MASTER'S THESIS

Teaching English through Song in the Primary School Classroom

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Teaching through song is a technique in which songs and music are used as tools to support learning in other subjects. It is a teaching technique well suited for language learning as new words are often frequently repeated in a natural context and learners get to practice their speaking and listening skills alongside the rest of the class. The study aims to examine the use of songs and music in primary school teachers' English lessons in Norway and to investigate whether this is a suitable technique for teaching new vocabulary to younger learners. Through classroom research, in which two groups of first-graders were the participants, it became evident that teaching through song was a successful technique. All the learners increased their vocabulary. The technique showed particular improvement in words that were taught explicitly through song. Comparing the results of the research group to the control group revealed that, for the most part, those who learnt through song acquired and recalled a few more words than those who learnt words through other techniques. However, the difference was subtle and not one that can be used to draw a conclusion indicating superiority to one technique. To inquire into Norwegian teachers' thinking surrounding teaching through song, an online questionnaire was sent to primary school teachers of English. Out of 102 respondents, all replied that they used songs in their English lessons to varying degrees. Their main reasons for using songs and music were to practice and learn linguistic features, create variation and breaks in their lessons and a belief of this being a technique that provided enjoyment and motivation for the learners.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

"From an educational standpoint, music and language not only can, but should be studied together" (Engh, 2013, p. 121). This quote closed a literature review that examined why music should be used in English language learning and gave a definite conclusion. Music surrounds our daily lives; a song on the radio on your way to work, in the background of your favourite movie or video game, the national anthem at a sport event or the ice cream truck announcing its presence on your street. Singing is a collective activity which can be practised without professional training or experience, and group singing occurs everywhere from a karaoke bar to a football match (Engh, 2013, pp. 114, 117). Singing and dancing is also a part of every culture in the world (Bamford, 2008, p. 19; Sohrabi, 2015, p. 908). When music is awarded such a big role in society, it seems only natural to incorporate it into formal education as well.

Using songs as a technique for language learning is not new. Both researchers and educators seem to agree that music can be beneficial in language teaching. Evidence of this dates back to the 1960s, at least, when academics argued that music in the language classroom would prove beneficial for both linguistic improvement and motivation (Engh, 2013, p. 113). An arts-rich education will also encourage creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking and other 21st century skills (Bamford, 2008, p. 19). However, there is not an abundance of research on the field. Some of the available research and studies on the effects of foreign language learning through song are not empirically grounded (Good, Russo & Sullivan, 2014, p. 627; Ludke, 2016, p. 372). Other academic papers show a strong potential for music to aid in language acquisition, still not how or why it is used in a practical context (Engh, 2013, p. 119).

The research that has been conducted indicates the many advantages of teaching through song. Examples include increased vocabulary, better pronunciation and higher motivation. There is little research in Norway on teaching through song. One can assume that similar findings would appear had such a study been conducted in Norway, and there is a need for more research to back this up. This master's thesis aims to investigate both the use of the technique *teaching through song* among Norwegian primary school teachers and the potential benefits the technique can have on young learners. The goal is to see whether the teaching technique can be beneficial for both learners and teachers of primary school.

1.2 Research questions

The purpose of the study is to see to what degree teaching through song is a technique that will help learners acquire and recall new words and whether it is a teaching technique that Norwegian teachers believe in and use. The research questions this study will explore are the following:

1. Will teaching through song impact how many new words young learners can acquire in a foreign language and how long they will retain the new vocabulary in memory?
2. What is Norwegian teachers' thinking on song as a technique for teaching English in primary school?

An attempt to answer the first research question will be made through a small-scale study in two first-grade classrooms where one group is taught new vocabulary through song and the second group through other techniques. For the second research question, a survey sent out to Norwegian primary school teachers of English will provide the basis for the results.

1.3 Structure

The thesis is comprised of six chapters, including the introduction. Chapter 2 is the theoretical framework where English language learning and teaching through music will be the two main sections. The Norwegian national curriculum and previous research on the topic *teaching through song* will also be examined. In an effort to answer the two research questions, two studies have been conducted. Chapter 3 presents the methods used in the studies, and chapter 4 offers the results. In chapter 5, the data from the studies are discussed along with the information from the theoretical framework. Chapter 6 aims to briefly summarise and conclude the thesis, as well as offering suggestions for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework will focus on the teaching of the English language as a foreign language. The teaching technique *learning by singing*, or *learning through song*, will be evident in every section of the framework. First, attention is directed towards teaching methods and learning strategies. As singing, foremost, is considered an oral approach, the focus will be on oral language learning and oral skills. Vocabulary will also receive attention in this section as the research presented in chapter 4 in this paper revolves around vocabulary acquisition and word recall. Further, after a brief and general look into language teaching, the

Norwegian national curriculum will be investigated. The aim is to locate a possible inclusion of song as a teaching technique in the competence aims as well as to see how music is presented in the curriculum. The concept of art in education will then be discussed, including both potential benefits and attitudes. Lastly, an examination into previous research on song as a teaching technique will be made. Relevant findings will be presented in these three categories: vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation and motivation.

In an attempt to separate between terms, learning by song will be called a teaching *technique*. Techniques are what the teacher actually does with the learners (Cook, 2016, p. 258). A teaching *method* is, for example, the audiolingual method, a teaching *approach* can be an oral approach, and a teaching *style* is the different methods, approaches and techniques a teacher uses (Cook, 2016, p. 258). Teaching through song could also be called a learning *strategy*. Strategies are chosen by the learners themselves to aid in their language learning (Cook, 2016, p. 132). The way learning through song is used in this paper and research it functions as a technique used by the teacher, but it could potentially be used as a strategy by the learners as they grow older.

2.1 English language learning

Traditionally, English was taught through translation into and from the learners' first language and through grammar exercises. During what can be called the nineteenth-century revolution in language teaching, the emphasis switched to focusing on the spoken language (Cook, 2016, p. 4). The audiolingual teaching method, which saw its beginnings in the 1940s, was one of the first methods that placed speech and spoken abilities over writing and grammar. The language was supposed to be listened to first, mainly through a recording, and then it could be presented in written form (Cook, 2016, pp. 4, 22). The audiovisual method, introduced some twenty years later, was based on the same view of the importance of spoken abilities, but in addition, incorporated the use of visual images (Cook, 2016, p. 22). Including images is one way a teacher can make input more meaningful and comprehensible, especially for younger learners (Linse, 2005, p. 13; Cook, 2016, p. 79). The audiolingual method also emphasised the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. As oral skills and the ability to communicate were viewed as more important than the written language, listening was named the most important skill, followed closely by speaking (Richards & Rodgers, 2001 in Fenner, 2020b, p. 27). With the communicative teaching approaches, introduced around 1970, the four skills became more integrated (Skulstad, 2020b, p. 97). However, as the overall goal of

communicative language teaching was for the learners to use the language, oral skills still had both importance and value (Cook, 2016, p. 280).

The classroom is a typical oral arena. The teaching is often oral, either through lectures or class discussions. Learners speak in plenary, in groups and pairs, and participate in presentations, readings, dramatisations and so on (Svenkerud, Klette & Hertzberg, 2012, p. 36). Skulstad (2020b, p. 112) argues that making the speaking of English a natural everyday activity will stimulate the learners to use the language vocally from a young age. Although the classroom presents an ideal arena for practising oral skills, it is not necessarily used as one. If a teacher is concerned with the social climate in a class, and some learners are nervous or scared when it comes to expressing themselves vocally in front of the class, the teacher may use this as a reason to avoid or minimise oral activity (Svenkerud et al., 2012, p. 46). A learner will only become a highly competent speaker of English if he or she is not afraid to take risks or make errors; he or she must be willing to use the English language orally as much as possible. The teacher needs to facilitate this by creating a tolerant and accepting classroom (Skulstad, 2020b, p. 113).

The terms auditory learning and auditory learner are often associated with oral skills and oral teaching. Linse (2005, p. 25) refers to three main channels for learning, or ways of receiving and processing information, especially when meant for young learners: auditory, tactile and visual. An auditory learner might learn the material better when it is presented as a listening task, such as listening to an audio book or a song. For the auditory learner, listening to the song might be enough, whereas the visual learner would prefer pictures as well, and the tactile learner might like to do movements along with the song. To make the intended learning comprehensible for the majority, it is recommended to use a combination of all three channels (Linse, 2005, p. 26). A technique mainly intended for an auditory learner can be adapted to fit visual and tactile learners too. An example is choral response, which is a technique that fits in with the repetitive drills often associated with audiolingual teaching. In choral response, the teacher says a sentence or word, and the class repeats that word or sentence in unison. This technique is also used in learning songs where the learners repeat the different lines. Jolly (1975, p. 11) points to songs being a good way of eliminating the boredom of repetitive drills. By choosing a song with movements, or a finger-play, one will cater to the tactile learner, and by including video or pictures of what is being sung, the visual learner is also included. The repetitive language and language substitutions that occur throughout the song will ensure

learning for all three groups when it comes to the patterns of the English language (Linse, 2005, p. 53).

2.1.1 Learning strategies

Learning a language includes many aspects. Some of the most important ones are motivation, learner autonomy, intellectual development and a repertoire of learning strategies (Skulstad, 2020a, p. 56). Learning strategies have received a great focus lately and has been given ample space in the Norwegian national curriculum. In the Core Curriculum, there is a section devoted to the concept "learning to learn" in which it is stated that "schools shall help the pupils reflect on their own learning, understand their own learning processes and acquire knowledge independently" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020a). As mentioned briefly in the introduction of the theoretical framework, learning strategies are the choices the students make (Cook, 2016, p. 132). It can be defined as "any set of operation or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information" (O'Malley et al., 1985, p. 23 in Fenner, 2020a, p. 290) or as "steps taken by the learner to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable" (Oxford, 1990 in Cook, 2016, p. 141).

Put simply, learning strategies are how someone learns. The preferred strategies will vary from one individual to another. A strategy might also need to be changed if learners feel it is no longer working for them or the topic (Fenner, 2020a, pp. 294-295). For a learner to utilise a learning strategy effectively and consciously, he or she needs to know about different strategies relating to writing, reading, vocabulary learning, communication and so on. The job of introducing these strategies belongs to the teacher. When the teacher knows which strategies work for a particular student or group, he or she can facilitate learning through that strategy (Fenner, 2020a, p. 301). A 17-year-old Arabic student explains how he used learning through song as a strategy by translating words he did not know from various songs. He also listened to the songs repeatedly and sang along. He claims this helped his pronunciation, listening skills and vocabulary acquisition (Cook, 2016, p. 148). With the youngest learners, the teacher often chooses the strategy. The learners might be too young to understand which strategy works for them and to discuss different strategies. The teacher should strive to teach a variety of strategies so that the learners have plenty of choices for when they become older and more active and responsible participants in their learning (Fenner, 2020a, p. 293).

2.1.2 Vocabulary

With good language learning strategies, learners can acquire new vocabulary. Vocabulary is a central part of learning a language as one needs words to read and partake in oral discourse (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 329-330). Traditionally, vocabulary was taught through memorising word lists, dictionary studies, translation exercises and drills. More recently, in methods such as Communicative Language Teaching, the notion has been that vocabulary is learnt through communicative exposure and incidental learning through activities like reading (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 186). The English language is becoming more and more available to learners also outside of school, and because learners are more exposed to English now, compared to just a few years back, they have a larger vocabulary than before (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 185).

Vocabulary can be taught in all the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Examples include teaching through Total Physical Response activities, which require listening skills, and by creating a word wall, which involves writing (Linse, 2005, p. 122). Linse (2005, p. 123) argues that, with the youngest learners, oral-language vocabulary development is best suited as they might not yet have gained literacy skills in their first language. Vocabulary acquisition will develop gradually and over time as it takes time to learn new words. Schmitt (2008, p. 348) estimates that a word needs to be experienced at least 8-10 times before it is learnt, implying that repetition and recycling of words are of great importance. In research conducted by McKeown, Beck and Sandora (2012, p. 28), findings indicated that there were comprehension advantages when a learner had encountered a word twelve times, but not when encountered only four times. Vocabulary can be taught both implicitly and explicitly. Implicit learning is an indirect approach that focuses on learning new words incidentally, for example, through listening to or reading a book. Explicit teaching is a direct approach that intentionally focuses on the new words (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 189). Both direct and indirect teaching of vocabulary should be emphasised in education (Linse, 2005, p. 123).

A key term in vocabulary acquisition, especially perhaps with the younger learners, is transparency. Transparency refers to words that are so similar in two or more languages that a learner immediately will understand the foreign word; examples in English and Norwegian include bus-buss and smile-smil (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 36). Transparent words are important in vocabulary acquisition because they represent words that are easily understood, reproduced and remembered, and give ample opportunities for creating extensive collections

of vocabulary (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 37). A learner's first language can aid in the acquisition of foreign words when the two languages share certain elements, and it can hinder the learner if the two languages differ (Cook, 2016, p. 17). Words can also incorrectly be assumed to be transparent. Chunks are often transparent, as long as the co-occurring words are familiar for the learner. Still, despite being easy to understand, they are not necessarily as easy to produce for learners of a second or foreign language due to, for example, overuse of familiar structures and words (Hestetræet, 2020, pp. 189-190, 198-199).

In order to acquire a new language and discover the meaning of new words, learners need vocabulary learning strategies (Linse, 2005, p. 122). One crucial strategy in vocabulary acquisition is the ability to guess based on context. This ability becomes apparent in transparent words or when it comes to using knowledge of other known languages. When learners know how to utilise the strategy of guessing from context, they can continue to learn new vocabulary throughout their lives (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 201). Learners also need to be taught that sometimes they cannot guess the word from context and consequently need another strategy, like looking up words in a dictionary; this happens most often when reading (Beck & McKeown, 2003 in Linse, 2005, p. 124). Some learners, especially younger learners, are unsure about guessing and need to be encouraged to take chances. These perspectives mean that even though a word is practically identical in the learner's first language and the target language, he or she might still not be able to produce it (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 37).

Other learning strategies used to make meaning of new words and remember them are repetition and linking words to existing knowledge (Cook, 2016, pp. 76-77). Repetition is of great importance as learners are more likely to use a word, phrase or chunk if they know it well (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 198). More traditional techniques, like using pictures, explanations and translation into the learners' first language are also commonly used (Cook, 2016, p. 73). In the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a suggestion of presenting words with accompanying visuals such as pictures or miming is presented as a way of ensuring learners develop their vocabulary (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 149-150). The choice of which words to teach depends on several factors like frequency, teachability and appropriateness. Frequency refers to the number of times a word emerges, teachability to how the word can be demonstrated, for example, through actions like miming or showing a picture, and appropriateness refers to the need or want a learner has for learning that particular word (Cook, 2016, p. 63). Linse (2005, p. 122) points to the importance of choosing words that are

useful for the learners. By useful, she means words that they will encounter often and words that are of interest to the learners. The teacher will help facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching words and learning strategies that will help the learners make context-based generalisations and form connections to new words (McKeown et al., 2012, p. 25).

2.2 The Norwegian national curriculum

In Norway, teachers have *freedom of method*. The curriculum does not describe any specific way of teaching (Fenner, 2020b, p. 37). This means that the teacher is free to choose the method that he or she feels will best facilitate learning based on a curriculum whose content has been decided by the government (Engelsen, 2017, p. 59). In other words, teaching through song or music is optional, much like any other teaching technique. However, the curriculum does specify that in order for the teaching to create motivation and a joy of learning, there is a need for a varied selection of learning activities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020a). To reach all learners, education should not be based on one method or technique alone. Learners are individuals and will learn different things from the same teaching, and this must be accounted for when planning a lesson (Cook, 2016, p. 11; Fenner, 2020a, p. 288). Accompanying the competence aims is a statement that again emphasises the importance of variation: "The teacher shall facilitate for pupil participation and stimulate the desire to learn by using a variety of strategies and learning resources to develop the pupils' reading skills and oral and writing skills" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020c). One of these strategies or resources could be songs.

In the English subject curriculum from 2020, there are 78 competence aims. The words *song* or *music* appear in four of them. Three belong to primary level and are centred around exploring letters, words and pronunciation patterns in song activities, play and other language learning activities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020c). The fourth aim is from upper secondary school and deals with discussing and reflecting over form and content in various media, including music (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020c). These particular aims indicate that the technique chosen to teach them should include music in some way, either as a listening task or as a sing-along task. However, the choice of using songs to teach can be used to accomplish other aims as well. Fenner (2020b, p. 38) mentions that the competence aims in the 2020 curriculum are very wide and open to interpretation from both teachers and textbook writers. For some teachers, this is a benefit, while others might be

overwhelmed and rely more on their textbooks (Fenner, 2020b, p. 34). This situation may influence the choice of teaching techniques.

In the Core Curriculum, creative abilities are described as something that will not only contribute to enriching society but also as something that is important for the individual's development. Therefore, learners should be allowed to encounter various cultural expressions throughout their time at school (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020a). However, the aesthetic subjects, here defined as music and arts & crafts, have in the last 40 years been given less and less room in the Norwegian curriculum. In 1974, music and arts & crafts accounted for 19.7 per cent of all lessons in primary and secondary school in Norway. This number has since decreased steadily with each new curriculum (Imsen, 2004 in Kalsnes, 2005, p. 293). After what is referred to as the PISA-shock in 2001, the Norwegian government gave more room for theoretical subjects and less to creative, aesthetic subjects in the hopes of receiving better PISA results (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 291). In the curriculum from 2006, music and arts & crafts accounted for only 13.3 per cent of the lessons (Imsen, 2004 in Kalsnes, 2005, p. 293). The trend of decreasing the number of allocated hours for music and arts & crafts continues in the most recent curriculum, from 2020. The arts subjects receive 12.6 per cent of the total number of hours. However, this number does not include electives like *Stage Production* which can be chosen in secondary school. In addition, music is given less time than arts & crafts. No more than 4.7 per cent of all the teaching hours are allocated to music (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020b).

2.3 Teaching through music

Teaching through song or music is a choice made by the teacher. As with any other technique, one should always reflect around the appropriateness of usage. Is it an appropriate technique regarding the intended language learning, the group of learners and the classroom situation (Cook, 2016, p. 11)? Knowing that a technique suits the learning situation makes it easier to use it. Teaching through song is often described as an appropriate technique with younger learners as they usually are familiar with music from infancy. Before they can speak, or even comprehend words, babies listen to the melody and rhythm of a language and produce speech sounds themselves, similar to music, that allows them to have a sort of social interaction with another speaker (Cook, 1997, p. 228). Deutsch, Henthorn and Dolson (2004, in Kalsnes, 2005, p. 297) found in their research on the relationship between linguistic hearing and musical hearing (pitch) that musical hearing is very likely to form good conditions for further

language development and foreign language learning. Musical structures are processed in the brain's language area, indicating that musical and linguistic sequences could be recognised in similar ways (Engh, 2013, p. 116). Therefore, by working with music and musical perception, one can develop basic skills, particularly oral language skills.

A differentiation is made between *art education* and *education through art*. The first refers to art subjects such as drama, music and arts & crafts, whereas the latter speaks about using art as a teaching tool in other activities like reading, writing, mathematics or technology (Bamford, 2008, p. 11). Using the technique *teaching through song* in an English lesson would be classified as education through art. The artistic activities, like songs, are used as tools supporting the learning in a curriculum content other than music (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 12). As these activities can be used to provide more general educational benefits, Bamford (2008, p. 21) suggests using them frequently in other subjects, particularly social and cultural ones.

There are many reasons for using songs as a technique to teach other subjects, like a foreign language. One important reason is enjoyment. Learners, particularly young learners, enjoy listening to and taking part in songs and chants (Linse, 2005, p. 23; Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 59; Sohrabi, 2015, p. 908). Some learners might feel unsure about speaking a new language in front of others. Singing together with the class might help them feel more confident as the focus is not on the individual speaking, but on a joint activity. There is safety in numbers (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 59). Songs and rhymes are also an excellent way of ensuring the presence of English every day, or often, in the first years of school. Examples include a good morning song or a goodbye song. By giving the learners small doses of English often, they will encounter and familiarise themselves with the language more frequently compared to having only one lesson a week (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 28). By making the singing of a song a regular class activity, the teacher is providing the learners with the chance of developing strong speaking skills. They will encounter the same words repeatedly, making them more obtainable (Linse, 2005, pp. 47-48). Repetition is essential in vocabulary acquisition, as was described earlier. A song can provide both a meaningful context and purposeful repetition, and words or chunks are more easily remembered when there is a rhythm and rhyme to them (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 60).

Young children are good at mimicking what they hear. By listening and singing along to songs, they get to practice both sounds and intonation (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 47). Through a song, the learners will also be exposed to authentic text and a natural context for words, chunks and sentences, which are important reasons for choosing the technique.

Learners of English need to be taught a functional language. The naming of objects will not alone aid their social interactions; they need chunks or phrases to communicate with one another. By learning words through a song, the learners will encounter a natural context for that word as the language in a song will always come in some sort of a chunk (Munden & Myhre, 2007, pp. 31-32). It is also easier for younger learners to learn one big piece compared to many smaller pieces. Songs are considered to be authentic texts. Authenticity is a central aspect in the English subject curriculum and a requirement for communicative competence, a highly significant concept in English didactics (Fenner, 2020b, p. 30; Skulstad, 2020a, p. 43).

Just as the reasons for choosing to teach through songs are many, so are how one can accomplish such teachings. Some examples of using songs in a lesson include motivating or preparing learners for a lesson or topic, pre-teaching words or practising new language, as a break or rounding off a lesson (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 61). Quite a few teachers of young learners use music as a way of letting off steam after periods of concentrations (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 68). Many action songs incorporate Total Physical Response activities, songs in which the learners carry out actions or movements while singing, cf. theories of learning by doing (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 60). Total Physical Response, developed by James J. Asher (1977), is a method in which learners *physically* respond to verbal commands; if the teacher asks the learners to jump, then they will jump. This method includes all three of the learning channels described earlier, namely: auditory, visual and tactile. The learners listen to the command, watch each other and perform the activity themselves (Linse, 2005, p. 30). Another way of using songs and music is to make learners relax. The teaching method *suggestopedia,* developed by Lozanov in the 1970s, consciously uses music in an attempt to avoid the block or resistance some learners might have towards a new language (Cook, 2016, p. 23). The method stresses the importance of mental calmness in learning (Sohrabi, 2015, p. 909) and uses the idea of hypnotic suggestion to relax learners through means such as listening to music (Cook, 2016, pp. 297-298).

Teaching through art can bring many benefits. Relaxing the learner or making the new language a little less scary are only some of these benefits. Bamford (2008, p. 12) argues that when the program is of high quality, education through art can increase academic achievements, reduce a learner's possible reluctance towards school and highlight positive cognitive transmission. Art can create a more positive self-image, develop cultural awareness and acceptance of oneself and others and encourage learners' motivation to learn. These are all crucial aspects in the pursuit of lifelong learning (Bamford, 2008, p. 20). In addition to

providing the learners with shared experiences in class, it is also meaningful for personal and social growth (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 10). Through art education, or art-based education, schools might educate learners who will have self-confidence, a critical sense and motivation, and learners who can act as contributors to a rich cultural society (Bamford, 2008, p. 16). In the White Paper No 39 (2002-2003), cultural competence is described as something which possesses both "intrinsic value, great significance for increased quality of life and qualification for the future and working life". It continues by stating that "strengthening the cultural competence of children and young people is an investment in the future" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2003a, p. 8, my translation). A final benefit, closely linked to self-confidence, is pride. When a young learner has learnt his first song by heart, it is a tremendous boost for his confidence. That accomplishment will give learners a positive feeling towards learning new languages (Munden & Myhre, 2007, pp. 59-60).

2.3.1 Attitudes towards education in and through art

Despite the alleged benefits of the arts, most educational monitoring is centred around goal achievement, often defined by scientific, mathematical or technological thinking (Bamford, 2008, p. 20). As a result, the cultural dimension in education is, to some extent, ignored. This is, for instance, clearly shown in the Norwegian national curriculum, mentioned above. A possible reason for ignoring the arts is the lack of evidence on the benefits education in and through art can have on the general education (Bamford, 2008, p. 20). While many teachers agree that the use of songs can improve a learner's language abilities, several of them also state that because of a lack of theory on the subject, they cannot defend the use of this technique (Engh, 2013, p. 113). A review of journals on foreign language teaching going back two decades reveals that there are substantially fewer articles published on the technique *teaching through song* compared to other techniques (Salcedo, 2010). Rasmussen (2017, p. 12) emphasises that the discursive problems surrounding art in education are not problems specific to only one country, like Norway, they probably apply to all Western Europe.

Since the implementation of the curriculum LK06, aesthetic subjects like music and arts & crafts have been pushed aside to give more room for theoretic subjects and basic skills (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 289). Looking at the Norwegian curriculum, from an art-education point of view, it could appear as if the introduction of basic skills in all subjects means that a learner's ability to read and write will influence his competence in art, rather than his competence in art being something that can aid his reading and writing skills (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 291). The

aesthetic subjects are to act as an arena for both development and assessment of basic skills. Still, the basic skills mention nothing about a learner's creative abilities, which is vital in the actual subject (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 296). Many researchers agree that the theoretical subjects have a high status in Norway compared to the aesthetic subjects. According to Rasmussen (2017, p. 3), a discourse on arts education is subordinate to that of academic skills and competencies in Norwegian primary and secondary schools. Bamford (2008, p. 16) mentions that through conversations with learners, teachers and bureaucrats she understands the pressure Norwegian education is under, but clarifies that education through art or art education should not be viewed as something extra, but rather as the core in successful, effective and engaging education.

A common notion when it comes to art is that it is used either recreationally or for entertainment. In NOU 2003: 16 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2003b, pp. 186-187), it says that practical-aesthetic electives were included in secondary schools to counter the theoretical, abstract subjects and to give learners a break and some rest from theory. This way to describe the arts subjects implies that they are used for entertainment and diversion and are not existential subjects (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 296). Arts in school are often given the role of pastime activities; this limits their function as learning-subjects and emphasises the recreational aspect (Rasmussen, 2017, pp. 3, 11). Rasmussen (2017, p. 6) asks whether the goal of art education is to become an educated person or a professional artist. His own response is that it seems to lean more towards the latter. To put it bluntly, if one is not supposed to be an artist later in life, there is no point in spending time on arts activities in school. In Norway, the Municipal Cultural School and other out-of-school arrangements might provide an excuse for schools not to deal with arts in the everyday school setting as art steals time from the already overcrowded curriculum (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 6). Instead, arts are used to provide breaks of entertainment, play and relaxation.

The teaching of English in Norway is mainly influenced by three factors: the curriculum, the textbook and the teacher (Fenner, 2020a, p. 297). The Norwegian national curriculum's inclusion of music and art is limited, which means that including, for example, songs in an English lesson depends to a large extent on the teacher and the textbook. Research shows that the textbook plays a very prominent role in teaching and that teachers rely heavily on the textbook as a resource (Skjelbred, Solstad & Aamotsbakken, 2005, p. 75). Listening to a song is one thing, but actively using a song in class as a teaching technique is different. Some teachers might need help from a textbook, and if the textbook does not offer any

support, or include any songs, it might be more convenient to choose a different technique. Several books on how to use music in the language classroom were published in the 1990s. However, they were never renewed and quickly became outdated (Engh, 2013, p. 120). With little to no new books on the topic, the technique becomes challenging to implement. Kalsnes (2005, p. 295) points to a lack of competence from the teacher regarding the challenges surrounding the aesthetic subjects. A survey conducted in 2000 showed that around half of the teachers that taught arts & crafts or music in elementary school, and more than 25% of teachers that taught the same subjects in secondary school, had no formal education in these subjects (Statistics Norway, 2000 in Kalsnes, 2005, p. 294). In addition, some teachers have the idea that the experts on art are artists, not teachers. This attitude might hinder them in teaching arts & crafts and music, increasing the gap between education and art (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 5). Due to the low numbers of hours per week devoted to arts subjects, the need for teachers who specifies in these disciplines decreases. Also, if the focus in further education continues to be on theoretical subjects, most teachers and students will choose these over aesthetic subjects. Consequently, the teacher competence in arts subjects will be diminished (Kalsnes, 2005, p. 294).

2.4 Previous research on song as a technique for English language learning

A point was made earlier in the theoretical framework about the benefits of arts not being taken advantage of because of missing documentation, or evidence, which affirms these benefits. The art subjects are underestimated in many countries, but there are some studies pointing to profits in arts education (Bamford, 2008, p. 24). The following section will examine some of the findings in studies regarding song as a teaching technique in foreign language learning. The studies referred to were conducted all over the world and used various methods and techniques. The study participants either had English as their first language, or English was the foreign language they studied. The age groups ranged from primary school learners to adults, and all participants were enrolled in some sort of school. All the included studies hypothesised that learners from the song groups would outperform learners in the control groups, or that the learners would say they learned more from language instructions through song than through other techniques. There were many positive findings, such as songs leading to greater cultural awareness, an increase in grammatical abilities and more incidental learning. However, only the main research findings will be discussed in-dept in the present study.

2.4.1 Vocabulary

Whether teaching through song leads to an increase in a learner's vocabulary is an element included in several research articles. Rukholm (2015, p. 183) found that learners in the song group learned more new vocabulary than those in the non-singing group, leading to a conclusion that songs worked better than poems, for instance, when it came to facilitating vocabulary learning. Those results support the claim that melody and music can have an impact on language learning. The repetitiveness of lyrics in a song combined with a tune makes it easier for the vocabulary to manifest itself in a learner's memory (Rukholm, 2015, p. 183). Setia et al. (2012, p. 272) found the same in their research; songs helped the learners remember new words better and longer. They concluded that when new words were taught through song, the learners' vocabulary expanded. The learners in Ludke's (2016, pp. 377-378) research improved their vocabulary significantly, but compared to Rukholm's findings, the difference in results from the song group and the non-singing group were not as evident. Jolly (1975, p. 13) conducted a survey in which many respondents answered that they felt the use of songs increased their vocabulary. Iswara, Julia and Supriyadi (2018, p. 3) found that when their respondents simply listened to a song, their ability to memorize song lyrics and learn new vocabulary in this way, was low. However, when they were instructed to also write down the lyrics, more words would be remembered, and their vocabulary increased. Comparing these results, one can state that songs are helpful in vocabulary acquisition. Researchers came to different conclusions on whether it is a better technique compared to other techniques, but they all found significant improvement.

Closely linked to vocabulary is the notion of word recall. Teaching through song and music has produced positive results in vocabulary recall (Engh, 2013, p. 118). Good et al. (2014, p. 632) asked their learners to recall lyrics from a song. Those who had learned it as a song recalled more sequenced words and phrases than those who had been taught the lyrics as a poem. However, the question was asked if they only remembered it through song. Though being a valid strategy, it becomes limiting if they need to sing to remember the words they wish to produce in conversation (Good et al., 2014, p. 638). The learners who had learned the lyrics through song performed much better than the non-singing group when they tested delayed word recall. After six months, several participants still remembered the entire song (Good et al., 2014, p. 635). The reason for them performing better in delayed word recall is attributed to rhythm and the combination of lyrics and melody (Good et al., 2014, pp. 636-

637). Ludke (2016, p. 380) proposes to further investigate whether the combination of music and linguistics, which can be found in songs, will lead to surface-level memory or a deeper understanding. In Salcedo's (2010) research, a song group was also compared to a non-singing group. The results were similar to what Good et al. discovered; the song group could recall more text than the non-singing group. Salcedo (2010) also tested for delayed recall but could not find a significant difference when comparing the song group and the non-singing group's results. She admitted that the time between the original test and the delayed test (2 weeks) had not been long enough and could explain why the results were not as expected (Salcedo, 2010). The researchers investigating whether song as a technique could improve learners' word recall found that there were advantages. Still, an important question was made regarding the learners' ability to recall the words without singing.

2.4.2 Pronunciation

Several of the articles reviewed investigated whether learners' pronunciation would improve when it was taught through song. In the study conducted by Good et al. (2014, p. 633), a point was made about the different pronunciation of English and Spanish vowels. The post-test showed no significant difference in the song group and the non-singing group's pronunciation of consonant sounds; however, the learners in the song group were much better at pronouncing the vowel sounds. In contrast, Ludke's (2016, pp. 377-378) research found that learners in the song group performed slightly worse, although insignificantly, in the pronunciation post-test, compared to a group who had instructions through drama. However, both the drama group and the song group improved significantly from the pre-test, and pronunciation was the only category in which the drama group scored higher than the song group. The learners in Setia et al.'s (2012 p. 272) research evaluated their own pronunciation after a period of English language learning through song. A vast majority of the learners stated that, through song, their pronunciation had improved. In all these studies, learners' pronunciation did advance; thus, one can conclude that song as a teaching technique was beneficial. Nevertheless, this conclusion is drawn on a limited number of studies and is therefore not decisive.

2.4.3 Motivation

The motivational factor is to be found in all the studies included here, despite not necessarily being what the researchers intended to investigate. Most of the researchers point out that for

the song, or songs, to be effective, it is important that they are chosen for a purpose and that the learners can relate to them, making them real-life, or authentic, language (Jolly, 1975, p. 13; Rukholm, 2015, p. 186; Setia et al., 2012, p. 270). Mentioned already in the 1970s by Jolly (1975, p. 13), adding music and song to a lesson can increase learners' enjoyment. In a questionnaire provided by Setia et al. (2012, p. 272), the learners were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "Learning English is more enjoyable when songs are used". A majority of the learners agreed on this. The same learners also stated that their level of confidence rose with the use of songs in teaching (Setia et al., 2012, p. 273). Good et al. (2014, p. 638) reported that the teacher noticed how the learners smiled more during lessons involving songs and often asked when they would sing again.

Motivation, or lack thereof, could impact the results of a survey or a study. Rukholm (2015, p. 188) mentions that an area worth exploring further is whether the learners' taste in music can influence the effectiveness of their learning. Will the learning outcome be the same if the learners do not like the songs used? In Iswara et al.'s survey (2018, p. 2), 92.3 per cent of the respondents stated that they enjoyed listening to songs, but only 46.5 per cent liked listening to foreign songs. However, 80.6 per cent of the respondents said they learnt a foreign language through song, indicating that learning can still occur even if the song is not well liked. Salcedo (2010) found that the song group in her study outperformed the non-singing group, but not always significantly. One of the songs used showed only a small difference in the amount of text recalled. She discovered that the song in question was an old ballad with a complicated structure and an obsolete vocabulary. It was, in retrospect, seen as an inappropriate song choice as it was too difficult for the learners (Salcedo, 2010). Most of the learners in Setia et al.'s (2012, p. 273) survey stated that the type of song chosen had an impact on their desire to learn English. When learners like a song, the chances of it promoting better language learning are higher, and they might even listen to the song outside of the classroom (Setia et al., 2012, p. 274). Motivation can, in this sense, interfere with the results in research; it can, potentially, either show better results because the learners liked the song or worse results because they disliked the song (Ludke, 2016, p. 380). Good, et al.'s (2014, p. 638) research reports that all language instruction through song involved a guitar and that the guitar alone could have sparked a motivation to learn. Hence, it would be unfair to compare the song group's results to those from a lesson without an instrument. Motivation seems to be a good argument for using songs in language lessons, and as most people enjoy listening to music, they could potentially learn language from it as well. The reviewed studies state that

the choice of songs is important for the learning outcome; however, it is not the only factor in ensuring a successful language lesson.

3 Methods

The following section will describe the methods used to investigate the two research questions. Part 3.1 revolves around examining whether song as a teaching technique would aid the learners' vocabulary acquisition, involving learners in the first grade. Defining this research, or labelling it, proved rather challenging as elements of several methods were used, such as *action research* and *case studies*. Hence, the choice was made to name this type of research *classroom research*. The second part of the chapter, 3.2, will describe the survey used to investigate Norwegian teachers' thoughts surrounding song as a teaching technique. The survey was comprised of a written questionnaire where primary school teachers answered five questions regarding the use of songs and music in their English lessons.

3.1 Classroom research

The classroom research was comprised of many parts and included elements from several research methods. It was a small-scale, localised study, much like action research, but rather than aiming to change classroom praxis, or fix a problem (Burns, 1999, p. 30), the goal was to see whether teaching through song was a worthwhile technique that would teach the learners more vocabulary compared to other practices. Should it, however, prove to be a successful technique, then a debate on its contribution to changes in classroom praxis could occur. As the research traces the language development of a particular group of learners, one might also draw a parallel to case studies, according to McKay (2006, p. 72).

   The implementation of the research was done through four sections: a pre-test, classroom teaching, a post-test and a delayed post-test. During the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test all the participants took part in a one-on-one conversation (Appendix A). The conversations were made one-on-one to ensure that no one could copy answers from others and to make speaking English a little less scary as some get nervous about talking English in front of their peers (Skulstad, 2020b, p. 112). The participants were shown pictures of 24 different animals and asked if they knew the English name of the various animals. At the time of the pre-test, there had been no teaching on the topic *animals* in English class. A few weeks after the pre-test, a unit comprised of four 60-minute lessons started with the

theme *animals*. The participants were split into two groups: the research group, who would be taught new vocabulary in the theme *animals* through song and the control group, who would use no song or music at all in any of the four lessons. Following the lesson unit, the participants all took a post-test. The post-test was identical to the pre-test; the learners were shown 24 pictures of different animals and asked what these animals were called in English. While the intention was to conduct the post-test within one to two weeks after the final lesson unit, an unfortunate round of quarantine and home school caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, delayed the test. Therefore, the post-tests were administered between two and four weeks after the unit was completed. This applied to both the research group and the control group and, consequently, will not impact the results' validity. Nine weeks after the last unit of the lesson, the participants took a delayed post-test. Again, the test was identical to the other two tests.

Except for the song activities, the lesson plan for the unit was the same for the two groups. Words need to appear many times to be learnt. One way of ensuring this was to use follow-up activities such as games, worksheets, miming, etc. That way the song would not just be an isolated happening (Linse, 2005, p. 126; Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 71). The control group also did these follow-up activities; the difference was that they had been introduced to the new vocabulary through speaking and listening activities that did not include music. Both groups also received plenty of visual support. As mentioned earlier in this text, the inclusion of pictures helps younger learners comprehend input better (Linse, 2005, p. 13). It is important to include pictures, or having the teacher act out content when a song is used for the first time, as younger learners need more than just words for support if they are to learn the content (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 66). The pictures used in the lessons were the same as the learners were shown during the pre-, post- and delayed post-test.

The 24 animals the participants were shown images of can be placed in different categories depending on when they were introduced, whether they were transparent, and, for the research group, how they were presented. For both groups, the first 13 animals were introduced in the first lesson and brought up throughout the entire unit. The remaining 11 animals were split into farm animals and zoo animals and introduced in lesson two and three, respectively. All 24 animals were included in the fourth and final lesson. Nine of the animals can be considered transparent as they are very similar to the Norwegian spelling and/or pronunciation of the same word. A point was made during the lessons that these words resemble the Norwegian ones, which corresponds well with the aim after year two from the

English subject curriculum "find words that are common to English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020c).

For the research group, the animals can also be divided based on *how* they were introduced. The lessons utilised three songs, all for slightly different purposes. The first 13 animals were introduced through a song called *Animal rap* from the textbook series *Quest*. *Animal rap* was sung in all four lessons with the intention of the learners learning it by heart. As it was a deliberate attempt to get the learners to focus on new vocabulary and retaining it, the song was used for explicit language teaching (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 189). The farm and zoo animals were taught through the songs *Old MacDonald had a Farm* and *Let's Go to the Zoo*, both with versions from supersimple.com. The song *Let's Go to the Zoo* is an example of a Total Physical Response activity; the learners moved and danced, following the instructions in the song (Linse, 2005, p. 30). Singing along with the song was optional, and most of the learners chose only to listen as they performed the movements. Any new words they would acquire through the song were therefore incidental, and the use of the song becomes an example of incidental language learning (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 189). The animals from the final song, *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, fall somewhere in the middle of incidental and explicit language teaching. The song was used both as a listening activity where the learners could sing along and as a song in which they could choose their own animals, thus becoming innovators, making their unique twist on the verses (Linse, 2005, p. 48). This also meant that other animals than the 24 in the test could be included in the song. Four of the 24 animals tested were taught neither explicitly nor implicitly through song. They appeared elsewhere in the lessons, but not in any of the songs.

3.1.2 Participants

The participants in the classroom research were two groups of first-graders in a Norwegian school. All the participants were either six or seven years old. Because of their age, the parents or guardians had to give written consent (Appendix B). However, the learners were also asked if they wished to participate. The research group was comprised of 20 pupils and the control group of 17. Ten of the learners from the research group and two from the control group did the post-test digitally via video chat due to Covid-19 restrictions. One of the participants from the research group was unable to attend the delayed post-test.

None of the participants uses English as a first or second language at home. Therefore, it was decided to call English a foreign language for all the participants. According to Cook (2016, pp. 14-15), foreign language teaching is for long-term future use and will involve learning a new language in your own country. In contrast, second language teaching is for immediate use of a language, for example, immigrants learning the language of their new country. Many Norwegian teachers do, however, refer to English as a second language rather than a foreign language for their learners. Reasons include the focus on content literacy and the fact that English often functions as an instructional language in several subjects (Chvala, 2020, pp. 6-7). A middle option is to use the term *a learner of a second or foreign language,* which is used by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43).

3.2 Questionnaire

In the questionnaire, there were five questions, all of which were voluntary to answer (Appendix C). The first question was a close-ended question asking the respondents to state how often they used songs or music in their English lessons. The question was designed as a *Likert-scale* question, asking the respondents to rate their views. This method provides answers that are easily structured and analysed (McKay, 2006, pp. 38-39). The remaining four questions were all open-ended questions asking the respondents to state why, or why not, and how they used music, name possible learning outcomes and say what they felt their learners thought about songs and music in English lessons. All these open-ended questions were so-called *short answers* where the respondents also were given the opportunity to provide detailed information (McKay, 2006, p. 37). While open-ended questions provide less structure and are not as quickly analysed as close-ended questions, they do not limit the responses in any way and might provide richer data (McKay, 2006, pp. 10, 39). Therefore, the majority of the questions in the survey are open-ended.

A total number of 102 teachers fitting the description of a teacher teaching primary school English in a Norwegian classroom answered the survey. The respondents were selected randomly, and they were all anonymous. Surveys often provide the researcher with a good amount of control (McKay, 2006, p. 10). Making the respondents anonymous removes some of this control as there is no guarantee about whether the respondent is in fact a primary school teacher of English; however, the reason for anonymising the respondents is that the research will be reliable. A disadvantage of using a survey lies in the respondents providing answers based on what they think the researcher wants to hear. That might make the research

unreliable (McKay, 2006, p. 36). In the present study, control has been sacrificed to ensure reliability.

The choice to conduct a survey was to ensure a generous amount of data from which a general conclusion could be drawn (McKay, 2006, p. 7). The classroom research described above is a small-scale research project that cannot be used to draw generalised conclusions. A quantitative survey, like the questionnaire described, will deliver both valid information and enough data to generalise. By using a random, representative sample of educators that teach a foreign language, one might hope that the key findings may apply to other Norwegian foreign language teachers as well. A quantitative survey will hence provide validity to the research (McKay, 2006, pp. 7, 12).

4 Results

In the following section, results from the classroom research and the questionnaire will be given. Chapter 4.1 centres around the classroom research and chapter 4.2 on the survey results.

Findings from the classroom research will be shown through bar charts depicting the average percentage results from the research group and the control group. However, the results will be discussed using the actual figures and presented in the following categories: the total amount of animal words recalled, the difference between the first and last words taught, the difference between transparent and non-transparent words recalled and the difference between words taught through song and words taught using another technique. In the last category, only the results from the research group will be offered. The control group learnt all 24 animals with a teaching technique other than song; hence their results are not relevant in the fourth category and will not be presented.

The results from the survey will also be visualised in bar charts showing the percentage of answers and the actual figures will be discussed. Reoccurring themes from the respondents' answers make up the categories. There were 102 teachers who replied to the survey, all providing individual answers. To make the data more manageable only answers given by more than three respondents were incorporated. However, a few exceptions will occur. An example of how the answers were divided into categories is the following teacher's response when asked why he or she used songs and music: "because kids love to sing, and

they learn faster when they sing". This reply falls into the categories *enjoyment* and *faster learning*. The different categories are presented in *figures 6, 7* and *8.*

4.1 Effects of teaching English vocabulary through song

The classroom research focused on investigating how many words a learner would learn and recall after a unit which introduced these words mainly through song. *Figure 1* illustrates the average percentage of words recalled from the research group and the control group. The control group had no songs or music in their lessons but worked with the same vocabulary.
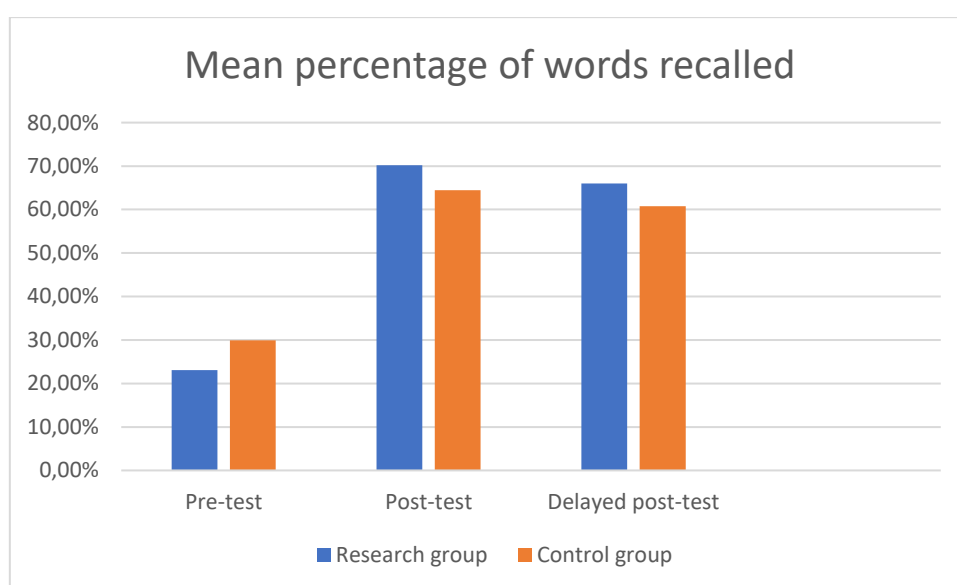

Figure 1: Percentage of overall words recalled.

The pre-test, which was conducted a few weeks before the unit on animals began, revealed how many names of animals the learners knew before having been taught them at school. As *Figure 1* demonstrates, the research group recognised, on average, 5.75 animal words out of the 24 animals, whereas the control group could identify, on average, 7.18 animal words. The control group knew almost a third of the animals before starting the unit, which was slightly more than the research group. After the end of the unit, the post-test revealed that the research group could recall, on average, 16.85 animal words, meaning that they could tell almost three times as many words as before the unit. The control group recalled, on average, 15.47 animal words after the unit, which was slightly above twice as many words as they knew before

starting the unit. Nearly all the words were still retained at the time of the delayed post-test; both groups were showing a decline of approximately one word.

The animals could be split into different categories depending on when they were taught and whether or not the names of the animals were considered transparent words, hence findings regarding these categories will be examined and presented. The first 13 animals were introduced in the first lesson of the unit and, in addition, appeared throughout the other three lessons. They were also the ones used in the song the research group worked the most on. The last 11 animals were introduced in lesson two and three. The control group followed the same procedure, but without any singing activity.
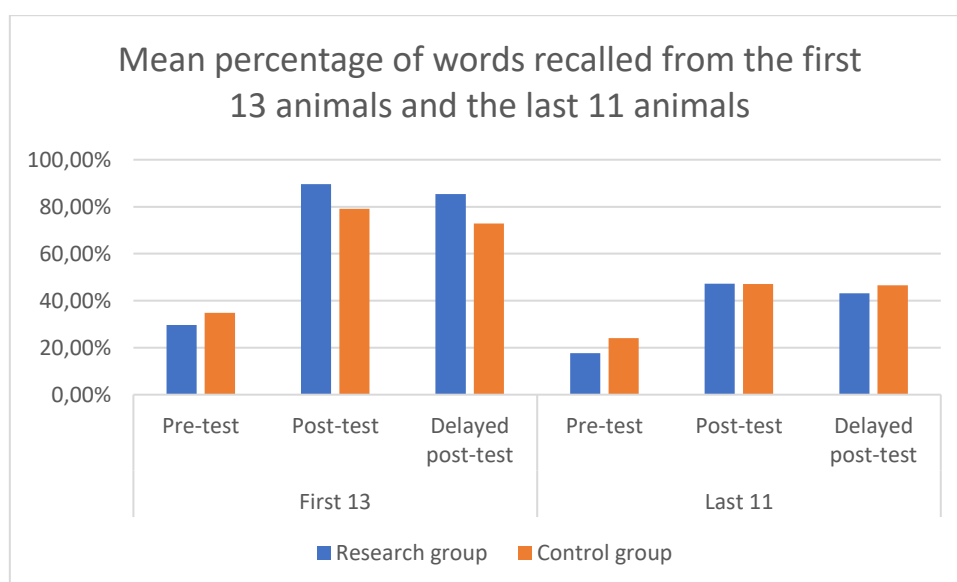

Figure 2: Percentage of words recalled divided into the first 13 and the last 11 animals.

Figure 2 shows the average percentage of animal words recalled, comparing the first 13 to the last 11. At the time of the pre-test, the research group knew, on average, the names of 3.85 of the first 13 animals. This number increased to an average of 11.65 animal words at the time of the post-test. Fifty per cent of the learners recalled all the 13 animals. At the time of the delayed post-test, the number of known animals dropped insignificantly to 11.1 words, and seven learners still recalled all thirteen words. In comparison, the control group had a better start since they knew, on average, 4.53 animal words of the first 13 at the pre-test. However, the post-test figures for this group turned out to be lower, with 10.29 words, and dropped even lower at the delayed post-test, with an average result of 9.47 animal words.

The number of animals recalled for the remaining 11 animals gave a different result. At the time of the pre-test, the research group recognised 1.95 animal words out of 11 and the control group 2.65 animal words. At the post-test, the research group could name 5.2 animals, whereas the control group recalled 5.18 animal words. At the time of the delayed post-test, the research group had forgotten some of the animals and identified only 4.47 out of the 11 animal words, whereas the control group remembered almost the same amount as they did on the post-test, with 5.12 animal words. As can be seen, the control group knew more animal words before starting the unit; however, the research group often recognised a few more after the unit was complete. At the delayed post-test, both groups had a slight decrease, however not a significant one. There was a noteworthy difference between the first 13 animals and the last 11. Possible reasons for this result will be discussed in chapter 5.1.
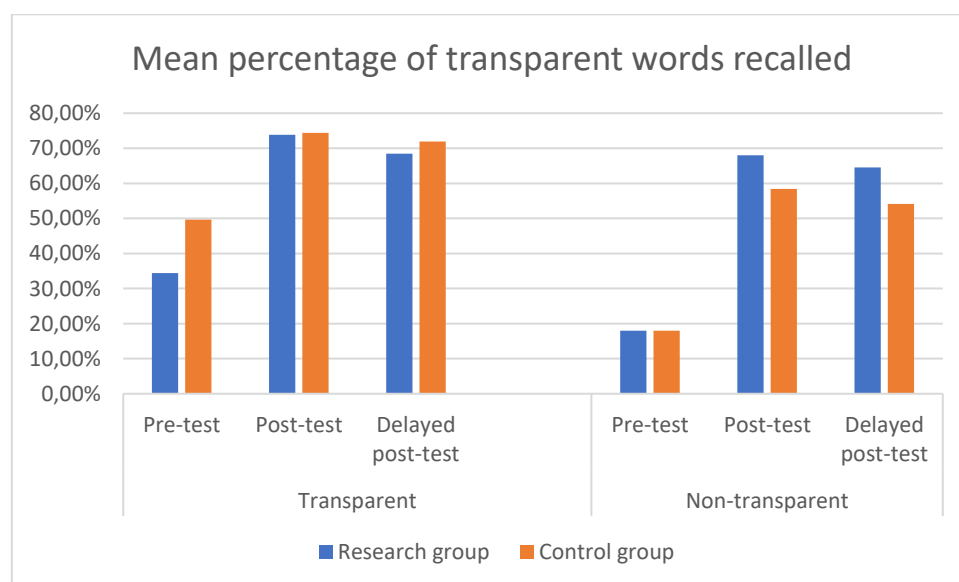
Figure 3: Percentage of transparent and non-transparent words recalled.

Figure 3 illustrates the results for transparent and non-transparent words. Nine of the chosen animals have been labelled transparent words as they are so similar to the Norwegian words, either in spelling or pronunciation, that the meaning can be understood immediately (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 36). Examples include cat (katt), tiger (tiger) and elephant (elefant). Of the transparent animal words, the research group knew, on average, 3.1 of them at the time of the pre-test, 6.65 of them at the time of the post-test and 6.16 at the delayed post-test. The control group knew, on average, 4.47 of the animal words at the time of the pre-test, which is almost half of the transparent words and somewhat more compared to the

research group. However, their results are fairly similar on the post-test, with 6.7 animal words and the delayed post-test with 6.47 animal words. The results based on how many non-transparent words the learners knew before and after the unit vary more. Both groups knew the exact same number of words at the time of the pre-test with 2.7 animals. After the unit, the research group recalled 10.2 animal words, a few more compared to the control group's 8.76 animal words. At the delayed post-test, both groups experienced a slight decrease with 9.68 animal words recalled for the research group and 8.12 for the control group.

The research group learnt 20 animals mainly through song and four animals through other teaching techniques. *Figure 4* reveals the difference in words recalled, separated into the categories *learnt through song* and *learnt without song*.
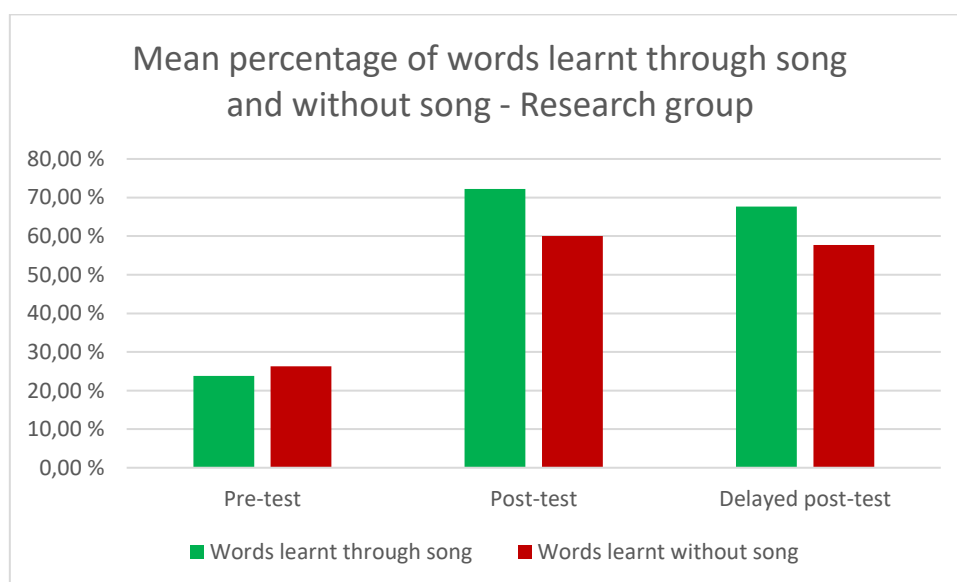
Figure 4: Percentage of words recalled by the research group.

At the time of the pre-test, the research group knew, on average, 1.05 animal words of the four not included in any of the songs and 4.75 of the 20 animal words included in one or more songs. At the time of the post-test, the numbers had increased to 2.4 animal words learnt without song and 14.45 animal words of the ones included in songs. The delayed post-test gave a minor decrease with 2.31 animal words not present in any songs and 13.53 animal words used in the songs.

4.2 Norwegian teachers and the use of songs in English lessons

The first question in the survey was the only close-ended question. The respondents were asked to check off a suitable answer ranging from *never* to *always* about whether they used songs/music in their English lessons. Out of the 102 respondents, 101 answered this question.
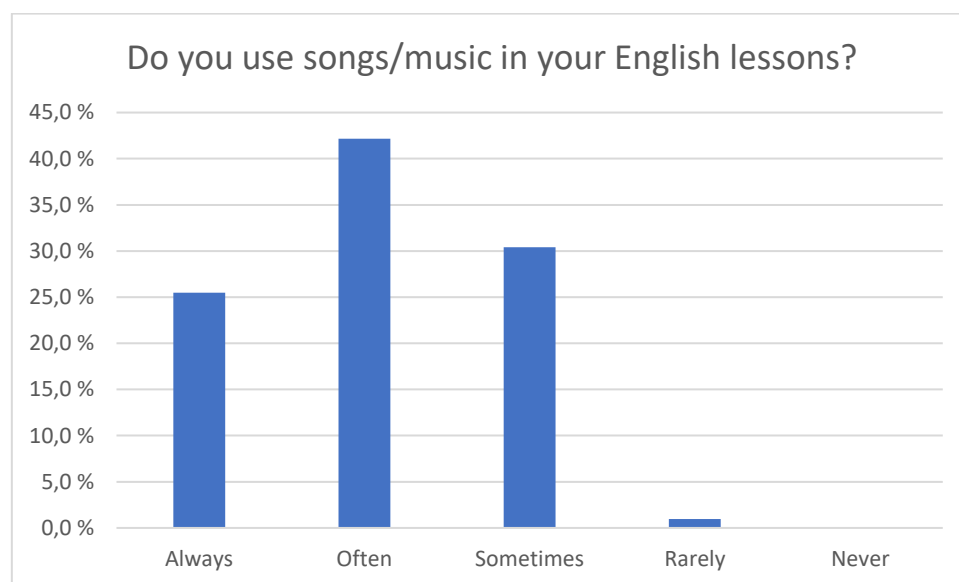
Figure 5: Percentage of answers regarding the use of songs/music in English lessons.

None of the teachers answered *never,* and only one respondent answered *rarely*. From *Figure 5*, one can see that the most common answer was *often,* with 43 replies. *Often* is also the median.

4.2.1 Learning benefits

The teachers were asked to state why they used songs and music in their lessons. There were 98 respondents who answered this question; the remaining four provided blank answers. *Figure 6* presents the most frequent responses given.

Figure 6: Percentage of answers regarding why songs/music were used in English lessons.

The two major reoccurring themes from the answers were motivation and enjoyment and that songs provided good opportunities to work on various linguistic features, different subject topics and obtaining cultural knowledge. In total, 56 of the replies list motivation, enjoyment and the word *fun* as reasons for using songs in their English lessons. While some teachers answered in a more general way, stating that they used songs and music because there was a lot to learn from it or because songs and music increased learning, th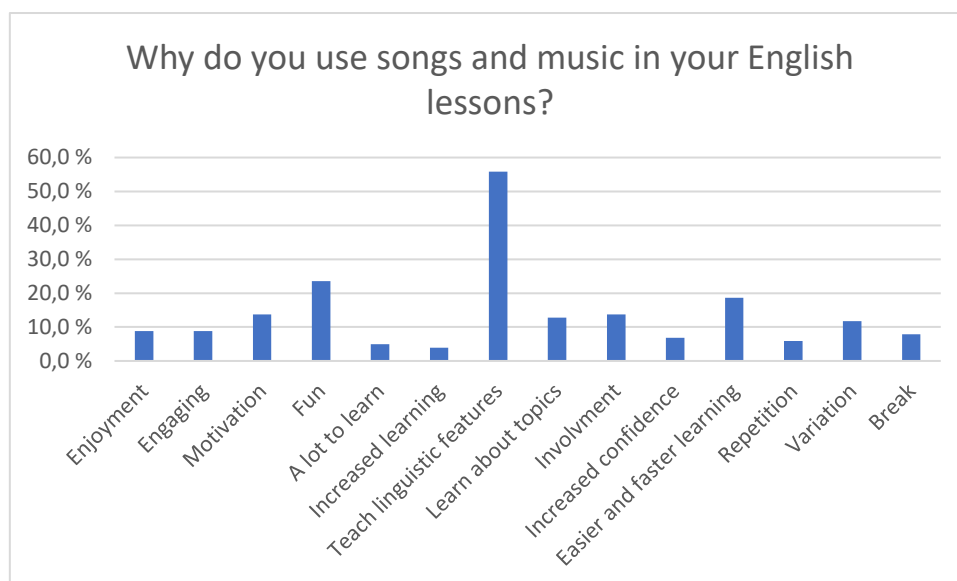e majority of the respondents included specific aspects of language learning in their answers. There were 57 replies mentioning a linguistic feature. The most common was that they used music because it provided good opportunities to teach vocabulary (28 specific replies and another eight on word recall and phrases), pronunciation (11 replies) and grammar (ten replies). Other elements like rhythm, spelling, intonation, sentence structure and so on were mentioned by one or two respondents and are not featured in *Figure 6*.

Other categories receiving multiple answers include a social aspect; songs and music were ways of getting everyone in the class involved. Everyone could practise their oral skills simultaneously, and they could do so without fear or anxiety of having to speak aloud in class. Seven teachers claim that they use songs and music to provide the learners with confidence and a sense of achievement. There are also several replies that bring up *easier* and *faster* learning through songs. The teachers claim that children will learn quicker and that words and other elements will be easier to remember when introduced in a song. Six of these teachers attribute the *easier to remember*-aspect to the repetitiveness songs offer. The two final

categories with numerous replies are variation and a break for the learners. Twelve respondents say they use songs to create variation in their lessons and eight respondents say they use songs and music to generate brain breaks and movement breaks for their learners.

While most of the answers offer reasons for using songs and music in English lessons, four answers provide reasons for why songs and music are not being used. Two of them are about the difficulty in finding appropriate songs for the age group. One claims that for learners in the middle of their primary school years, songs are often *too childish* or *too mature*. The other states that there are fewer songs in the textbooks now, and as a result, he or she rarely use songs. The other two teachers wrote that they did not feel competent enough to use songs and music. One replied: "I am not a good singer, so I am not confident in singing with the pupils. Listening to music works fine". The other replied: "I know very little about it. I feel insecure". Interestingly enough, two of the replies on why the teachers did use music were "because I am a music teacher and it feels natural to sing with them".

The teachers were also asked to give examples of how they used songs and music in their lessons. There were 95 teachers who answered this question. *Figure 7* depicts the categories with the most replies.
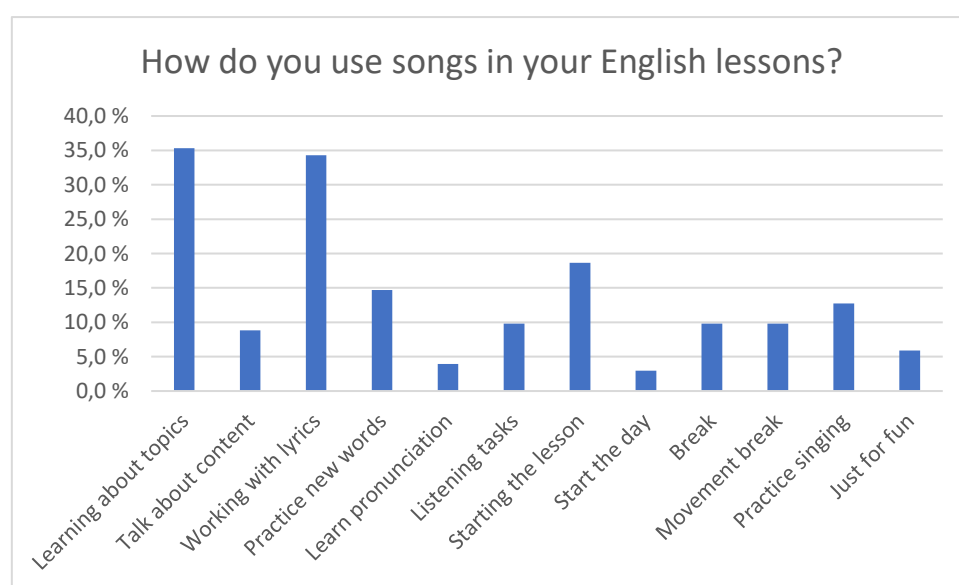

Figure 7: Percentage of answers regarding how songs/music were used in English lessons.

There were four categories that stood out: introducing or learning about specific topics, text-work like translating lyrics, sentence analysis or filling in gaps, starting the lesson, or the

school day, and for breaks and variation. *Songs about a theme* or *introducing a theme* were mentioned in 36 of the replies and working with the lyrics in 35 replies, making them the most frequent answers. Answers regarding the structure of a lesson were also frequent. In addition to those who used songs or music to start the lesson, one teacher wrote that he or she used it to end the lesson, and another replied that he or she used music when "I have three spare minutes". There were 20 teachers who wrote that they used songs and music to give the learners a break. Ten of these specified that the break involved movement. Practising for recitals, learning about artists and composing their own songs are examples of categories where replies were given by less than three teachers.

4.2.2 Learning outcomes

In addition to questions surrounding why and how songs and music could be used in English lessons, the teachers were also requested to state potential learning outcomes for their pupils. Ten respondents chose not to answer this question.
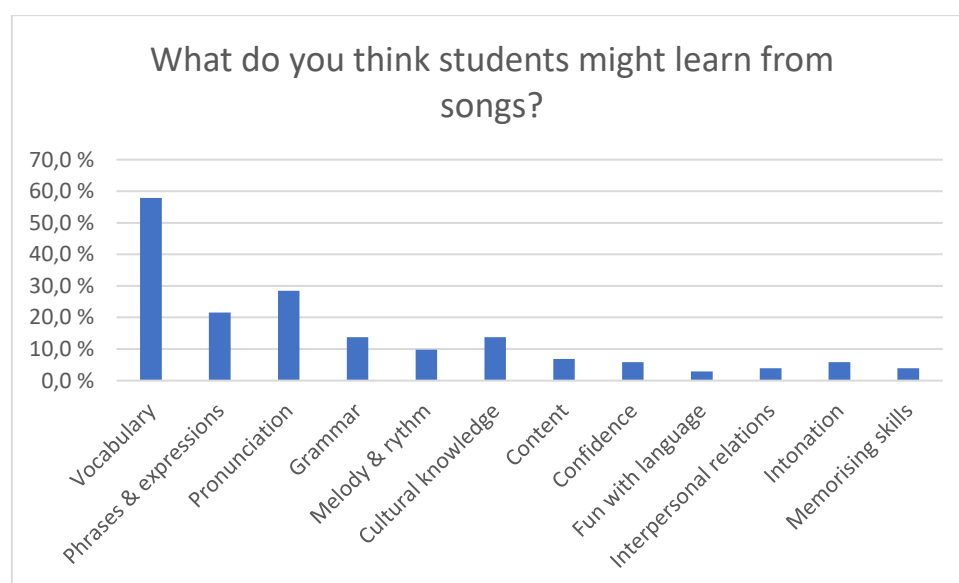
Figure 8: Percentage of answers regarding potential learning outcomes.

Figure 8 reveals that the majority of the respondents gave answers that can be categorised as language skills. The most common reply was that learners could acquire new words through songs and music. Spelling, stress patterns and sentence structures are examples of replies given by one or two respondents; these replies could also be classified as language skills.

Those answers that did not specifically mention a linguistic feature, pointed more towards the learners' personal growth. Of the six responses that claim learners will gain more confidence and dare to speak more in class, two informants mention that songs and music will provide learners with a sense of achievement. Three respondents stated that learners learnt to have fun with the language when they were taught it through songs and music, and four respondents replied that through music, the learners might create positive relations to the teacher, the other learners and to the language itself. One teacher gave a more general answer and stated that "you can learn the same through song as through any other technique", whereas another wrote a simple "everything".

The final question in the survey asked the teachers to state how their learners experienced the use of songs and music in English lessons. Nine respondents did not answer this question.
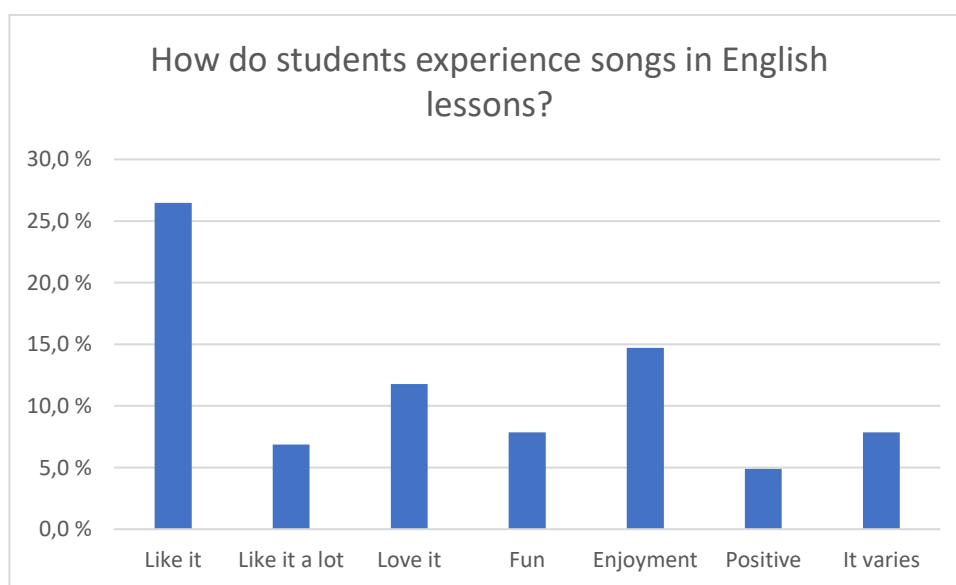
Figure 9: Percentage of answers regarding learners' experiences.

Most replies were overwhelmingly positive, with for example, 34 teachers answering that either all or most of their learners like it, or like it a lot. Twelve respondents even wrote that their learners *loved* learning through songs and music. Several other replies used positive words such as *fun*, *enjoyment*, *positive*, *rewarding*, *enthusiastic* and *motivated*. One teacher wrote that the learners seemed happier when songs were used in lessons, and quite a few commented that they heard their learners sing the songs to themselves or together also after

the lessons. Eight respondents answered that the learners' experiences varied, some liked it, and some did not. Three respondents also commented that the experience depended on the choice of song. Some of the teachers emphasised that the younger learners really enjoyed songs and music in class. One teacher wrote that after year four, the learners were more reserved and did not sing as much and thus, impacted their experience with lessons incorporating songs.

5 Discussion

This section aims to answer the two research questions: "Will teaching through song impact how many new words young learners can acquire in a foreign language and how long they will retain the new vocabulary in memory?" and "What is Norwegian teachers' thinking on song as a technique for teaching English in primary school?". Finding answers to the two questions will be attempted by examining the data from the classroom research and the questionnaire, comparing these data to the theory included in the theoretical framework. Chapter 5.1 revolves around the classroom research part and whether teaching through song will impact vocabulary acquisition and word recall, whereas chapter 5.2 centres around the survey and Norwegian teachers' use of songs and music in the English classroom.

5.1 The impact teaching through song has on vocabulary acquisition and word recall

The results from the classroom research show improvement for both the research group and the control group. The research group performed slightly better in almost all the categories on the post-test; however, there are no major differences. Unlike Good et al.'s (2014, p. 635) research, the delayed post-test in the present study revealed few significant differences between the two groups. On average, both groups recalled approximately one word less in all categories. The delayed post-test showed that the control group performed slightly better than the research group in two categories: the last eleven animal words and the transparent words. Hence, a conclusion stating that teaching through song is a better teaching technique than other techniques cannot be made. However, it is clear to see that it has had an effect. The learners from the research group knew fewer words compared to the control group at the start of the project and a few more after, which might indicate that the technique works.

At the post-test, two of the learners from the research group commented that they remembered the words from the songs, and one said: "It is monkey, I remembered because it

came after crocodile in the song". The same learner also commented that some of the words in the post-test were in the opposite order from how they were presented in the song. Recalling words from the song was also brought up at the time of the delayed post-test. A learner commented that she remembered a word from the song, and another said she did not know all the animals because she had only learnt those being present in *the song, Animal Rap*, the one used in all four lessons. A few weeks after the post-test, a learner from the research group commented to his teacher that he remembered the *Mouse and rat song*, which is the *Animal Rap.* These remarks show that teaching through song had an impact on the learners. Many of them remembered the lessons well.

After reviewing the results comparing the first 13 animal words to the last 11, and factoring in the remarks some learners made about *the song*, there are signs indicating that explicit language teaching works better when teaching through song. The learners in the research group remembered significantly more of the first 13 animals compared to the last 11. While a combination of explicit and implicit vocabulary teaching should occur in education (Linse, 2005, p. 123), the results here show that the learners remembered less than half of the words being taught implicitly through song as opposed to almost 90 per cent of the words that were taught explicitly through song, showing that there is a possible difference in the two approaches. At the time of the delayed post-test, the learners in the research group still recalled more than 85 per cent of the first 13 animals. It is apparent that the number of times a word is used, or repeated, has an impact. Like the research group, the control group remembered more of the first 13 animals than the last 11. The first 13 animals were the ones that were a part of all four lessons, and hence, also the ones repeated the most. Munden and Myhre (2007, p. 28) emphasised the importance of using English every day, and Schmitt (2008, p. 343) pointed to repeating and recycling words being vital for the understanding and retaining of words. The words that were the most used, were also the ones most recalled. It is also worth noting that the research group outperformed the control group on the post-test when it came to the first 13 animals. Based on those findings, one might possibly say that teaching through song, at least explicitly, may impact the number of new words a learner can acquire.

The four animal words not included in any of the songs, were incorporated in the research to examine if there was any difference in the learners' ability to retain words from a song compared to words not presented in a song. The findings revealed that the learners learnt more of the animals used in songs. During the post-test, a learner commented "We have not

learned about that one" when shown a picture of one of the animals not included in any of the songs. While the animals were part of other activities in the classroom, the learning of these words could be considered incidental. The learner had not realised that the word had been used, at least orally, in class. Because the research group remembered more of the animal words from the songs than those not from songs, one could say that these findings show a tendency towards the effectiveness of teaching through song. However, another point to be made is that the previous animal word the learner did not remember being taught, was one of the zoo animals, used only in two of the lessons. This fact applies to all of the four animals not included in the songs; hence, the results may have been influenced by the fact that the learners had not been given ample opportunities for repeating and recycling the words (Schmitt, 2008, p. 343).

Some interesting discoveries were made regarding the transparent words. After the unit, the research group and the control group remembered almost exactly the same amount of the words in this category. This result may show that transparent words are easier learnt, perhaps regardless of the teaching technique. In addition to being easier understood, transparent words are also supposed to be more easily reproduced and remembered (Munden & Myhre, 2006, p. 37). A goal of the lesson was to "find words that are common to English and other languages with which the pupil is familiar" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020c). One learner commented during the post-test that he knew the word *mouse* because it was the same in German (Maus), his native language. Cook (2016, p. 17) mentions that a learner's first language can aid vocabulary acquisition when there are similarities in, for example, two words. Some learners might also have guessed the word and got it right because the English and the Norwegian words are so similar. Guessing based on context is an important strategy in vocabulary acquisition (Hestetræet, 2020, p. 201). That a few of the learners were guessing became apparent with some of the non-transparent words. Suggestions like *froask* (frog – frosk) and *easel* (donkey – esel) appeared frequently. The research group remembered significantly more non-transparent words compared to the control group. Together with the first 13 animal words, the non-transparent words made the most substantial difference between the two groups. One might therefore suggest that certain non-transparent words in English might be easier learnt through song for younger learners. This is an area that requires further research.

A number of factors must be considered in this kind of research, all of which contribute to the fact that there is no conclusion drawn to the efficacy or superiority of one

teaching technique. One of these factors is the learners' age. The participants in the research are only first-graders and are still learning how to be pupils. Their attention span is limited, and this could impact their answers and results. A possible reason for the learners remembering less of the last 11 animal words could be that they were tired of answering questions. The one-on-one conversation was intentionally made short in an effort to avoid boredom and tiredness, but nonetheless, this might have been the case. The learners are all individuals and, like adults, also capable of having good or bad days. One learner from the control group could not understand why he had to do the post-test and was more occupied with things going on outside the window, which of course impacted his answers. A few learners even recalled words at the time of the delayed post-test that they did not recall at the post-test. As can be the case, some of the learners might have chosen not to respond because they were not sure they had the correct answer. At the delayed post-test, a learner gave the answer *big* when shown a picture of a pig. He realised it was wrong, and rather than guessing again, quickly changed his answer to "I do not know". His answer is very much in accordance with Munden and Myhre (2007, p. 37) who pointed out that younger learners sometimes chose not to guess because they were unsure. Many of the words were transparent, and guessing could have given these learners more correct answers.

Another possible effect of the results, linked to not wanting to guess, is the fact that twelve of the respondents had their one-on-one post-test digitally. Ten of these pupils were from the research group and only two from the control group, which means that it is not an even divide and could impact the validity of the research. Skulstad (2020b, p. 112) stated that one-on-one conversations were a good remedy for learners who might be anxious about talking in front of their peers. During the digital post-test, some of the learners had both parents and siblings in close proximity. At least two of the learners, both from the research group, seemed nervous about speaking or about being wrong, they might have chosen to say "I do not know" rather than making a guess. Online communication, or communication through a machine, will likely never be the same as face-to-face interactions (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 96).

To summarise, there were no significant differences between the research group and the control group. The research group performed slightly better than the control group on the first 13 animal words, that were taught in all four lessons, and on the non-transparent words. Other than in these categories, their results were fairly similar. Therefore, though being a limited study, two conclusions might be suggested: teaching through song works better when

the teaching is done explicitly, and teaching through song might strengthen the learning of non-transparent words. Seemingly, both these conclusions, require more research since the small selection provided for this research does not give enough evidence for generalising (McKay, 2006, p. 73). Because of the learners' age, one must also take into consideration that there are external factors that will impact their results. One of these factors are the learners' ability to pay attention over longer periods of time. Some may have had a bad day, and as a result, not performed their best.

5.2 Norwegian teachers of primary schools' thinking towards song as a teaching technique

Despite the fact that the arts subjects have been allocated fewer hours in the renewed Norwegian national curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020b) compared to the previous one, and that it has been called a subject that steals time from the already overcrowded curriculum (Rasmussen, 2017, p. 6), the survey results show that most Norwegian teachers in primary school do use music in their lessons. They make use of *education through art* (Bamford, 2008, p. 11) and incorporate activities like singing and dancing in their English lessons. Out of 102 respondents, 69 stated that they often or always used songs and music in their English lessons, and none of the respondents answered *never*. Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn stating that Norwegian primary school teachers use songs and music in their English lessons.

A frequent reply as to why the teachers used songs and music in their lessons was that it was fun, created enjoyment and gave motivation. *Enjoyment* was a reason emphasised by both Linse (2005, p. 23) and Munden and Myhre (2007, p. 59) as to why teaching through song was a good option for younger learners. When asked what their learners thought about lessons that incorporated songs, 46 of the teachers answered that they either liked it, liked it a lot or loved it. Some of these also emphasised the word *younger* when describing the learners that appreciated the use of songs. Jolly (1975, p. 13) claimed that music and songs could increase any learners' enjoyment, and previous research shows examples of older learners enjoying lessons more when songs were used (Setia et al., 2012, p. 272). Three respondents from the survey answered that the choice of song was important for the learners' enjoyment and motivation. These findings were also apparent in Salcedo's (2010) and Setia et al.'s (2012, pp. 273-274) research; the choice of song impacted the learners' desire to learn. One teacher answered that the learners' seemed happier in lessons where songs and music were

included. Good et al. (2014, p. 638) reported similar results in their research; the teacher had commented that learners smile more during the lessons involving songs. Enjoyment can therefore be considered an important factor in why teachers use songs and music in their teaching.

Another reason brought up by many teachers was that singing was an activity suited for the entire class and something that might help shy learners speak a foreign language. The focus is not on a single person speaking, but on a joint activity (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 59). Singing together, and producing language together, could also make learners feel more confident. Seven respondents wrote that they used songs in their lessons because it could increase learners' confidence and provide them with a sense of achievement. Being able to sing a song in a foreign language is an accomplishment that might make a learner feel proud, ensuring that learning new languages remains a positive experience (Munden & Myhre, 2007, pp. 59-60). That art can contribute to a more positive self-image, boost learners' self-confidence, and that it is important for personal and social growth were points made by both Bamford (2008, pp. 16, 20), Rasmussen (2017, p. 10) and Setia et al.'s (2012, p. 273).

Nineteen respondents stated that it is *easier* to learn when songs or music are included in a lesson and that the learners will learn faster. One of the reasons attributed to this was the fact that songs made it easier to remember. Previous research on the topic did conclude that songs helped learners recall new words better and longer, resulting in an expanded vocabulary for the learners (Setia et al., 2012, p. 272). Munden and Myhre (2007, p. 60) also mention that it was easier to retain words and chunks when they were given rhythm and rhyme. Some of the respondents added that repetition was an important factor in remembering and learning words. Rukholm (2015, p. 183) argued that the repetitiveness of lyrics in a song combined with a melody, would make learning new vocabulary easier for a learner. Children in particular are excellent *copycats*. They mimic what they hear, and through a song they will listen to correct sounds and pronunciation, as well as many new words (Munden & Myhre, 2007, p. 47). Often these words will be repeated throughout the song, or the song is used multiple times, giving the learners ample opportunities for hearing, and consequently learning, new words. Therefore, it is apparent that some aspects of language can be easier learnt through music, as stated by the respondents in the survey.

Variation and *giving the learners a break* were reasons given both for *why* teachers used songs and music in their English lessons, and *how* they used songs and music. A break incorporating music can be anything from a relaxing exercise (Cook, 2016, pp. 297-298) to a

Total Physical Response activity where the learners move and carry out actions (Munden &
Myhre, 2007, p. 60). When songs are used this way, the aim is not necessarily for the learners
to acquire any new knowledge through the song. However, learning can still happen
incidentally. For example, in action songs; the learners need to actively listen to the lyrics to
understand what they are meant to do. They will practise their language skills and may also
pick up on new vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar or other linguistic features. *Just for fun*
was also brought up when the teachers were asked how they used songs and music in their
lessons. One way of doing this could potentially be through having the learners listen to a
song they like. It does not provide an explicit language focus, but still offers chances for
listening to the language. It was evident that most of the teachers also used songs explicitly in
their teaching, as they brought up various linguistic features and text work in several of their
responses.

One of the four teachers who did not use much music or songs in the English lessons,
stated it was so due to a lack of songs in the textbook. Another teacher remarked that it was
hard finding appropriate songs for the age group, which could mean that neither was this
respondent finding what he or she needed from textbooks. Because the new curriculum is
wide and open to interpretation, some teachers might rely more on the textbooks now
compared to earlier (Fenner, 2020b, p. 34). The textbook plays a prominent role in language
learning (Skjelbred et al., 2005, p. 75), and some teachers opt to using materials and
techniques provided in the books. If there are no songs, then they might not use songs either.
The other reason provided for not using songs or music in English lessons, was that the
teachers did not feel competent enough. One stated that listening to others singing was ok but
felt unable to use song for any other purpose. A lack of competence in the subject of the arts
was brought up by Kalsnes (2005, p. 295). Almost half of the teachers that taught music in
primary school did so without formal education. Many of these teachers might teach English
as well, and without training or experience in teaching through song, it can feel like a better
solution to utilise a different teaching technique.

To summarise, most Norwegian primary school teachers use songs and music quite
frequently in their English lessons. Out of 102 respondents, none answered that they never
used songs or music. The attitudes are mainly positive, with the teachers listing several
reasons for why and how they use song and music as well as coming up with a number of
potential learning outcomes for the pupils. The vast majority of the respondents also state that
their learners enjoy learning through song. Some claim that their learners are more motivated

and that this technique increases pupils' self-confidence. Four respondents gave answers indicating that they were somewhat unsure when it came to teaching through song, giving reasons such as the lack of songs in textbooks and a feeling of not having a good enough singing voice as well as being competent enough in the teaching technique.

6 Conclusion

Through the shift in emphasis to spoken language during the nineteenth-century revolution in language teaching, listening and speaking skills gained importance. Today, the classroom is considered a typical oral arena where lectures, discussions and presentations make up a significant amount of the content. There are many teaching techniques which emphasise oral skills, one of which is teaching through song. Teaching through song involves using songs as tools that support learning in subjects other than music. It has been described as a technique enjoyed by many, especially younger learners, and as a technique which includes everyone in the classroom, as singing is a joint activity. Previous research on the use of the technique indicates that learners can increase their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation as well as being a technique that improves motivation to learn. Despite these benefits, music often falls short to the more theoretical aspects of education which also is reflected on national and international tests. In addition, some teachers might be unsure about the technique, either because of a lack of competence or because the textbook does not offer help on how to teach through songs.

The research conducted in this thesis shows that most Norwegian teachers in primary school use music in their English lessons and believe their learners enjoy it. The teachers state that they use music because it could increase the learners' language abilities, their motivation and offers breaks and variation in the lessons. From the study with the first-graders, it is evident that teaching through song does impact the number of new words a learner can acquire and recall. However, there were no clear signs that it was a superior technique. Both studies could benefit from further research. Firstly, the classroom research was conducted with a very small selection of informants and words and did not offer grounds for generalising. To state whether teaching through song is a strong technique for language learning, a much larger research pool is needed. More groups of six-year-olds should be studied to see if the results will be similar or different to the results presented here. And, because many researchers and teachers emphasised the term *younger learners* when

describing those who would benefit from teaching done through song, the same research should be conducted with different age groups to see if there might be any clear differences regarding age. Furthermore, the present study only investigated learners' ability to recall animal words presented in different songs. It would be interesting to see if teaching through song might make a difference in the pronunciation of new words as well. Secondly, the questionnaire was only sent to primary school teachers. This choice was made as the classroom research involved primary learners, which would ensure cohesion between the two parts of the research. However, one should also investigate what teachers of other age groups and levels think about the use of song as a teaching technique and what they see as beneficial. A generalised conclusion would be greatly strengthened by widening the target groups.

Regardless of the results, although they were mostly positive, there are other aspects of teaching through song that make it a worthwhile teaching technique. After one of the lessons in the unit, a boy from the research group asked if they could please do the songs and song exercises again; it had been so much fun. The next day, several of the learners had commented to their teacher that the English lesson the other day had been great. The teacher said this was the first time anyone had commented on an English lesson the day after. These comments, along with the remarks some of the teachers in the survey made about pupils' enjoyment and that the learners seemed happier, are undoubtedly enough to state the importance of teaching through song.

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Appendices

Appendix A – pre, post and delayed post-test.

Name:	Date:	Pronunciation/Notes	Date:	Pronunciation/Notes	Date:	Pronunciation/Notes
Cat						
Dog						
Snake						
Frog						
Crocodile						
Monkey						
Horse						
Cow						
Donkey						
Bat						
Pig						
Mouse						
Rat						
Duck						
Sheep						
Turkey						
Lion						
Tiger						
Elephant						
Bear						
Penguin						

Kangaroo					
Polar Bear					
Giraffe					

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet
Effekten av musikk i engelskundervisningen

Dette er et spørsmål om deltagelse i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se på hvilken effekt det å lære engelsk gjennom sang har på elever. I dette skrivet får du informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære.

Jeg er student på masterprogrammet «Fremmedspråk i skolen» ved Høgskolen i Østfold og skal nå i gang med å skrive masteroppgaven. Der ønsker jeg å forske på det å bruke musikk i engelskundervisningen og se på hvorvidt det har en effekt på evnen til å lære seg nye ord. I den forbindelse vil jeg gjennomføre et forskningsprosjekt med elevene på skolen hvor jeg ser på hva man kan før et undervisningsopplegg med fokus på sang og musikk og hva man kan etterpå. Dette sammenlignes med resultater fra en klasse som ikke kommer til å ha fokus på sang og musikk i undervisningen. Det er Høgskolen i Østfold som er ansvarlige for prosjektet.

Hva innebærer deltakelsen?

Elevene er med på en tre-fem minutters samtale en og en med meg hvor de blir bedt om å si det engelske ordet på det de får se på en rekke bilder. Det presiseres at det ikke er viktig å kunne alle ordene, men si det man tror, elevene får beskjed om at dette ikke er en test for dem, men at de hjelper meg. Deretter gjennomføres engelskundervisningen som vanlig i noen uker. Etter en periode gjennomføres den samme en-til-en-samtalen hvor vi ser på bilder og sier det engelske ordet.

Det er kun jeg og kontaktlærer som vet hva elevene svarer. I selve masteroppgaven avsløres kun klassetrinn, ingen andre opplysninger om elevene blir gitt. Resultatene brukes kun til formålet beskrevet i dette skrivet og behandles konfidensielt (elevenes navn erstattes av nummer) og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Prosjektet avsluttes i juni 2021 og alt av data som er samlet inn vil da bli slettet.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Samtykket kan trekkes tilbake når som helst uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle resultater slettes da. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for eleven hvis du/dere velger å ikke gi samtykke til deltakelse eller å trekke det tilbake senere.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Behandling av personopplysninger

Personopplysninger behandles basert på deres samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Østfold har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Ta gjerne kontakt om du har noen spørsmål.

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- Meg: Anette Rougnø, epost: arougno@gmail.com
- Min veileder: Karin Dahlberg Pettersen, epost: kdp@hiof.no
- Personvernombudet ved Høgskolen i Østfold: Martin Gautestad Jakobsen, epost: martin.g.jakobsen@hiof.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen
Anette Rougnø

✂ Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg/vi har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *«Effekten av musikk i engelskundervisningen»* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

☐ Jeg/vi gir samtykke til at mitt/vårt barn kan delta i forskningsprosjektet

Jeg/vi samtykker til at mitt/vårt barns resultater behandles frem til prosjektet avsluttes i juni 2021.

Eleven navn: _____

Signatur foresatte: _____

Dato: _____

Survey: The use of songs / music in English lessons

1. Do you use songs / music in your English lessons?

Select one answer

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

2. Why do you use / why do you not use songs / music in your English lessons?

Type one or a few words...

500

3. What do you think students might learn from using songs / music in their language learning?

Type one or a few words...

500

4. If you use songs / music in your English lessons, can you give any examples of how you use it?

Type one or a few words...

500

5. How do the students experience the use of songs / music in English lessons?

Type one or a few words...

500

Informasjon om forskningsprosjektet
Effekten av musikk i engelskundervisningen

Dette er et spørsmål om godkjenning til å bruke elever på skolen i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se på hvilken effekt det å lære engelsk gjennom sang har på elever.

Jeg er student på masterprogrammet «Fremmedspråk i skolen» ved Høgskolen i Østfold og skal nå i gang med å skrive masteroppgaven. Der ønsker jeg å forske på det å bruke musikk i engelskundervisningen og se på hvorvidt det har en effekt på evnen til å lære seg nye ord. I den forbindelse vil jeg gjennomføre et forskningsprosjekt med elevene på skolen hvor jeg ser på hva man kan før et undervisningsopplegg med fokus på sang og musikk og hva man kan etterpå. Dette sammenlignes med resultater fra en klasse som ikke kommer til å ha fokus på sang og musikk i undervisningen.

Deltakelse

Elevene er med på en kort individuell samtale med meg hvor de blir bedt om å si det engelske ordet på det de får se på en rekke bilder. Det presiseres at det ikke er viktig å kunne alle ordene. Elevene får beskjed om at dette ikke er en test for dem, men at de hjelper meg. Deretter gjennomføres engelskundervisningen som vanlig i noen uker. Etter en periode gjennomføres den samme en-til-en-samtalen. I selve masteroppgaven blir elever og skoletilhørighet anonymisert. Kun klassetrinn avsløres, ingen andre opplysninger om elevene blir gitt. Resultatene brukes kun til formålet beskrevet i dette skrivet og behandles konfidensielt (elevenes navn erstattes av nummer) og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Samtykkeskjema sendes hjem til elevenes foresatte og de gir et eventuelt samtykke. Det informeres om at deltakelsen i prosjektet er frivillig og at samtykket kan trekkes tilbake når som helst uten å oppgi noen grunn samt at dette ikke vil ha negative konsekvenser for eleven. Ved tilbakekalles av samtykke slettes elevens resultater.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Østfold har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Eventuelle spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet rettes til:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen
Anette Rougnø

Godkjenning

Jeg/vi (skolens ledelse) har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet *«Effekten av musikk i engelskundervisningen»* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

☐ Jeg/vi gir godkjenning til at elevene på skolen kan brukes til forskningsprosjektet, gitt at foresatte gir sitt samtykke.

Dato: _____ Signatur: _____

– NSD's assessment

Behandlingen av personopplysninger er vurdert av NSD.

Vurderingen er: Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet 05.03.2021 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:
nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 18.06.2021.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om elevene. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som foresatte kan trekke tilbake. Elevene vil også samtykke til deltakelse.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være foresattes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte og deres foresatte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert/foresatt tar kontakt om sine/barnets rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Reflection note

Writing this master's thesis has been very rewarding. I decided quite early on what I wanted to write about which provided me with opportunities to properly think and rethink through my ideas. The help I got from my supervisor Karin, was a great assistance in structuring my early thoughts and creating a strong foundation for the study.

It was joyous to see that the teaching technique I wanted to write about proved to be a successful one. After examining previous studies where teaching through song had been compared to other techniques, and proved to not only work, but often work better, there were both nerves and anticipation involved when I set out to conduct similar research myself. Based on the feedback from the learners, and the results, I would personally conclude that the technique is one worthwhile. I do believe in the technique myself and recognise that there are possible issues regarding biasness. Therefore, it was important to also include a survey in which the participants could provide anonymous answers. When the findings from the survey also came back positive, it strengthened both my beliefs in the technique and in the paper.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused several challenges for the research I intended to do in the classroom. The initial hopes of conducting a larger-scale study with learners from various age groups or various schools quickly became impossible due to access. Strict rules on where one could go limited the research pool substantially. Once the participants had been chosen, it was also challenging to gather consents. Parents and guardians were bombarded with information on the school situation and accepting a request to join a study might have ended up far down on the priority list. There were moments of frustration when quarantine and closed schools occurred at the exact same time as the post-test, and it had to be delayed. It meant I would not get the exact results I was aiming for. If I was to conduct a similar study again, I would have *waited out* the pandemic, so that I could have included more participants and have more data to compare.

Another minor issue that I would have altered, were I to do it again, was that the questions in the survey became a little too similar. Some of the replies provided were "see my other answer" which indicated that the teachers felt they had already given a response to that question. The subtle differences between *why* and *how* were probably not explained well enough. While I did receive the answers I needed for the paper, clearer questions might have eased the answering process for the respondents and the gathering of data for me.

Nevertheless, I am happy with the results both studies revealed and proud of the thesis. My hope is that this research can inspire teachers to take advantage of the technique and incorporate songs and music into their foreign language lessons. I believe this inclusion will bring both educational and social advantages to the classroom.