can work with film with a thematic focus on social and ethnic inclusion and how this can become a means of encouraging oral proficiency in the

\(^2\) Olson, Kristin and Boreson, Cecilia, *Medieresor: om medier för pedagoger*, Sveriges utbildningsradio (UR) i samarbete med Myndigheten för skolutveckling och Svenska filminstitutet, Stockholm, 2004 p.84


classroom. We also want to discover how one can process and work with the chosen movies and theme regarding this essay by including drama in the process.

Essay Outline
After the introduction and the essay outline the literature review of previous research will be presented. The literature review is divided into four parts: Attaining New Languages (with the critical period as a subheading), Popular Culture and Education, Drama as a Means of Education and finally Films in Education. After the literature review follows a list of possible problems and ethical concerns that may occur when putting this study into practice with examples of working with drama, the selected topic/theme, and working with movies. Thereafter, the methods of this essay are presented. We have chosen to include two different theories. The first one is the Comparative Method, described by Ragin and Denk. This method is used to compare the films chosen in this essay. The second theory is called the Pedagogical Perspective, retrieved from Eriksson and Lindgren. This method is used to theoretically explore how a teaching segment in the classroom might work since we have not conducted it in practice. The methods are followed by the Critique of Method. After this, the material for the essay is presented, that is the chosen films Zootopia and Remember the Titans, with a summary of each film. Thereafter, there will be a discussion/analysis part which starts with a recapitulation of the methods chosen in the essay and a clarification of how they are to be used in the analysis. We will then explain why we chose these particular movies and suggest how they can be used in the classroom with a special focus on similarities and differences. We will then be moving on to the theme of racism and xenophobia. Finally, we will tie everything together in our final conclusions and present some proposals for future studies.

Literature Review
Attaining New Languages.
Lynne Cameron claims in Teaching Languages to Young Learners that teaching a foreign language to a young learner is easier than teaching adults or adolescents. Young learners want to please the teacher, which older learners generally do not. Young learners are often very excited and enthusiastic. They are also not inclined to feel embarrassed when making mistakes,

5 Cameron, Lynne, Teaching languages to young learners, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 1
and eagerly try to use the language.\textsuperscript{6} However, young learners tend to lose interest faster than older learners, and an older learner is more prone to keep on practising. Older learners have a foundation to build on: they know the structure of their own language, how to apply the language in different situations, and, consequently, they can motivate themselves and do not need the teacher to constantly solve problems that they might face on the road to acquiring new knowledge.\textsuperscript{7} Since our study, which was performed during our last VFU, was conducted in an upper secondary school, the students had a basis on which to stand. The children were in the early adolescent years, and can no longer be considered young children, meaning that they are no longer too interested in pleasing the teacher. However, they have a steadier basis of knowledge of how their first language is constructed and can therefore motivate themselves to do the work necessary to acquire a new language.

Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada agree with Cameron that obtaining a new language is different from acquiring your first language as a child. They also state that when you have learnt your first language, adding a new one can be difficult. In the first acquired language, you have the previous knowledge of how to react and act in different situations because you have obtained a meta-knowledge of how the language should be adapted. Meta-knowledge is defined as knowledge about knowledge. In other words, you can apply and adjust the information that you have of how to act in one situation to another.\textsuperscript{8} It is important to take this into consideration, because working with a theme that might be difficult, for example racism and xenophobia you have to consider the students’ previous knowledge of the situations that will be discussed.

All knowledge is based on previous experiences, but when you attain a new language, the patterns might differ from the ones in the old language. As a second language teacher, you need to reflect on what previous knowledge in the language the students have attained and what the best way is to reinforce and develop the language. When you acquire your first language you do not have to consider the metalinguistic awareness, meaning that you can treat a language as an object, or to say what sounds compose a word.\textsuperscript{9} You have started the process of learning with the knowledge of how your first language is used and an awareness of cognitive aspects, as how to react in certain situations, which might differ in another culture. In other words, you

\textsuperscript{6} Cameron, 2001, p.1  
\textsuperscript{7} Cameron, 2001  
\textsuperscript{8} http://erg4146.casaccia.enea.it/Meta-know-1.htm (Meta-Knowledge Unified Framework (A.M. Gadomski) - the TOGA meta-theory, Italian Research Agency ENEA)  
can be led to make incorrect guesses of how the new language works. As you are acquiring a
new language, you are forced to consider these aspects. Olin-Scheller explains the concept of
“knowledge” in Säpor istället för Strindberg, and says that for some, the concept means that
you are aware of different historical epochs and famous writers and their works; in short, that
you are aware of the classics. For others, the term “knowledge” has a broader meaning, and
emphasizes that education, learning and knowledge begins in the person’s interest and previous
knowledge. Learning means to start with the basis of what you already know, and eventually
leave what is safe and familiar to approach what is not known.

Lightbown and Spada also state that students who are trying to acquire a new language are not
usually exposed to the new language enough. To attain a new language, Cameron claims, like
Lightbown and Spada, that you need to consider the time and extent of exposure to the language.
When you are in the process of learning a foreign language in your own country, it is likely that
you will not be exposed to the language outside of the classroom very often. The form in
which you are exposed to it is also important since if you are only made familiar with the
informal side, you will not know how to apply the language in a formal situation and this might
result in embarrassing situations, which might make the learner feel unenthusiastic about the
continued learning process. Sweden is a country known for its excellent skills in English.
Cameron argues that when you come across the new language being used in TV, film and other
media, your acquaintance with it grows. This is common in Sweden where they do not translate
or dub the programs/films shown, which in turn results in Swedish people being exposed to
new languages more often in their every-day lives, resulting in highly-developed language
skills.

In Engelsk Språkdidaktik: Texter, Kommunikation, Språkutveckling, Bo Lundahl discusses
students’ different language skills. Lundahl agrees with Lightbown, Spada and Cameron, that
students need to use their listening and speaking abilities in combination, meaning they must
practice these skills together. He refers to Stephan Krashen who claims that students advance
from informal teaching when the teacher takes a step back and give students the opportunity to
use the English language without being corrected or controlled by the teacher. If students are
given the chance to interact with each other, they tend to use English without being aware that

10 Lightbown and Spada, 2006 p.30
11 Olin-Scheller, Christina, Säpor istället för Strindberg?: litteraturundervisning i ett nytt medielandskap, 1.
uppl., Natur och kultur, Stockholm, 2008 p.27
12 Lightbown and Spada, 2006 p.32
13 Cameron, 2001, p.11
they are since most of the time they do not feel the same pressure of answering correctly or expressing a certain opinion as they might when the teacher is around. If students are given a certain amount of space, the grammatical rules and forms will fall into place naturally.14 Furthermore, Lundahl states that it is important to learn appropriate language behaviour in different situations. It is therefore important for second language learners to participate and learn through collaboration with others, rather than from individual performances. Thus, students should rely on their own and their classmates’ language production, and not view the teacher as the only model for language production.15 This justifies both the watching of movies and role-playing.

In *Children Learning Second Languages*, Annamaria Pinter agrees with Lightbown, Spada and Cameron that when a foreign language is introduced in school, there is virtually no access, or very limited access, to the target language outside of the classroom. However, with the improved technique and the breakthrough of internet, it has become increasingly possible for foreign language learners to have contact with native speakers and participate in a huge variety of different materials outside the classroom.16 Pinter confirms the idea that children in many countries are not sufficiently exposed to the target language. They may know songs, rhymes, some basic vocabulary and carefully rehearsed dialogues, but they rarely progress further and are often unable to express themselves. She argues that continuity is important.17

Students of English as a foreign language have stated that they also use English online to a great extent, through chatting, reading and watching videos. Still, Lundahl argues that the internet and other means of education are rarely used during English lessons in favour of textbooks. According to Lundahl, textbooks and other materials are used more by teachers with longer experience and less when the lesson has been planned collaboratively by teacher and students.18 This promotes the usage of films in education.

In *Second Language Acquisition* Rod Ellis writes about the motivation to acquire a second language. He identifies four different varieties of motivation, one of which he calls “Intrinsic Motivation”. According to Ellis, in some learning situations, it is possible that the students do

15 Lundahl, 2014 p.139
17 Pinter, 2011 p.91
18 Lundahl, 2014 p.55-56
not have any distinct attitudes, positive or negative, towards the target language. He states that this is probably the case with many foreign language learners, but that does not suggest that they are unmotivated. They might find the styles of assignments they are asked to do *intrinsically motivating*. According to this analysis, motivation involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and it can ebb and flow as a result of such factors as learners’ particular interests and the extent to which they feel personally involved in learning activities.�

According to Krashen, as referred to by Lundahl, many students might become uninterested to learn a new language when you introduce grammatical rules. This is because they do not naturally belong in a communicative context. Learning grammatical rules are quite difficult, since it is near impossible to introduce them in an authentic communicative context. According to the present study, we choose to interpret this as a reason to watch movies in the classroom. By letting the students watch films, they are given an insight in how language is used in an authentic context. Lundahl continues by referring to Merril Swain and her *comprehensible output hypothesis*. In this hypothesis, it is stated that when you as a learner generate language, you have to be more attentive to speaking and writing than when they are listening or reading; in other words, when they receive the language. When you interact with a collocutor, the student will be aware of their own limits and will need to come up with alternative strategies to express themselves. This results in the learner progressing in the target language. Swain concludes that when using the target language, output is an important factor in language development. When applying to Swain’s hypothesis towards our study, role-playing seems a profitable task in order to give the students the chance to exercise their ability to produce language, and in that way, give them a chance to practice language strategies

**The Critical Period.**

Many theorists studying the acquisition of language argue that there is a “critical period” in which you obtain language more effectively than after this period has ended. This period takes place before puberty, and is based on theories stating that before puberty your brain is still able to apply the mechanics used when you acquired your first language. However, this is a much-debated thesis, and is considered a very controversial idea. There are grammatical codes that affect the learning process, such as sentence structure, tense and word order. Cameron claim

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20 Lundahl, 2014 p.195
21 Lundahl, 2014 p.200
22 Cameron, 2001, p.13-14
that age affects the learning and that younger children are more prone to listen to sound and
prosody, which is the “melody” of a language, whilst older learners tend to focus on the order
in which words should be placed. They focus on sentence structure instead of pronunciation.

Films in Education

In “Using Movies in EFL Classrooms: A Study Conducted at the English Language Institute (ELI)”, Raniah Hassen Kabooha explores the attitudes of second language learners and teachers concerning working with movies in the classroom. Kabooha claims that the acquisition of a second or foreign language is one of the most cognitively challenging experiences a person may be subjected to during his or her lifetime. Despite the fact that most students had studied English for several years, they still could not use the language. One cause for this, Kabooha argues, might be that the material used in teaching English in Saudi Arabia is dull and unstimulating. He refers to several studies implying that movies can be an integral part of language teaching since they contribute significantly to developing the basic language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Kabooha argues that the “visualization” of movies can facilitate comprehension and understanding for the language in an ideal visual context which makes movies an effective language learning tool. Moreover, films work as a teaching aid through the use of paralinguistic features, such as gestures, actions and reactions of the characters. These features can help students understand the dialogues. However, the movies that teachers show in class should be chosen with care and with educational objectives in mind. Watching movies in the classroom should not be pure entertainment for the students.

Andersson and Hedling write in Film Analysis: An Introduction that there are no rigid models for how film analysis is to be conducted since there are too many diverse genres and forms. However, there is a list with certain factors, and elements, that are inevitable in a film analysis. First, you should reflect on the analysis context - for whom do I analyze and what kind of knowledge am I looking for? Second, it is important to carefully observe and investigate its object, in other words, the film to analyze, which may seem rather obvious. It is important not to take anything for granted; some things may be difficult for outsiders to understand.
In the study performed by Kabooha, the participants watched four movies. The study involved several steps for using the movies with an educational purpose. Before watching a movie, the group was assigned a few previewing activities such as answering a couple of questions to activate the students background knowledge. They did not watch a whole movie at the same time but only short sequences while working with worksheets in order to make the participants concentrate on certain details in the movie. After watching the films, the participants wrote reviews and worked with role playing based on scenes from the movie.28

In “Audiovisual News, Cartoons, and Films as Sources of Authentic Language Input and Language Proficiency Enhancement,” Bahrani and Shu Sim has conducted a similar study, where they aimed at discovering the effectiveness of exposure to audio-visual programs such as news, cartoons and films in order to see how sixty low level language learners developed their English language skills. They divided the people into three groups, each group concentrating on either news, cartoons or movies.29

Bahrani and Shu Sim contend that technology has developed rapidly in the last few years. We now have among other things television, computers, iPad, cell phones. The multimedia world facilitates easy access to different audio-visual programs. Audio-visual means both visual and auditory; you can watch and hear at the same time.30 What Bahrani and Shu Sim wanted to examine was the effectiveness in learning English by being exposed to different audio-visual media. They chose to expose the candidates of the study to either news, cartoons or movies. The reason they selected these three themes was because of the sustained exposure to authentic language. The study lasted for ten weeks. During the study one group was continuously exposed to audio-visual materials from news, another group was exposed to audio-visual materials from cartoons and the last groups was exposed to audio-visual materials from various films. In the beginning of the study all participants took a language proficiency test to give the researchers an overview of their English language skills. At the end of the study all groups took a second language proficiency test to find out if any group/groups had improved their language proficiency significantly. The result indicated that group one (news) failed to improve their language proficiency. In contrast, group two (cartoons) and three (films) had in fact improved their proficiency. Interestingly, the group which had been exposed to cartoons was most successful in this respect.

28 Kabooha, 2016 p.3-4
29 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.4
30 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.1
Kabooha seems to support such a conclusion by stating that movies are powerful instructional tools that can help develop students’ language skills. He also states that both teachers and students were positive about involving movies in the classroom. The participants felt that the movies could help them improve their language skills and to Kabooha the study indicates increased motivation, participation and engagement among the students. Moreover, Bahrani and Shu Sim refer to several previous studies that show that cartoons and animated movies hold a pedagogical value and often tend to have the potential to encourage thinking processes and discussion skills. In addition, they argue that films hold a certain value by providing an excellent basis for the development of critical thinking skills and a rich source for language learners.

In conclusion, Bahrani and Tam claim that the news group did not succeed in improving their language proficiency because authentic language is not used in the news. They claim that the language level in news is probably higher than it is in cartoons and films. They also mention the vocabulary and speed of speech as reasons for why the news group did not develop as much as the other groups. Cartoons usually do not have such specialized vocabulary as news programmes have, and according to Bahrani and Shu Sim, they tend to create a greater interest than news does, which Bahrani and Tam thinks could be a factor for the cartoon group’s improved results. The film group also improved their results, although not as much as the cartoon group. Bahrani and Tam are of the opinion that this depends on the lack of pedagogical value the cartoons have. In their conclusion Bahrani and Tam maintains that audio-visual programmes such as cartoons and movies is a great way to improve low level language learners’ language proficiency.

Drama as a Means of Education

What is educational drama? When the term is used in this essay we aim to focus on how you utilise drama in school, what pedagogical value it can have for the students and how it can make certain aspects of lessons more approachable and interesting for the students. To dramatize means to shape an action in the room with the help of roles and role-playing. The focus is often

31 Kabooha, 2016 p.8
32 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.3
33 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.4
34 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.7
35 Bahrani and Shu Sim, 2012 p.8
on students' social and creative development. Students develop both their imagination and ability to express themselves, and their ability to communicate, assess and collaborate.36

Rasmusson and Erberth discuss what they call the socio-analytical role play which is a method designed by Björn Magnér. The method is designed to explore the relationship between individuals and society and teach participants to take a stand. In the beginning, the group discusses a common theme, such as xenophobia, to air opinions and prejudices. Then the students are divided into groups and are given the task to play different roles in a role-playing game that deals with the problem.37 One problem is that this type of role-playing games with similar themes can create strong emotions. Therefore, it is important to always have a supportive leader, like the teacher, present. The authors describe this type of role-playing game as a form of therapy.38 Rasmusson and Erberth further refer to researchers Ross and Witkin who claim that the skills learned in school are indirect. You often read about a subject before you experience it in real life.39 Students receive insufficient training on how to see with their own eyes and experience it themselves. The school gives considerable room for the intellectual side of life but little to the emotional one. Thus, Rasmusson and Erberth believe that the aesthetic activity fills an important need in this context. Through the aesthetic and emotional sides, children come in touch with their own experiences and their authentic life.40

In his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Jeremy Harmer discusses pedagogy and how teachers may incorporate relevant English language teaching practices into their lessons. According to Harmer, language learning is based on four skills divided in two categories. Listening and reading belongs to the receptive category, while speaking and writing belongs to the productive category. By using roleplay, students get the chance to exercise both receptive and productive language skills in the form of listening and reading.41 When discussing listening skills, Harmer promotes what he calls a communicative classroom and states that it is important for students to listen to English produced by other people than the teacher, since the English language contains a variety of dialects and accents. He argues that students mainly practice listening for specific information and answers, but in communicative classrooms where students interact with each other and the teacher, the listening skills are practiced more naturally

37 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.24
38 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.24
39 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.29
40 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.29
and students engage in extensive listening on a more extensive scale. Since Harmer argues for the possibility of students hearing other people besides the teacher speak, watching films in class can be interpreted as something useful since they provide a great deal of authentic input. Harmer may also be seen as promoting role-playing since the students are then made to interact with each other.

Claes Eriksson and Monica Lindgren conducted studies in Sweden on the use of aesthetics in school, and *En Start för Tänket, En Bit På Väg* is based on their studies. The purpose of the study was to find out what methods you can apply to culture in schools, what aesthetic learning process is most suitable, what knowledge is considered to take place and how an aesthetic learning process can be defined? Eriksson and Lindgren argue that it is taken for granted that different aesthetic activities like singing, painting and sewing promote the students’ health. What (or how) they are performing their aesthetic activities is not important; instead the teacher focuses on the students’ exertion of their hands and minds. Eriksson and Lindgren argue that after some practice, people can learn to express themselves through different artistic forms and not just through writing and talking. By being able to express yourself in more than just two ways we comprehend the world more fully. The human senses are important to us by helping us receive different expressions which affect our feelings and our intellect. Eriksson and Lindgren argue that due to this, educational work requires direct sensory experiences, where students are given the opportunity to process these experiences through various media such as music, drama or dance.

For some time, there has been a discussion about how to make school more attractive for students. There is an assumption that much of the education in schools today is based on the students’ everyday experiences. Eriksson and Lindgren allege that popular culture therefore has a natural place in school activities. There are different opinions as to whether this is positive or negative. Eriksson and Lindgren refer to the Swedish national curriculum which on one hand expresses that the starting point for learning should be in the students’ everyday life, and, on the other, states that the school should focus on knowledge that students usually do not encounter in their everyday lives.

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42 Harmer, 2012 p.303
43 Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.13
44 Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.18
45 Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.18
46 Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.19
47 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2002 p.24
When discussing productive language skills, Harmer writes about the skill of speaking. Teaching the students how to produce spoken English is one of the most important goals in English language teaching. Many students in second language classrooms appear to be reluctant to interact in speaking activities since they feel uncomfortable producing the second language. In contrast, however, there are always some students that feel more comfortable and confident than others about speaking. According to Harmer, the teacher is crucial for enabling students practicing and improving their oral proficiency. The teacher presents the students with relevant topics, make them feel relaxed and give them time to prepare and allow them to work in pairs and/or group.48 As an example of communicative activities Harmer mentions role-playing that takes place in typical environments, like the grocery store, in school or at the bus, and other types of activities where students are encouraged to interact with each other. Harmer claims that if these kinds of activities are executed, learning a language should develop by itself.49 By using role play, the teacher can make sure that everyone is given a chance to speak, even when some are more or less comfortable with producing spoken language. Role-playing can also help the students to feel more relaxed and secure by being able to hide behind their character. They will also be working in groups, which according to Harmer is beneficial. According to him, many students benefit from working in pairs or groups, since they often feel more comfortable producing spoken English in front of a smaller audience. When processing their role-playing, the students work in small groups. While this feels secure, some might find it scary to perform later it in front of the whole class. This, we mention in our problem section.50

Moreover, when discussing the production of spoken language, Harmer discusses students expanding their vocabulary and states that it is easy for students to simply grasp the meaning of a word or a phrase, while it is more complicated to actually learn in which situation the word should be used. Moreover, Harmer claims that it is easier to learn a new word/phrase if you come across it in a context.51 In relation to this, Harmer says that students learning a second language need training in pronunciation to successfully produce spoken language. In addition, many students might find pronunciation complicated since they are used to the sound of their first language.52 This can be seen as a reason to use movies and drama. By watching the film, the students have a chance to see how the words are used in context. Later when processing the

48 Harmer, 2015 p.384-387
49 Harmer, 2015 p.69
50 Harmer, 2015 p. 384-387
51 Harmer, 2015 p.25-26
52 Harmer, 2015 p.38-41
movie with the help of drama, they are given a chance to use it themselves and can try it out in different contexts.

One of the schools that were involved in Ericsson & Lindgren’s study had the expectation that being involved in the study and being forced to include more drama and other aesthetic dimensions in the learning process would help the teachers and students to think, talk and teach in a different way than traditionally. These expectations were in the end fulfilled, and one teacher mentioned that they had started to use more drama when teaching socially-orientated subjects instead of just reading and writing. When enquiring about what the students had gained through this approach, the teachers reported that since people learn through different methods, several students had been able to show their abilities. It had also been displayed in the assignments that many students had developed through the use of drama in education, and had been able to remember more than with just reading and listening. However, some teachers, who did not have any major prior knowledge in working with aesthetics in their subjects, occasionally had a challenging time in assessing the students’ work. The teachers were agreeing, though, that many of these problems were influenced by their lack of prior knowledge.

Eriksson and Lindgren refer to Ziehe who discusses the problems with bringing the students everyday culture to the classroom. Ziehe argues that this is a mistake. He is also critical of the relationship between students and teachers these days. He argues that teachers provide the students with different “didactic decoys” in order to accommodate the students. Such decoys might very well be different kinds of popular culture. Eriksson and Lindgren cite other research that establishes that this often is the case and that teachers use popular culture to connect with the students. The aesthetic subjects also tend to be a sanctuary or refuge from the other activities in the school.

Kristin Olson and Cecilia Boreson, declare in their book, Medieresor – om Medier för Pedagoger, that you can approach everything, from historical events and politics to religion and geography, by dramatizing or creating your own images and stories. The key word is empathy that combined with imagination makes the facts and information come alive. The approach itself results in students asking more questions about the material, than if the aim is

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53 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2002 p.44
54 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2002 p.49-50
55 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2002 p.51, 53
56 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.25
57 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.25
to present a text or take a test. Social sciences in particular often offer plenty of opportunities for the students to dramatize and write their own script. By using drama, the teacher is able to make the subject or current project come alive, which is likely to increase the students’ motivation, and as Olson and Boreson imply, help the students gaining a deeper understanding of different historical events or situations in society. This approach can also be useful in various subjects included in social science, but also in the process of learning authentic, everyday English.

Like Olson and Boreson, Rasmusson and Erberth consider it important to have certain frameworks when working with role play, and to allow the students enough time for using their creativity. Role play as a method is useful in many subjects in school and there are several opportunities to dramatize different phenomena, such as historical events or unfamiliar environments and social or organizational contexts. Role playing can be a complement to other presentation methods. It engages the audience and spurs the discussion. You can also for example role play certain situations and events that illustrate a very specific topic. In addition, Olson and Boreson state that for large-scale projects, role-playing gives students freedom within limits. There are many opportunities for students to generate their own “advancement,” meaning that the students choose how much they want to learn in a subject. You must have a distinct time frame, both in terms of the actual work process and the finished material. A meaningful task creates motivation. This is in line with Ericsson & Lindgren’s thoughts about themes, and in what way it is important for students to have certain structures, or guidelines, while they are exercising their creativity.

Lena Aulin-Gråhamn, writes about drama in the anthology *Skolan och Den Radikala Estetiken*, as a subject without its own syllabus, but as a method to use in other subjects or specific projects. She states that teaching drama is similar to playing games, but the aim is often to handle conflicts or to develop specific methods. A common purpose is to develop democratic attitudes in students. Further, in “Enhancing the English-Language Oral Skills of International Students through Drama,” Chamkaur Gill has studied a group of people with a non-English-speaking background in Australia. The study focuses on oral English communication and how

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58 Olson, Kristin and Boreson, Cecilia, *Medieresor: om medier för pedagoger*, Sveriges utbildningsradio (UR) i samarbete med Myndigheten för skolutveckling och Svenska filminstitutet, Stockholm, 2004 p.84
59 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.47-48
60 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.156-157
61 Olson and Boreson, 2004 p.86
62 Olson and Boreson, 2004 p.42
63 Aulin-Gråhamn, Persson, and Thavenius 2004
it is affected by including drama in the classroom. Gill argues that there are a great many advantages in using drama in the classroom and that it can play an important role in developing a learner’s oral proficiency. He claims that drama encourages spontaneity, which might create error-ridden language, but the lack of pressure to produce correct verbalisation promotes confidence and fluency.  

This, Gill contends, is particularly useful for students who suffer from social anxiety. They are often shy and lack confidence. Taking the pressure off people, including both those who suffer from social anxiety and those who do not, is a means of making them feel protected by their character and they can thus improve their pronunciation. Moreover, by using drama, teachers may prevent some students from taking up more space and talking more than others. In regular discussions, there are often a number of people who sit in the background never making their voices heard. By using drama, the teacher can make sure that all the students speak.

Drama is also an excellent way to include all students in the activity. The concept of inclusion means that everyone is addressed and experiences a sense of community and togetherness in a group, both socially and physically, whether you have special needs or difficulties. An idea foregrounded in the Swedish curriculum is that no one should feel left out; the school should strive to be a vibrant social community that provides security and willingness and desire to learn. In the Swedish curriculum it is also stated that all those who work in school should assist in developing the students’ sense of belonging, solidarity and responsibility for people, even outside the immediate group. Exclusion is the opposite of inclusion. By excluding a person, one chooses not to accept the person and rather expels him/her from the group for various reasons.

**Popular Culture and Education**

The concept of popular culture is a broad term, and it can be discussed what should be included in the term. In *Populärkulturen och Skolan*, Magnus Persson attempts to define the term “popular culture.” He mentions that in many cases it can be used as a negative thing to disparage something. But the term "popular" is mainly linked to something that is popular or well-liked.

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64 Gill, 2013 p. 2
65 Gill, 2013 p.2
by many. Here you can include film, and this is the reason we have chosen to incorporate film in our essay. In *Popular Culture - Theories, Methods and Analysis*, Simon Lindgren defines “popular” in several different ways, but in a summary, he states that popular culture is commercial, accessible and homely. It gives people what they want and can thus reflect many people's wants and needs. In short, something common people in common.

Persson discusses historical social changes that have resulted in certain consequences for the Swedish school. He mentions that the formative years and the educational period has been extended. People do not have to grow up as rapidly as they had to “in the old days,” and it has become the norm to continue with higher education at university level after high school. The school and the teacher’s authority are no longer obvious to the students; it must be earned and conquered. Moreover, Persson claims that popular culture presents an important aspect for today’s young people. He argues that although the school is an increasing part of students’ lives, popular culture has for many become an alternative agent competing with school about time, attention and interest. This is problematic for the educational system since it has traditionally been a duty for school to “fight” popular culture. In Persson’s opinion, this is not a constructive approach and refers to the Swedish School Board for the claim that children’s and young people's own experiences, culture and knowledge should be taken into consideration.

Olin-Scheller discusses the importance of processing reading experiences in the classroom, and that for young people’s opportunities to consider the story’s assertions against reality. Young people also often demand emotionally strong reading experiences. According to Olin-Scheller, students are unfortunately offered limited opportunities to build their own conceptual worlds and to develop new reading strategies. Instead, it is common that assignments on literature generally are limited to checking that the students are in fact reading. Examples of course work are individually written book reviews and oral group presentations. These assignments often result in a short presentation of the document and not a closer reflection of the contents.

Persson further discusses the school’s relationship to popular culture and refers to Otto’s study, stating that before the 1950s, popular culture was excluded from education and was considered an external threat. Nowadays, for example, reading fiction in Swedish schools is seen as natural

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68 Persson, Magnus (red.), *Populärkulturen och skolan*, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2000 p.22
70 Persson, 2000
71 Persson, 2000 p.15-17
72 Olin-Scheller, 2008 p.39
and obvious. Persson writes that the view on popular culture has subsequently changed, and that the focus is on the fact that students are actually reading, rather than on what they are reading. Persson presents two possible approaches which are based on students’ reality and experience. On one hand, related experience can be used as a motivation for learning, and to make the students interested and motivated. On the other hand, to look at students’ experiences is to consider them as complex and contradictory with the goal to place students’ experiences in a larger social and historical context which results in a broadened understanding. The ambition is then to gain new experiences based on old.

Sernhede writes about the school and its relation to popular culture and about the past two to three decades of debate on the crisis in school. Some people want to go back to the old school, including teachers with authority, while others are convinced that schools need to embrace students’ culture and everyday life. Sernhede is of the opinion that students lacked, and still lack, motivation in school. However, he does not think that a further blurring of the line between school and youth culture is the way to go. While remaining a school, he argues, it should still affect the students as deeply as popular culture does.

A case in point, presented in Såpor istället för Strindberg, is a study performed by Olin-Scheller of high school students’ text worlds during their spare time and in school with a focus on youth culture and different types of texts and media, Olin-Scheller describes how popular culture has been previously perceived and treated as a bad influence by the school. She reflects on the concept of the “expanded concept of text” or “a broad concept of text” and says that it can be interpreted as a broader meaning of the verb to read. She also states that, from a semiotic point of view (meaning the study of meaning-making), text can mean a great deal of things in addition to the traditionally written text. The types of texts she focuses on in her book are multimodal such as TV series, fictional literature, films and computer games.

According to Olin-Scheller, reading comprehension and being able to read is not the same thing. She claim that while students can easily read the words in a text and thus benefit from the text, they may still miss the plot and message because they lack the ability to interpret, critically

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73 Persson, 2000 p.29
74 Persson, 2000 p.37
75 Persson, 2000 p.49
77 Sernhede, 2006 p.14-15
78 Olin-Scheller, 2008 p.6
79 Olin-Scheller, 2008 p.9
examine and analyse the text. According to Olin-Scheller, the reading of typographical text, the regular, written text, is an important skill in our society, but that our environment also requires us to have the ability to understand and interpret different text types. Therefore, reading comprehension and reading skills must also include written-, image- and sound-based texts.80

“Aesthetics” is described as encompassing different areas within art, for example music, drama, architecture, painting and dancing. Ericsson and Lindgren mention that the concept of aesthetics appears in several ways in scientific and educational texts. It can be anything between how to perceive the beauty of the music to the issues of democracy, morality and ethics. However, there is no explanation for whether aesthetics is a skill, an expression or a way to comprehend.81 Topics such as music, pictures, sports, and crafts are areas in which school promotes aesthetic skills. Drama, for example, is not a school subject in itself, but still works as an aesthetic learning process and as a learning tool in other subjects.82

Persson continues by discussing media in education stating that it is important to integrate an aesthetic and analytical approach. One should not focus on the media itself, but rather use them as resources in the different school subjects.83 He refers to an article written by Brandt-Pedersen, who believes that aesthetics should have a larger part in school. The school should benefit from the commitment and the skills students exhibit in their circle of friends. The student who seems uninvolved and uninterested in class might suddenly show a huge capacity for work when he/she carries out a thematic requirement with any of the various forms of aesthetic tools (dance, drama, singing, etc.). Brandt-Pedersen claims that the experiences that create enthusiasm in school are often linked to different aesthetic experiences.84 Persson then refers to Drotner, who agrees with Brandt-Pedersen in many respects, and believes that aesthetics can operate as a “free zone” where students are given a chance to experiment in a pleasurable and challenging way. If the finished production does not conform to the traditional criteria of art, this does not matter according Drotner. What is important is to offer a wider field where students can mix different forms of expression.85

80 Olin-Scheller, 2008 p.15-16
82 Aulin-Gråhamn, Lena, Persson, Magnus & Thavenius, Jan, Skolan och den radikala estetiken, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2004 p.29
83 Persson, 2000 p.61
84 Persson, 2000 p.63
85 Persson, 2000 p.64
Problems/Ethics
A possible problem of working with films is that watching movies is something most students already do in their spare time. It is therefore to be expected that they associate this activity with relaxation. This is however not the case in school which is why the teacher should introduce some short preparatory work on the film, for example a minor discussion or asking the students to stay attuned to certain occurrences. The students could also be given questions to answer while watching. This way the students might be more likely to stay focused.

One of the issues when working with drama might be that some students will find role-playing childish or too close to playing games, and therefore think it is embarrassing to perform a role in front of other people. However, if there is a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, this problem will hopefully not be too acutely felt. Students and teachers can help prevent the problem by making sure that there is a good atmosphere in the room and to encourage the group to have fun and make a good presentation instead of feeling childish.

Another problem that is not unusual when working with oral performances is that some students feel shy and do not want to talk in front of their classmates. One reason to use drama in the first place is to give students the chance to “hide” behind their characters. As a character, you would not feel as vulnerable as you sometimes do when you give a speech in front of other people. Besides, you are rarely alone on stage during a role play and therefore the audience’s eyes will not be entirely fixed on you. The last thing we identified as a possible problem when working with drama is students making fun of each other. Again, this can easily be prevented by the creation of a friendly classroom atmosphere before even initiating the role play.

Working with the selected topic is where the ethical problems may come in. When working with themes like racism and xenophobia, some students might feel uncomfortable or singled out which as a teacher you would naturally like to prevent. Racism is a sensitive theme that produces strong emotions, and it would therefore be beneficial to talk with the class about it and have some discussions before making them do a role play. During our previous study carried out in schools, we went around to the different groups to carefully make sure that no group did anything inappropriate or used offensive words. This was not a big problem in this particular class, but it can go very wrong very fast if the teacher is not alert.

It is also possible that some or someone might exclaim certain racist or xenophobic statements when working with this theme. The teacher should therefore stay alert and if he/she notices that
something is wrong quickly remind the students about the school’s values and what is suitable in the classroom.

The theme, racism and stereotypes, might seem risky to undertake. However, it is stated as belonging to the Swedish school’s fundamental values. The Swedish school has been asked by representatives in Swedish society to mediate, establish and portray certain fundamental values. “Fundamental value” is the term used in the curriculum for this purpose. Thus, the metaphor of a “base” is used to convey the sense of a foundation on which a design is to rest and be based.86 In the overall Swedish school values, it is stated under the headline “Basic Values” that, for example, the sanctity of human life, individual freedom and integrity, human equality, gender equality, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are basic values that the school shall represent and communicate.87

Method
The Comparative Method
In The Comparative Method Charles C. Ragin begins by quoting Guy Swanson who claims that “Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And, in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research”. Ragin argues that most scientists agree with this and that virtually all empirical social research is based on comparisons of some sort.88 You must compare one thing to another, to make a distinction of what the differences and similarities are, and to distinguish one subject from another. Our language is based on comparing, and you need to be able to define and describe the differences of things to be able to make yourself understood. And when you describe the differences you are also comparing things to each other. In short: by being able to define differences and similarities, you consequently make comparisons. Ragin argues that almost all scientific methods are comparative, at least in a broad sense. It can be used to further describe and/ or explain differences and variations of studies.89 The comparative method compares data from at least two studies. The researcher focuses on the differences and/or similarities of the subject studied. Researchers that work with the comparative method may be divided into two different types; the qualitative comparative

86 Olivestam, Carl Eber & Thorsén, Håkan, Värdegrund i förskola och skola: [om värdegrund, yrkesidentitet och praktik], 2. rev. uppl., Rebus, Göteborg, 2011 p.27
87 Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011, 2011 p.7
89 Ragin, 1987 p.1-2
researcher and the quantitative comparative researcher. The qualitative comparative researcher studies how different conditions and causes fit together in different settings.\textsuperscript{90} The researcher is interested in specific historical sequences or outcomes and their causes across a set of similar and different situations, meaning that you compare, for example, how the democratic system have worked in ancient Greece and how it worked in ancient Rome.\textsuperscript{91} The quantitative comparative researcher, on the other hand, is more widely used within the comparative method because when you study a macrosocial unit you need quantitative facts, for example a country’s population in numbers or how the political systems differ between countries. \textsuperscript{92}

Thomas Denk, claims in Komparativ Metod – Förståelse genom Jämförelse, that there are three kinds of comparative studies: Descriptive Comparative Analysis, Explanatory Comparative Analysis and Predicative Comparative Analysis.\textsuperscript{93} The first is used when different political objects in a certain country or group of countries are described.\textsuperscript{94} However, we intend to apply the descriptive comparative analysis in a different manner. Our aim is to compare the two films, Remember the Titans and Zootopia and examine how you might work with them to develop the pupils’ knowledge in English. With this method, you can put your study in perspective.\textsuperscript{95} The second kind, the explanatory comparative analysis, is more advanced than the descriptive analysis. It is used to clarify different situation for example how different countries have different political systems and what reasons lie behind,\textsuperscript{96} or as in our study, clarify what reasons there are to work with these films. The third approach, the predicative comparative analysis, is similar to the explanatory one. The main difference is that the third form aims to predict the future.\textsuperscript{97} This is relevant to our study since we intend to describe how you might work with one of the films. Thus, we intend to predict what outcome you might have.

**Pedagogical Perspective**
Our second theory is based on what Eriksson and Lindgren call the Pedagogical perspective. In En Start för Tänket, en Bit På Väg, they mention, among other things, the Cultural

\textsuperscript{90}Ragin, 1987 p.13  
\textsuperscript{91}Ragin, 1987 p.13  
\textsuperscript{92}Ragin, 1987, p.13  
\textsuperscript{93}Denk, Thomas, Komparativ metod: förståelse genom jämförelse, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2002, p.8  
\textsuperscript{94}Denk, 2002 p.11  
\textsuperscript{95}Denk, 2002, p.11  
\textsuperscript{96}Denk, 2002, p.12  
\textsuperscript{97}Denk, 2002, p.20
Theoretical perspective and the Pedagogical perspective. With the former the school is an institution to which the students must relate and which forms a part of their everyday lives. With the latter, however, there is often an ambition that research will lead to improved conditions in school. Moreover, according to Eriksson and Lindgren, the pedagogical perspective, may also illustrate how the view on culture has changed over time. Earlier, a great distinction used to be made between high culture and popular culture. These differences have then become somewhat blurred. When studying culture and aesthetics in school, researchers do not look at the contents of education taught. Instead, it is ultimately the question of how informal learning strategies can be used in school, or how learning occurs. Such a research focus does not problematize everyday culture's impact on teaching, but the starting point is rather to find ways to a more efficient and motivated learning.98 This is what we aimed to do with our previous study when we worked exclusively with Zootopia, and we think it fits well with our current study when it comes to how you can apply popular culture, more precisely movies, in teaching English as a second language.

Eriksson and Lindgren continue by discussing the term Modest Aesthetics. The term modest aesthetics harmonizes well with the previously discussed Pedagogical perspective. Modest aesthetics means that students’ everyday culture is integrated in school with the intention of creating an increased motivation and efficient learning. Another characteristic of modest aesthetics is its therapeutic function, for instance through the healing power of music. Lindgren asserts that children, who, for various reasons, have difficulties in school, need more time for artistic activities and these activities help reduce the problems. It is also seen as essential that students are given the opportunity to mix practical-aesthetic work and theoretical learning to become complete individuals. And just as the students are considered to have needs of aesthetic activity to balance the school’s theoretical activity, they are considered having a need for fun. Lindgren states that most students are expected to find singing or painting more fun than reading or writing.99

This line of argument fits well into our aim to use drama as an aesthetic tool when working with movies. Watching the movies might not be the most active procedure, even if the students are to pay close attention and not just take it as relaxation. Through analysing and making use of the film, you can turn it into a modest aesthetic activity, especially when combining it with the role play. By using drama, the students have the chance to express themselves in another way.

98 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.27
99 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.30
than just through writing and talking. We also think it is important for the students to have some fun in between all the theoretical school work. The Swedish curriculum regarding overall objectives and guidelines, states that “The school has a responsibility to see to it that all pupils, after completing primary education… can utilize and take part in many different forms of expression such as language, art, music, drama and dance, and has developed an awareness of society’s cultural activities.”\(^{100}\) It is also stated that the teacher is responsible for providing the students with the chance to try different working methods and arrangements.\(^{101}\)

When working with aesthetics in school, it has been shown that theme-related work is functional. Eriksson and Lindberg conducted studies in several schools and in some of them, they used different themes; one week there was an Africa theme and another week a Horror theme. What they could see from their study, was that many students in upper secondary school, appreciated that there was independent work, but it needed certain frames. Some students state that they needed restrictions in order to know what to do. Without any rules, their creativity seemed to be inhibited but taking their starting-point in a set theme, they were stimulated in their creative process.\(^ {102}\)

**Critique of Method.**

One possible objection that may be raised for our choosing of the comparative method is that it was originally designed for social research on different countries, societies and cultures. This is far from what our study is aiming at. However, as Ragin states, a great deal of social research is based on comparisons of some sort.\(^ {103}\) Thus, even if the comparative method is designed for social political and cultural research, it can be used to study other things. Describing three different kinds of comparative analysis, Denk for example draws attention to the significance of underlying reasons and speculations about the future as significant features of the method.\(^ {104}\) Instead of looking at politics, cultures and countries, our research will be based on comparing the movies *Zootopia* and *Remember the Titans*. We investigate reasons for working with these movies in the classroom, what differences and similarities can be discerned and how they may

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\(^{100}\) *Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011*, 2011 p.14

\(^{101}\) *Läroplann för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011*, 2011 p.15

\(^{102}\) Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007, p.42

\(^{103}\) Ragin, 1987 p.1

\(^{104}\) Denk, 2002 p.11-20
be used in an English teaching education. From this point of view, we think the comparative method will suit this particular study.

**Materials**

Below are two short summaries of the films we used in our study. The first is *Zootopia*, an animated movie from 2016. And the second film is *Remember the Titans*, a feature film from 2000.

*Zootopia*

*Zootopia* is a movie produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. It is directed by Byron Howard and Rich Moore starring Ginnifer Goodwin, Jason Bateman, Idris Elba and Jenny Slate. The movie portrays racism and stereotypes in a smart, implicit way. The movie’s underlying message may not be obvious to the students, but if you know what to look for before watching the film, it becomes quite clear.

The main character in the film is Judy. We become acquainted with Judy when she stars in a play. You are provided with background information of how the world has developed and that all animals live in harmony. You can be what you want in the city Zootopia. Judy, for example, wants to become a police officer. Judy grows up and becomes the city’s first bunny cop. Her parents do not support her dream, but Judy succeeds anyway. At the train station, Judy’s parents warn her against animals they believe are dangerous, stating that foxes are the worst.

When arriving in the city, Judy discovers that she is the smallest animal there, and that the other police officers do not believe in her capacity. They are working with several missing animals, but Judy is assigned to parking duty. Out working, she notices a fox acting suspiciously. She follows him to an ice-cream bar for elephants that refuse to serve him. Judy steps in to help and convinces the elephants to serve the fox. The fox is named Nick, and at the end of that day, Judy sees him deceiving animals and confronts him, but she cannot prove anything. Later Judy has a chance to be a real police officer by finding a missing otter. She returns to Nick, and threatens to arrest him, and forces him to help her. After finding out what car the otter disappeared in, going to the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles), where a sloth helps her finding out that the car belongs to Mr. Big, a mouse who is the biggest mafia boss in the city, they find the driver who was with the otter when he disappeared. The driver tells Judy and Nick that the otter kept talking about “night howlers.” The panther suddenly goes savage and attacks
them, Judy and Nick manage to escape and call for back up, but when returning with the police, the panther is gone.

The “witch hunt” of predatory animals is a fact, and other animals are afraid of them. Bellwether becomes the new mayor while Judy quits her job and returns home. Working on the farm Judy discovers that “night howlers” is a flower, and it makes you savage. She returns to Zootopia, and she and Nick steal the serum. They discover the real villain - mayor Bellwether. Bellwether shoots Nick with the serum to make him kill Judy. However, Nick and Judy had replaced the serum with blueberries and the police arrive and arrest Bellwether. Judy and Nick save the city. The animals that have been savage are cured, and the hunt for predators is ended. The movie ends happily.

*Remember the Titans.*

*Remember the Titans* is a biographical, sports drama directed by Boaz Yakin. It stars Denzel Washington, Will Patton, Wood Harris and Ryan Hurst. The film is based on a true story and is set in Alexandria, Virginia, 1971. There are many conflicts between Afro-Americans and Caucasians in the city, and racism is an ever-present problem. The city’s pride is its high school football team, the Titans. They are led by Coach Yoast, who is very popular amongst the players and the citizens. We meet him when he has a chance to earn a place in the football Hall of Fame.

During the pre-season, Yoast is told that he has been demoted to assistant coach, and is replaced as head coach by a man named Herman Boone, an Afro-American football coach. The Caucasians in the city are not pleased that Boone replaces their old coach, but the city’s Afro-American citizens are very glad that an Afro-American has been given such a prestigious position. With coach Boone in charge, a great deal of change is initiated. Now, the Afro-American adolescents have a chance to get on the football team. However, the Caucasian players are not content with either Boone as head coach, or the fact that they are going to play in the same team as the Afro-Americans. Tension and conflicts are ever-present, and at a camp, the players are forced to associate; share rooms and acquaint themselves with their team mates. Over time, they start looking beyond skin colour and start focusing on the individuals instead. When they return from the camp, most players have improved their skills. However, they notice that the citizens have still not changed. The team, however, are standing together. Coach Boone’s and Coach Yoast’s collaborated coaching has proved successful, and as the team keeps winning games the citizens of Alexandria become more accepting. When the high school
football board is trying to get rid of Boone by bribing a referee to force the Titans to lose, Yoast insists that the referee starts making accurate verdicts. The Titans wins the game, and coach Boone can keep his job. After substantial drama, race-based conflicts and difficulties, the Titans end up becoming the Virginia state champions of 1971. The film concludes with the team gathering ten years later to attend the funeral of their old team captain, who died in an accident. In the final credits, the movie shows the stories of some of the more prominent characters, and how their lives turned out after the 1971 high school football championship.

**Discussion and Analysis**

Regarding Our Method/Theory

In our analysis, we use the Comparative method described by Ragin\(^{105}\) and Denk\(^{106}\) to compare the two films *Zootopia* and *Remember the Titans* and unravel differences and similarities between them. Our intention is to give examples of how you can use these films with the help of drama to improve the students’ oral proficiency in English. We want to provide examples that may inspire teachers to work with these films and what the outcome may be. We will do this by applying the Pedagogical perspective described by Ericsson and Lindgren\(^{107}\) and their ways of using drama to find effective and motivating ways of learning English.

In our minor study during our last internship (VFU), we wanted to develop how you can use film to improve the students’ oral proficiency in English. We had six weeks of internship at the same school in the south of Sweden, and during those weeks we completed our study in a seventh-grade class where the students worked with *Zootopia*, which, as has been presented above, deals with important and current topics such as stereotypes, where you expect someone to act a certain way just because they are a certain animal, for example that foxes cannot be trusted, elephants have a good memory and bunnies are cute and dumb, and it also deals with racism. In this class, we focused on working with the film to develop the students’ oral skills through discussions, oral presentations in the form of short theatre plays that the students themselves wrote. One of the authors of this essay also worked with a parallel class (in the same year as the first) where she worked in different ways with the film, not only focusing on oral

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\(^{105}\) Ragin, 1987 p.1  
\(^{106}\) Denk, 2002 p.11-20  
\(^{107}\) Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.27
exercises, but also on written proficiency. The main emphasis, however, was on the other class where the emphasis was on the oral development.

**Why We Chose Zootopia and Remember the Titans**

*Zootopia* is an animated film and we thought that it would be easy for most students, both older and younger ones, to connect to it and understand it. The language is suitable for a younger audience, and since we are teaching English as a second language we thought that it would be on an appropriate level for the students. The movie was released in 2016, and at the time of writing this essay, it is still quite new. The animation is of a very high quality and several students might have heard about it and wanted to see it. Therefore, the motivation tended to be high, both prior to and while watching the film. A further argument for choosing this particular animated movie, as we have stated before, was its important underlying theme, namely racism and stereotypes of animals acting “the way they should” based on what animal they are.

One reason that we chose *Remember the Titans* as our second film is that it serves as a contrast to *Zootopia* in the sense that it is non-animated. Moreover, the movie is based on a true story, which *Zootopia* is not. However, *Remember the Titans* is built on the same theme, racism and prejudice, though perhaps in a more concrete way. The film was made in 2000 and it is not certain that the students have seen it before, which might be positive when you wish to catch their interest and attention.

**How to Work with the Films**

Bahrani and Shi Sim found that films in general, and animated movies and cartoons in particular, hold a certain pedagogical value. In our study we covered this by choosing one animated movie combined with a non-animated movie. The films have different qualities, both positive and negative. *Zootopia* is humoristic and pedagogical with its implicit message of stereotypes and racism, while *Remember the Titans* is more explicit regarding the theme. Both movies provide a great content for language learning and linguistic diversities.

Students do not necessarily need to have any previous knowledge of the particular films that we have been discussing in this essay. They know what a film is, and have certain expectations based on the specific genre. Film is a part of popular culture and something that the students

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108 Bahrani and Shi Sim, 2012 p.3-4
109 Bahrani and Shi Sim, 2012 p.4
are well acquainted with from their home environment. We start the learning process with something the students already are familiar with which is important, because if the students feel well acquainted with the subject the potential for learning is greater. In this study we have focused on teaching English to Swedish students, and it might be that students are not exposed to the target language as much as they preferably should. However, the breakthrough of the internet presents a great many chances for the students to expose themselves to the language. Since we have chosen two quite popular and famous movies, the students could watch them at home, either by renting them, watching them on different streaming services like Netflix or Viaplay or searching for certain scenes on Youtube.com. Thanks to this, the students are not necessarily bound to the classroom when it comes to watching the selected movies and they can enjoy them from home if they would like to take a closer look at certain things.

We chose to work with movies which have a similar theme, racism, since we wanted a topic that could help the students focus on improving their oral skills. If they stick to that theme, they are free to create a play about what they want. The reason we chose to work with racism as a theme is because then we can make our work harmonise with the school’s values and the Swedish curriculum whilst enabling them to practise their oral skills.

By using movies and drama together we hope to achieve what Ellis calls “intrinsic motivation,” which we experienced during our previous study. The students might not find language learning motivating enough in itself, but by offering the students interesting and playful ways of learning English, the teacher might hopefully stimulate the students’ intrinsic motivation. Kabooha states that movies might function as a motivating factor in itself. This corresponds with Persson’s claim that popular culture is becoming an increasingly important part of students’ lives and that it is valuable to include students’ experiences and culture in the classroom. Eriksson and Lindgren agree with this opinion. In fact, at our final VFU, we noticed that the students seemed very motivated, which we believe is a consequence of having fun and feeling motivated and that this led to them to perform well in both drama and language respects. Gill’s conclusion about the “fun factor” goes well with what Aulin-Gråhamn argues

108 Ohlin-Scheller, 2008 p.27
109 Lightbown and Spada, 2006 p.30
110 Pinter, 2011 p.86-87
111 Ellis, 1997 p.76
112 Kabooha, 2016 p.2
113 Persson, 2000 p.15-17
114 Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.24
when she connects the act of drama with its closeness to play.\textsuperscript{117} Moreover, she claim that you can process the message of the movie and raise other questions through drama.\textsuperscript{118}

The way we chose to use drama is similar to the method called the “socio-analytical roleplay” described by Rasmusson and Erberth.\textsuperscript{119} Especially when working with racism and xenophobia in school, it is important to discuss and talk about it with the class before trying to perform a role-playing session. It would be very unfortunate if anyone would feel singled out or uncomfortable. However, it is stated that there are several advantages you can achieve by working with drama in the classroom. To begin with, Olson and Boreson write that you can use drama and role-playing to approach almost any topic you want to discuss in school.\textsuperscript{120} In addition, people learn in different ways, which is another reason for including drama when teaching, since it opens up for learners who for example learn by doing and not reading.\textsuperscript{121}

When working with the chosen theme (in our study; racism and xenophobia) drama is a great method to process what is being discussed. Aulin-Gråhamn argues that drama is good for processing and handling different conflicts, and is commonly used to develop democratic values.\textsuperscript{122} In language learning, Gill promotes drama by stating that it improves fluency and confidence.\textsuperscript{123} He also states that people who feel insecure and tend not to speak much in class are protected by their character.\textsuperscript{124} When working with drama, the teacher also prevents some students from taking up more room than others when it comes to speaking while some prefer to stay in the background. Thus, everybody can be forced to speak proportionately.

While carrying out his study, Gill noted that the students showed more enthusiasm during the lessons where drama was used.\textsuperscript{125} The participants talked more with each other and laughed together. They tended to be more exited during the drama weeks. The facilitator could see that the participants showed a greater willingness to produce interactive oral English than they had before.\textsuperscript{126} Due to the fact that the teacher took a step back and no longer was the dominant figure, the participants felt that they were in control (within the framework set by the teacher).

\textsuperscript{117} Aulin-Gråhamn, Persson and Thavenius, 2004 p.29
\textsuperscript{118} Aulin-Gråhamn, Persson and Thavenius, 2004 p.29
\textsuperscript{119} Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.24
\textsuperscript{120} Olson and Boreson, 2004 p.84
\textsuperscript{121} Eriksson and Lindgren, 2007 p.49-50
\textsuperscript{122} Aulin-Gråhamn, 2004 p.29
\textsuperscript{123} Gill, 2013 p.2
\textsuperscript{124} Gill, 2013 p.2
\textsuperscript{125} Gill, 2013 p.6
\textsuperscript{126} Gill, 2013 p.6
Both Olson & Boreson\textsuperscript{127} and Rasmusson & Erberth\textsuperscript{128} agree on the need for certain frames when letting the students dramatize. When being too independent, some students might have a hard time figuring out what to do or how to do it. It is also important to have a leader present in the room who can step in if something turns out to be offensive or if the students need help or input.\textsuperscript{129}

The main reason for letting the students produce their own role-playing is, as stated earlier in the introduction, to make them exercise their oral skills, which we find is often lost when processing movies in school. However, we do not believe it would be beneficial to let students work on their own directly after watching the films. Therefore, before dividing them into groups, we believe it would be advantageous to process the films together. One way of doing this is through discussion. When interacting with each other through discussion, the students will practice their productive English language skills, while they also exercise their receptive listening skills. The students may start to discuss in pairs or small groups before raising the discussion together with the whole class. Harmer states that the teacher is essential and should present interesting topics and make the students feel relaxed.\textsuperscript{130} Thus, the teacher is responsible for the discussion and how it progresses. He or she must do so, however, without taking up too much space, and provide the students with relevant questions that makes it possible for them to analyse, think and discuss the movies.

A topic to discuss in relation \textit{Zootopia} could be stereotypes, for example; \textit{Are there any stereotypes depicted in the film? How are they portrayed? This is about animals, but can it be applicable on humans? If so, in what way?} Stereotypical features in the animal kingdom in the movie are that bunnies are small and cute and that, consequently, they cannot take on the rough profession of a police officer, and that foxes are sneaky and therefore cannot be trusted. One stereotype the movie actually contradicts in order to create a comic effect is that elephants are supposed to have a good memory, while the elephant the protagonists of the movie encounter is actually very forgetful. When discussing this aspect, the teacher can move on and ask the class what stereotypes there are in human society.

Another example of a topic to discuss in \textit{Zootopia}, in relation to stereotypes, is the prejudice in the movie. The teacher in the classroom can ask the students questions similar to these; \textit{Can

\textsuperscript{127} Olson and Boreson, 2004 p.57
\textsuperscript{128} Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.47-48
\textsuperscript{129} Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.24
\textsuperscript{130} Harmer, 2015 p.384-387
you define anyone being exposed to prejudice in the movie? If so, in what way? There are situations in the film where the characters imply opinions such as “you cannot trust a fox” or “policemen are fat and loves doughnuts.” Some characters, Judy’s parents for example, are afraid of predators and expect them to behave in a certain way, even though everyone lives together in harmony. This can also be applicable on the human society and discussing what prejudice exists in society today, and what it can lead to.

In *Remember the Titans*, the racist theme is depicted very explicitly. It is also shown how characters overcome their differences and prejudices which might be worth talking about. Examples of questions to discuss could be; What is racism? How did the players in the team become friends? Do you think that the inhabitants of the city changed perspective/opinions over time? Why/why not? Is there still racism in today’s society? How can we prevent it? In the movie, sports make people come together. What other things do you think can make people overcome their prejudices? In the film, the players have a hard time accepting each other at first, but after a while they realize that they have to work together in order to win. Coach Boone also works hard on forging the team together. When the players return to the camp, the city’s inhabitants do not understand how a team of mixed races can work together, but when the team starts winning, the city’s inhabitants starts to change perspective. One character for instance, Bertier’s mother, is not happy that her son becomes best friend with an Afro-American, Campbell, but later when seeing how strong their friendship is she accepts Campbell unconditionally. One thing to think about before discussing this topic is that it can be very sensitive. It is important for the teacher to handle this carefully and make sure that no students feel uncomfortable or bothered.

After discussing the movies together, the next step would in this case be to divide the students into groups of three or four students. The groups will be asked to conduct a role play together, based on the same theme as the movie, namely racism. Rasmusson and Erberth, among others, state that it is important to give students certain frames to work within when conducting their own role-playing. Examples of aspects that students should take into account may concern the length of the role play, the number of lines given to each student, a respectful and inoffensive atmosphere and finally, the use of English. Moreover, it is excellent if the students can come up with their role-playing completely on their own, but if they find it too difficult they can find inspiration, or even take complete scenes, from the film. Therefore, it would be useful for the

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131 Rasmusson and Erberth, 2008 p.47-48
students, if the teacher could provide the students with some example scenes from the movies that they can work with. Such examples could be:

**Zootopia:**

1. Judy talks with her parents at the train station, waiting on the train that will take her too Zootopia. Her parents are worried about their daughter moving to the city and warn her about foxes, weasels and other animals they think cannot be trusted.
2. Judy meets Nick for the first time. Nick wants to buy ice cream at an elephant store but is refused to do so simply because he is a fox, but after a while Judy manages to persuade the elephant to let Nick buy ice cream.
3. After Judy’s press conference, where she states that the reason some predators have gone savage has to do with their DNA, many of the city’s predators are treated differently even if they are innocent. Some are told to “go back to where you came from.”
4. Nick and Judy are searching for a missing otter and visit a place where he is known to visit frequently. There they are introduced to an elephant that is said to have an impeccable memory, but it quickly becomes clear that it really has not.

**Remember the Titans:**

1. The players joke in the locker room after training; some of them are teasing Sunshine about his feminine hair. Sunshine responds by kissing Bertier. Bertier and Petey become a bit worried that Sunshine might be gay, but the rest of the team do not have a problem with it.
2. After winning their first game, three players from the team visit a bar to celebrate their victory. When entering the bar, they are stopped by the owner who refuses to let them in since two of the players are Afro-Americans.
3. Coach Yoast is told by the football board that they have bribed a referee to make the Titans lose their next game which will result in Coach Boone being fired and Yoast having his old job back. The board does not want an Afro-American coach on the team. However, during the game Yoast has a serious talk with the referee, threatening to expose everything. The Titans win the game, Boone keeps his job and Yoast misses the opportunity to have his place in the Hall of Fame.
4. Bertier’s girlfriend Emma does not understand his new friendship with Cambell since she does not think people of different colour should be friends. After a while she reconsiders and begs Campbell to forgive her.

If the students do not find any of the named scenes appropriate to what they want to do, they can watch the film again on their own and choose another scene that they find more interesting.

Similarities in the Films Chosen

Even if Zootopia is intended for younger viewers while Remember the Titans is aiming at an older audience, there are still many similarities between the two films. The most obvious one is the theme of racism and stereotypes which is the main reason why we choose to work with these two films. When looking at the characters, you identify several similarities between Judy Hopps from Zootopia and Coach Boone from Remember the Titans. They both move to a new city where they do not know anyone. They are filled with confidence, knowing that they are capable of doing their job. When arriving at their new workplaces, they are both challenged by their new colleagues and people around them. During their first days at their new job, they both manage to acquire a somewhat reluctant companion (Nick Wilde in Zootopia and Coach Yoast in Remember the Titans) who later becomes one of their closest friends.

The two movies share a very similar scene. In Zootopia, Judy’s first acquaintance with Nick is in an ice cream-bar. At this bar, Nick is denied buying ice cream because he is a fox. In Remember the Titans, a group of players from the team (Sunshine, Petey and Blue) goes to a bar to celebrate the team’s first victory. When entering the bar, they are denied a table since Petey and Blue are Afro-Americans. The bar owners in both movies share almost exactly the same line – “We have the right to refuse service to anyone.” In Remember the Titans, it is much clearer that this is about racism whereas in Zootopia it does not have to be that obvious if you do not think about it. If working with both movies in the same class, this could be an interesting thing to show the students and maybe help them open their eyes when watching Zootopia. At the end of both movies, the main characters in each film have changed the townspeople’s way of thinking. The ordinary people are much more accepting and tolerant than they were in the beginning.
Differences in the Chosen Films

Unlike *Remember the Titans*, *Zootopia* is an animated movie and it is very colourful and full of humoristic moments which may appeal to most students. Some students may find it childish but the majority will probably not have any problems with the fact that it is animated. *Zootopia* does not use a complicated language so watching it with English subtitles might not be too overwhelming for second language learners. The xenophobic and racist theme is not obvious, and without mentioning it to the class it is possible that they will not even think about it. It is up to the teacher to decide whether to tell the class before watching the movie, in order make them notice certain scenes where stereotypes or xenophobic events are portrayed, or tell the students afterwards in order to get a certain realization about what they have just seen.

*Remember the Titans* is not as humoristic as *Zootopia*. There are some comic features, but the overall atmosphere is more serious. It is not animated and is intended for a slightly more mature audience than *Zootopia* is. Consequently, the language is a bit more complicated but not too much so for students at the age of thirteen to fifteen years old. In *Remember the Titans* the theme of racism is portrayed very straightforwardly. They use words such as “negro” and “race” and expressions like “Your people.” Since racism is more openly shown in *Remember the Titans* than it is in *Zootopia*, there are more characters in *Remember the Titans* who are portrayed as being tolerant and accepting of different people. Examples of such characters are Lastik and Sunshine who straight away stand out from the crowd when making their entrance in the movie. In *Zootopia* it is more common with people (or animals) being quite condemnatory, like Judy’s parents when warning her about foxes, weasels and other animals. To be fair however, it should be pointed out that Nick once states that “In Zootopia, anyone can be anything” which can be seen as an inclusive attitude, even if he constantly judges Judy for being a bunny.

Underlying Themes of Racism

The theme of racism in *Zootopia* is visible from the beginning, starting with Judy’s parents showing some racist and stereotypical tendencies when saying good bye to their daughter at the train station. They warn her about several predators, claim that weasels cheat and that you cannot trust foxes. They even provide her with a can of fox repellent. The story does not show any marked change in their way of thinking, but when Judy returns to work at her parents’ carrot farm, she learns that they have hired a fox to work for them. We can thus draw the conclusion that they might have changed their minds. This is also interesting to discuss in class,
and can be applied to real people when discussing how a person can change and how you should not judge a book by its cover.

Also in *Remember the Titans*, the theme of racism is depicted from the start, and in a more visible way due to the fact that the film is set in the 1970s when racism was still a very clearly felt feature in the lives of Afro-Americans in the USA. When Coach Boon gets the job as Head Coach and thereby degrades the previous Head Coach from his position, society does not look upon it with kind eyes.

In *Zootopia*, there are several interesting characters from a racial perspective. To begin with, we have the bunny Judy and the fox Nick. In the real animal kingdom, these two would probably be enemies since foxes eat bunnies when the chance presents itself. This is an interesting subject to deal with, and you may discuss how a similar relationship would look if the characters were human. *Remember the Titans* also portrays several interesting characters, based on the underlying theme of racism. First, there are coaches Boone and Yoast. They have different appearances and act differently. Boone is tough and fierce; he informs the team during their first gathering that “This isn’t a democracy, this is a dictatorship.” He likes to push the players to their limits, and is not satisfied until they are perfect. Coach Yoast, on the other hand, considers himself a second father for the team mates, and he has a more collected approach. The coaches have several interesting conversations, for example when Yoast tells Boone to ease up a bit. Boone replies that he is, indeed, harsh on the players, but he treats all of them the same, without any exceptions due to skin colour. Boon argues that Yoast discriminates the players and does not treat the Caucasian players the same way he does the Afro-American.

One scene in *Remember the Titans* is very similar to a scene in *Zootopia*. It takes place after the Titans have won their first game, and the team wants to celebrate. Sunshine, Petey and Blue are heading for a restaurant/bar in town. Petey and Blue (afro Americans) are a little doubtful whether to visit a certain bar or not, but Sunshine (Caucasian) convinces them. When they enter the bar, the manager claims that there are no tables available. When Sunshine argues that there are, indeed, several free tables around, the manager states that they do not serve Afro-Americans and that he “…has the right to refuse service to whoever he wants”. The scene is similar to a scene in *Zootopia*, in which a fox, Nick, is trying to buy ice cream from an elephant who does not want to sell ice cream to a fox. The elephant refers to a sign on the counter and says the exact same thing that the manager in *Remember the Titans* does; that he has the right to refuse service to whoever he wants.
The film *Remember the Titans*, portrays Julius Cambell and Gerry Bertier, who make an interesting personal journey. These two men are the team’s strongest defensive players, but they have difficulties agreeing. They are forced to share rooms and during the first day of the pre-season camp they start fighting. However, one day at the pre-season camp, after they have confronted each other and coach Boone takes the whole team on an early-morning run they become friends. Thanks to the hard work put into the team they have a breakthrough, commencing with Cambell and Bertier working together instead of separately. Cambell’s and Bertier’s friendship continues to grow throughout the film, and at the end, they are calling each other brothers. In *Zootopia*, Nick and Judy find themselves in a comparable situation when they become better friends. It takes place in a zip-line cart after they have been chased by the panther, and Judy has been reprimanded by her boss. Nick stands up for her, and they leave and Nick reveals to her that he has been misjudged and treated badly all his life. He tells her about how he wanted to join the boy scouts when he was a kid but was abused by the others because he was a fox. Another interesting depiction from the perspective of race in *Remember the Titans* is Bertier’s friend Ray who has difficulties accepting the Afro-Americans on the team, and deliberately fails to mark his attacker, which results in a team mate being injured. As a consequence, Bertier decides to exclude Ray from the team. On the whole, there are a great many of the stereotyped characters in *Zootopia*. For example, the animals working at the DMV are sloths, which is a hint at how much time an average visit may take to receive your driver license or other important papers at the DMV. They joke with animal stereotypes when talking with an elephant. Elephants are said to have a good memory, but this elephant seems to have trouble remember anything.

**Conclusion**

Taking our starting-point in our previous study made at our placement in schools, we have investigated how one can choose to work with movies within English. Instead of only processing the films with the help of classical film reviews and short discussions, we have focussed on students’ oral skills in second language acquisition, which often tends to be slightly forgotten when working with films. In order to make use of the films analysed in this essay, we have investigated what benefits may come from including drama and role-playing when working with movies.
We have consulted previous research in different areas such as second language acquisition, the integration of movies in the classroom and the importance of drama and role-playing. Having worked thoroughly along these lines, we are confirmed in our initial belief that including popular culture, like movies, is a good way to help students attain a second language and that role-playing can be a great way to encourage the students to speak. Due to the comparative method, we have been able to compare the two movies and distinguish similarities and differences while studying certain characters in depth. By using the pedagogical method, inspired by Ericsson and Lindgren, we have analysed reasons for using drama and role play when processing the movies.

Studies have shown that there are certain benefits from carrying out thematic work in school. The films that have been analysed in this essay, *Zootopia* and *Remember the Titans*, share a similar theme which makes them suitable for dealing with a certain topic in school, in this case racism. We chose one animated and one non-animated movie since these cover most types of language; one is humoristic and the other is more serious and is, in addition, based on a true story. Animated films often have a pedagogical value whereas non-animated ones tend to develop critical thinking while also containing a rich source of content for language learning and linguistic diversities.

Drama and role-playing have been proved to include several pedagogical benefits. For example, teachers have the opportunity to make sure that all students are given the same amount of speaking time. When working with drama, students are given a chance to express themselves in a way they might not be used to. This can be a profit for some students who find it hard to write down their thoughts and answers on different questions. It has also been shown that by including drama when teaching, students is offered a deeper understanding by being able to experience and not just listen. Finally, by letting students take control and work within certain frames, they learn to take responsibility. As a result, they feel in charge and experience that their thoughts are heard.

To summarize, even if this study has not been tested in real life and therefore is mostly to be seen as hypothetical, we believe that combining movies with role-playing might be a great way of teaching English as a second language, especially when focusing on students’ oral skills. If handled corrected, this approach may increase the students’ motivation for learning which in the end is likely to result in higher development and progress in their language proficiency.

132 Ericsson and Lindgren, 2007 p.27
Suggestions for Future Studies
After completing this essay, we have produced a few proposals for future research. To begin with, it would be interesting to test our plans in practice. It would also be interesting to look closer at different possible themes to work with, something other than racism, which we have been discussing in this essay. We would also like to know teachers and students’ thoughts and attitudes towards drama in the classroom. How often is drama used in school? And what are students and teachers attitudes towards movies and how often are movies used as a pedagogical tool? One final proposal for future studies is to look closer on what one can gain by combining drama and books.
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