

# *MASTER'S THESIS*

*Heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school: the case of Quest*

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## Abstract

Many researchers have taken an interest in heteronormativity in school textbooks (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Paiz, 2015; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010). This is due to the potentially negative consequences for students with respect to their well-being and feeling included in the classroom. My study explores heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school, with a focus on *Quest 2*.

My chosen method is multimodal content analysis. This has involved exploring how the textbook portrays gender, families, and sexuality. My study reveals that *Quest 2* contains no characteristics of heteronormativity. *Quest 2* portrays genders as diverse, as both girls and boys exhibit feminine and masculine traits. While previous studies have found that textbooks tend to portray predominantly traditional families, which consist of a mother and father, only half of the families in *Quest 2* fit into this category. All family constellations in the textbooks are portrayed in a similar, positive manner, as all families are depicted with bright colors and welcoming body language. In addition, all family members are illustrated as individuals, which indicates that all family constellations are equally good. The textbook portrays adults who are not involved in heterosexual relationships in a favorable light, thus conveying the idea that living a non-heterosexual lifestyle is both feasible and acceptable.

My thesis concludes that *Quest 2*'s lack of heteronormativity can potentially prevent negative consequences for students, such as bullying or the students feeling wrong, excluded, or suicidal. Also, the way in which the *Quest 2* portrays gender, families, and sexuality can have positive impacts on students, including promoting tolerance, acceptance, and a sound mental health.

**Keywords:** *Heteronormativity, textbooks, English as a Second Language, gender norms, queer theory, primary school, queer students, young learners, families, sexual diversity, gender diversity, homosexuality, asexuality, gender identity*

## Abstrakt

Flere forskere har undersøkt heteronormativitet i lærebøker (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Paiz, 2015; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010). Dette er på grunn av potensielle negative konsekvenser for elevers velvære og tilhørighet i klasserommet. Studien min utforsker heteronormativitet i norske lærebøker for engelskfaget og for barneskolen, med et fokus på *Quest 2*.

Jeg har anvendt metoden multimodal innholdsanalyse. Dette har innebåret å utforske hvordan læreboka fremstiller kjønn, familier og seksualitet. Studien min avslører at *Quest 2* ikke har noen karakteristikker av heteronormativitet. *Quest 2* fremstiller kjønn som mangfoldige, da både jenter og gutter har feminine og maskuline trekk. Mens tidligere studier viste til at lærebøker pleier hovedsakelig å fremstille tradisjonelle familier, med en mor og far, så tilhører kun halvparten av familiene i *Quest 2* denne kategorien. Alle familiesammensetningene i læreboka er fremstilt på en lignende, positiv måte, da alle illustrasjonene er fargerike og karakterene har vennlig kroppsspråk. I tillegg er familiemedlemmene framstilt som individer, som indikerer at alle familiesammensetninger er like gode. Læreboken skildrer voksne som ikke er involvert i heterofile forhold i et gunstig lys, og formidler dermed idéen om at det å leve en ikke-heterofil livsstil er både mulig og akseptabelt.

Oppgaven min konkluderer at *Quest 2*s mangel på heteronormativitet kan mulig preventere negative konsekvenser for elever, for eksempel mobbing eller at elever føler seg feile, ekskluderte eller suicidale. Dessuten kan måten læreboka fremstiller kjønn på ha positive påvirkninger på elever, slik som at den fremmer toleranse, aksept og en god psykisk helse.

**Nøkkelord:** *Heteronormativitet, lærebøker, engelsk språkundervisning, kjønnsnormer, skeiv teori, barneskole, skeive elever, småtrinnet, familier, seksuelt mangfold, kjønns mangfold, homofili, aseksualitet, kjønnsidentitet*

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# 1 Introduction

Research suggests that heteronormativity (see section 1.1) causes many of the issues queer<sup>1</sup> students and people face, including feeling excluded, wrong, and unnatural (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Røthing, 2011; Ryan, 2016). As a primary school teacher student, I am concerned with the well-being of these students. I therefore wished to explore heteronormativity in the classroom, and more specifically heteronormativity in textbooks. In addition, I am a student teacher in English, and have focused on textbooks for English as Second Language (ESL) learners.

In the following text, I describe my background for exploring heteronormativity in ESL textbooks for primary school. Further, I briefly present some relevant previous studies. Thereafter, I present the aim and the research question. Finally, there is an overview of my study.

## 1.1 Background

According to Save the Children Norway (n.d.), UN's Rights of the Child are often violated for queer children. These rights involve that children have a right to have their own identity and not be discriminated against (Save the Children Norway, n.d.). The reason for why UN's Rights of the Child are often violated for queer children is the way in which society treats these children. For instance, queer children are at a higher risk of being bullied, experiencing hate crimes, and having poor physical and mental health (Save the Children Norway, n.d.). Some students consider suicide as a reasonable reaction to not being heterosexual, even if their families are accepting of their identities (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Røthing, 2011). Gay-related names are still used in schools as a way for students to derogate each other (Slåtten, et al., 2015). The persistent issues of queer children are an important reason for why my study is concerned with heteronormativity in textbooks.

The Norwegian school has an important role in improving conditions for queer children. In 2020, The Norwegian Directorate of Education introduced the interdisciplinary subject Health and Life skills, which aims to promote sound mental and physical health for

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<sup>1</sup> This study refers to queer people as people who deviate from heterosexual gender and sexual norms.

students, including queer students. As already addressed, queer children are more likely to have poorer mental and physical health (Save the Children Norway, n.d.).

Moreover, the school's core values emphasize that all students shall feel included in school. A part of the school's core values is *identity and cultural diversity*, incorporating the idea that "School shall give pupils historical and cultural insight that will give them a good foundation in their lives and help each pupil to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment" (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020, p. 6). However, queer students may struggle to preserve and develop their identity in the classroom, as deviation from gender and sexual norms are often met with negative reactions, harassment, and violence (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). This also suggests that the classroom is often not an inclusive environment for them.

Another aspect of the school's core values is *human dignity*. The Norwegian Directorate of Education (2020) states:

School must consider the diversity of pupils and facilitate for each pupil to experience belonging in school and society. We may all experience that we feel different and stand out from the others around us. Therefore, we need acknowledgement and appreciation of differences (p. 5).

However, children who deviate from heterosexual norms are less likely to "experience belonging in school or society".

A third aspect of the curriculum's core values is *democracy and participation*. This aspect incorporates that school should promote democratic values such as mutual respect, tolerance, and individual freedom. The Norwegian Directorate of education (2020) writes: "School shall promote democratic values and attitudes that can counteract prejudice and discrimination. Pupils shall learn in school to respect the fact that people are different" (p. 10). The school needs to know how to promote these values with respect to queer students, since there is prejudice, discrimination, lack of mutual respect and tolerance towards queer students (Save the Children, n.d.; Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Røthing, 2011).

To achieve these aims for queer children, the school should be aware of heteronormativity, as this may be the cause of a lot of their issues (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Røthing, 2011; Brummett, 2015; Ryan, 2016). Heteronormativity is the idea that it is natural, normal, and desirable for people to be heterosexual, and that it is

therefore unnatural, undesirable, and abnormal for people not to be heterosexual (Brummett, 2015; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). It can be considered an oppressive ideology that “designates a regime that organizes sex, gender and sexuality in order to match heterosexual norms” (Castro Varela et al., 2016, p. 35). I further describe heteronormativity in section 2.1.

In the classroom, heteronormativity often causes students who do not align with heterosexual norms to feel wrong, unnatural, and excluded (Brummett, 2015; Ryan, 2016; Evripidou, 2020). Heteronormativity can also cause issues for students who are not queer. It can affect students who have families outside of heterosexual norms. It can also affect girls, as heteronormativity disguises boys harassing girls as natural, heterosexual behavior, that girls should consider a compliment (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). Heteronormativity may be present in teaching, interactions or learning materials.

In the Norwegian ESL classroom, textbooks play a prominent role, as many teachers use them to various degrees (Carlsen et al. 2020). Textbooks can be used as both teaching and learning materials and can be convenient to use as they are adapted to the criteria of the curriculum (Fuchs & Henne, 2018). If these textbooks are heteronormative, it may be harmful for students (Moore, 2020; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010). This is because of how heteronormativity in general can be harmful for students. For instance, if queer students lack positive representations of what their own futures might look like, at the same time as a future as heterosexual and cisgendered is idealized, it might cause students to picture their future as queer as an unhappy one, or in worst case cause suicide (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). This kind of heteronormality can be illustrated in textbooks by, for instance, only portraying heteronormative nuclear families and characters that align with gender norms (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2020)

Moreover, heteronormativity in textbooks may for instance appear to exclude queer identities such as gay, trans and asexual characters, or only portraying heteronormative nuclear families and characters that align with gender norms (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2020). In the Norwegian ESL classroom, learners are to deal with different ways of living and thinking, as well as “build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others’ identities in a multilingual and multicultural context” (The Norwegian Directorate, 2020, p. 3) through working with texts in the English subject. Therefore, heteronormativity in texts may hinder these aims, as it silences or opposes queer identities.

## 1.2 Previous studies

On a global level, several researchers have conducted studies suggesting that heteronormativity is prevalent in ESL textbooks (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2020; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021; Salami & Ghajarieh, 2016). These studies found few explicitly queer characters in the textbooks. In Gray's (2013) study, he found some short texts about real famous people who are gay, but their sexual orientations are never mentioned. There are multiple activities or texts where sexuality is visible, but these never include anything other than heterosexuality. Wherever homosexuality could have been implied, the books clarify that it was in fact not gay (Gray, 2013).

In Ruiz-Cecilia et al.'s (2020) study, they found that the textbooks almost exclusively portrayed heteronormative families, where a child lived with their two biological parents, except for one portrayal of a single parent. Moreover, in all the studies, there were stereotypical portrayals of gender (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2020; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021).

Researchers have analyzed heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks in several subjects and found that heteronormativity is prevalent (Røthing, 2017; Røthing, & Svendsen, 2010; Røthing, & Svendsen, 2011). Norwegian researchers have also found that heteronormativity is prevalent in ESL textbooks (Smestad, 2018; Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022). Most studies of heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks have focused on textbooks from lower-secondary or higher (Smestad, 2018; Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022; Røthing, 2017; Røthing, & Svendsen, 2010; Røthing, & Svendsen, 2011). My literature search (see *appendix 3*) suggests that there is a lack of studies that explore heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks for primary school. Smestad (2018) studied how LGBT issues were addressed in textbooks in various subjects for 1-10th grade, however he only analyzed ESL textbooks from 8-10th grade.

In addition, there are some Norwegian studies that explore heteronormativity in textbooks that are published to accommodate the requirements of LK20 (Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022; Klev & Granholt, 2022; Andresen & Drivflaadt). My literature search suggests that there is a lack of studies which explore heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks for primary school that have been published in accordance LK20. I further elaborate on previous studies in section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

### 1.3 Aim

The aim of this study is to explore heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school that are produced in accordance with LK20. It is important for teachers to consider heteronormativity in the classroom and textbooks starting in primary school to achieve the aims of the curriculum. A danger is that pupils develop a feeling of being unnatural or wrong that can follow them into secondary school and throughout life (Brummett, 2015; Hellesund, 2021; Ryan, 2016; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Bufdir, 2023). Due to the limitations of this study, the focus is on a textbook for second grade.

Moreover, it is essential to explore heteronormativity in ESL textbooks, as English is an important subject when it comes to identity development (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). I chose to explore a book designed to comply the requirements of LK20, as many teachers may consider acquiring newer textbooks to accommodate the requirements of the new curriculum. By exploring heteronormativity in a newer textbook, I can assess to what degree it is in accordance with the interdisciplinary subject *Health and Life skills*, the core values and competence aims.

As described in section 1.1, according to *Health and Life skills* and the core values, the school shall promote sound mental health, values that counteract discrimination, and allow the students to develop their identity in an inclusive environment (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). Heteronormativity in the textbook may make it difficult to accommodate these aims. Neto (2018) writes: “As long as our teaching materials and practices reflect and reproduce heteronormative perspectives, too many students will feel excluded” (p. 13). How heteronormativity may be counterproductive to the aims of the curriculum, forms the basis of my research question.

My research question is: *How heteronormative are Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school?* I explore this question by analyzing *Quest 2: My own book*. *Quest* was first published in Norway in 2012, and in 2014, it won the *Best European Learning Materials Award* (Aschehoug, n.d.). It has recently been revised to accommodate the requirements of LK20 (Aschehoug, n.d.). I further describe *Quest 2* in section 3.1 The exploration of this textbook for second grade will give an insight in how heteronormative Norwegian textbooks are for early primary school.

The analysis is a multimodal, content analysis which explores if the textbook has a heteronormative portrayal of gender, families, and sexuality. I have chosen to analyze these

concepts as these are central aspects of heteronormativity that can be discussed with young learners. I elaborate on this in the literature review.

#### **1.4 Overview of study**

The following text is divided into five chapters. In the literature review, there is a review of queer theory and heteronormativity, as well as heteronormativity in textbooks. Also, I further describe the concepts gender, family, and sexuality. I then present my method which is a multimodal content analysis. Thereafter, I present the results of my investigation. The fifth chapter contains the discussion, where I relate the findings to theory and previous findings. The findings of my study are summarized thereafter. In addition, I include additional notes in the final chapter.

## 2 Literature review

As already established, the aim of this study is to explore heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school. In this chapter, I present a section on heteronormativity, which includes a description of heteronormativity, as well as a review of scholars' contributions to the concept. Previous literature on heteronormativity forms the basis of how I operationalize heteronormativity in section 3.1.

To explore the research question established in section 1.3, I explore how heteronormative the portrayals of *gender*, *family* and *sexuality* are. Therefore, I include sections that discuss *gender*, *family*, and *sexuality*, which contain central ideas surrounding the concepts. These sections provide insight into why the portrayals of these concepts in textbooks matter. It will also act as a background to my discussion of heteronormativity in the textbook in the discussion chapter.

In addition, there is a section on heteronormativity in textbooks. This section includes an overview of the usefulness of exploring heteronormativity in textbooks, as well as a review of international studies of ESL textbooks on a global level, as ESL textbooks is a focus of this research. As this study focuses on heteronormativity in Norwegian textbook, there will also be a review of Norwegian studies of heteronormativity in textbooks of various school subjects.

### 2.1 Heteronormativity

Queer theory enables researchers to deconstruct and criticize social constructs, especially regarding gender and sexuality (Hellesund, 2021). A central concept within queer theory is heteronormativity (Castro Varela et al., 2016; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). Heteronormativity describes a concept where heterosexuality is considered the norm and normal, promoting the idea that sex, gender and sexuality should be in line with heterosexual norms (Brummett, 2015; Castro Varela et al., 2016). Moreover, heteronormativity promotes the idea that a universally “good” family is a nuclear family that consists of a woman, man, and children. This also indicates that families that deviate from these norms, for instance families with single parents or same-sex parents, are less ideal (Anderssen & Hellesund, 2009).

For many people, being considered *normal* is important and is associated with having a “good” life. The fear of not aligning with these heterosexual norms can have serious consequences, such as mental health issues or in worst case suicide (Hellesund, 2021). Due to

heteronormativity's potentially harmful consequences, many researchers have been critical of heteronormativity in the classroom and in textbooks, both on a global level and in the Norwegian context (Evripidou, 2020; Gray, 2013; Ryan, 2016; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). I further elaborate on this in section 2.2.

Several scholars within queer theory have contributed to the concept heteronormativity. It was introduced by Michael Warner in the early 1990's. He claims that the concept of heterosexuality structures many aspects of society, such as family, gender, health care, individual freedom, and identity (Ludwig, 2016).

Another scholar who has helped define the concept of heteronormativity is Judith Butler. Although Butler's work does not explicitly reference heteronormativity, their<sup>2</sup> critique of the heterosexual matrix can be viewed as a critique of the cultural assumptions and norms that underpin heteronormativity (Ludwig, 2016). Butler suggests that society expects a correlation in people's sex characteristics, gender expression and their (hetero)sexual orientation (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). This includes the idea that men and women have distinct interests, behaviors, and appearances because of their assigned sex at birth (Ludwig, 2016), which can also be called the gender-binary (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). This idea also promotes the idea that, for example, men are not truly men if they are attracted to other men. This is strongly imprinted in society, with the result that people can become confused when people act outside of sexual and gender norms.

Butler further suggests that society often responds with negative reactions, harassment, or violence when people deviate from any of these norms. These social rules are imprinted in children from a young age (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). Thus, Butler understands gender as a social construct that is produced and reinforced. In Butler's later work, they suggest that hegemony is a more suitable term than the heterosexual matrix (Ludwig, 2016).

Accordingly, some scholars understand heteronormativity as the hegemony of heterosexuality (Brummett, 2015; Ludwig, 2016). Based on Gramsci's understanding of hegemony, the hegemony of heterosexuality describes how heterosexual ideologies become "unquestionable" because they are the dominant norms, which most people consent to. Various institutions and civil society contribute to maintain these norms (Ludwig, 2016).

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<sup>2</sup> Butler prefers they/them pronouns (Szorenyi, 2022), and those pronouns are therefore used when referring to Butler in this text.

Ludwig (2016) proposes using the term heteronormative hegemony to better understand heteronormativity. She builds on the ideas of Gramsci's hegemony and Butler's heterosexual matrix. Ludwig (2016) explains:

I prefer the notion of heteronormative hegemony over heterosexual hegemony, as the former more accurately demonstrates that heterosexuality goes far beyond certain social, 'intimate' practices but rather serves as an imagined 'normality' and as a norm, and thus as a crucial and powerful force in current 'Western' societies (p. 71).

She argues that this way, heteronormativity can be understood as "a formation of state power grounded in civil society" (p. 71). Hence, society participates in reinforcing heteronormativity through daily practices, as for example in the classroom. Ludwig (2016) argues that people prefer to not deviate from normalcy. People may therefore wish to conform to heterosexual norms in an attempt to be *normal*. Several scholars within queer theory have stressed the link between normalcy and heteronormativity (Hellesund, 2021).

In the following sections, I will further describe the concepts gender, family and sexuality in relation to heteronormativity, as these are the concepts I explore to answer the research question: *How heteronormative are Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school?*. Although I discuss them separately, gender, family and sexuality overlap and are related. Sexuality is a part of family life and sexuality can be an aspect of people's gender (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Røthing & Svendsen).

### 2.1.1 Gender

This section aims to give background for exploring whether the portrayal of gender is heteronormative in textbooks, as well as background for the implications of a heteronormative gender portrayal. As described in section 2.1, heteronormative expectations of gender involve that there is a correlation in a person's assigned sex, gender, and sexual orientation. For instance, people assigned male at birth, should identify and act as men and thus be attracted to women (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Ludwig, 2016). I will describe why I use the term *sex assigned at birth* rather than, for instance, "born male", later in this section. People who are not heterosexual challenge gender expectations simply by not being heterosexual (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Røthing & Svendsen). At the same time, people and children who challenge gender roles may experience bullying involving homophobic language (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Slåtten, et al., 2015; Renold, 2005).

Although the terms *gender* and *sex* are sometimes used interchangeably, they bear different meanings. Sex is influenced by peoples' hormones and chromosomes. Western society categorizes people's sex as either, male, female or intersex (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). The reason I use the term *sex assigned at birth*, is that doctors assign a sex based on the child's sex characteristics, however, the sex assignment might not fully reflect their sex, as doctors most often do not test children's hormone levels or chromosomes. One's sex assignment may not align with, for instance, their chromosomes (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020).

Gender, however, reflects social aspects of one's identity. While a person's gender can be influenced by their sex, it will also be affected by culture (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). People are most often assigned a gender at birth, based on their sex assigned at birth (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). Different cultures have different understandings of gender, and different numbers of gender. My study focuses on textbooks in Norway, and therefore I focus on Norway and western societies.

Generally, in western societies there are two recognized genders: women and men. Nevertheless, some people identify as non-binary or a third gender, where they do not identify strictly as a man or a woman (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). Some people will be assigned the gender man or woman, although their actual sex is intersex. For instance, depending on the definition applied, up to 2% of people in Norway can be considered intersex. However, most of these people regard themselves as either a woman or a man (Bufdir, 2023).

Gender expressions are the observable aspects of a person's gender. It describes a person's appearance in terms of hair length, hair styles and clothing, and a person's behaviors, mannerisms and interests (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Ludwig, 2016). Gender roles, however, reflects society's expectations of how each gender should look and behave.

In western societies, men and boys are expected to be masculine, whereas women and girls are expected to be feminine. What is considered masculine and feminine is culturally dependent. In some cultures, men wear skirts and dresses, but that is considered feminine in most western societies, including Norway (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Røthing, 2011)

In my study, I analyze a textbook for second grade. Therefore, the following text describes some ideas surrounding gender in relation to children.

Erickson-Schroth & Davis (2020) write: “By three years old, most toddlers have a sense of their gender, and soon after, some children whose gender identities do not match societal expectations are able identify this discrepancy” (p. 4). This can indicate that gender identity is influenced by biological factors and hormone exposure in the womb.

Further, Erickson-Schroth & Davis (2020) state “Young people often present in hyperfeminine and hypermasculine ways” (p. 5). They also suggest that many children at the age of four will believe that if a man with short hair grew his hair long, he would become a woman.

According to gender norms, boys should be rough, unemotional, interested in sports, especially football. Being nurturing and gentle are seen as feminine attributes (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Renold, 2005). These gender norms also suggest that boys should physically distance themselves from girls, unless they are romantically involved. Even in primary school, having or performing a heterosexual orientation appears to be vital for aligning with gender norms (Renold, 2005; Ryan, 2016). This can involve, for example, girls expressing that they find boys or men attractive, or boys expressing that they definitely do not find boys and men attractive (Ryan, 2016).

Gender norms seem to be persistent for children in Norway. Meland & Kaltvedt (2019) conducted a study where they explored how gender roles were reinforced in Norwegian kindergarten. When it comes to appearance, the staff expected girls to be feminine and thus pretty, cute, wear dresses and bright colors. Boys, on the other hand, were expected to be masculine by looking strong and rough and using dark colors. When a girl in the kindergarten wore dark colors and had short hair, the staff often discussed how she was dressed as a boy, and she was praised when she came to kindergarten wearing a pink dress (Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019)

### 2.1.2 Family

As explained in section 2.1, my thesis investigates different concepts of the research question. This subsection explores *family*, to give background for exploring if the textbook’s portrayal of families is heteronormative. The Norwegian Academy Dictionary (n.d) considers a family as (1) two or more people who live in the same household or (2) people who are related biologically or through marriage or adoption.

In 2018, the population of children in Norway was approximately 1.1 million, distributed across 636,100 families (Statistics Norway, 2018). Seven of ten households with children consist of two parents with at least one child, where the parents are parents to all the children in the household. One of ten families with children consist of two parents and at least one child, who is not the legal child of one of the parents. This report does not contain any information about how many of these two previously mentioned family constellations have same-sex parents. Two of ten families with children consist of a single parent and one or more children (Statistics Norway, 2018). In 2020, about 25 000 children experienced that their parents either got divorced, separated, or broke up (Bufdir, 2021)

According to Bufdir (2023) statistics show that in 2022, 1693 children lived with same-sex parents who were registered as partners or married. Bufdir (2023) suggests that these statics most likely do not portray accurately how many children which have same-sex parents, as they may for instance live part-time with a parent who is in a same-sex relationship.

### 2.1.3 Sexuality

In this sub-section, I present some central ideas surrounding the concept sexuality.

Sexuality can be considered something people express, do or practice. What can be considered aspects of sexuality is culturally dependent. In present day, who people are attracted to is regarded an important aspect of their sexuality (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011). Examples of sexual orientations are heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and asexuality.

The term *homosexuality* was firstly developed in the late 1800's (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011). At that time, there was an idea that people had a stable heterosexual or homosexual core. Today, homosexuality refers to falling in love with or be attracted to the same gender. Sexual orientation is still commonly considered a central part of people's identity (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011).

*Asexuality* refers to experiencing a lack of sexual attraction (AVEN, n.d.). People who identify as asexual can have various romantic orientations and can, for instance, identify as heteroromantic, homoromantic, biromantic, or aromantic (Mitchell & Hunnicutt, 2019). In Mitchell & Hunnicutt's (2019) study where they interviewed ten asexual people, most

participants felt a sense of relief when finding and adopting the identity *asexual*. This helped some of them realize that they do not have to be in a relationship at all. It also assisted them in communicating about their emotions. As other non-heterosexuals, many had felt that there where something wrong with them (Mitchell & Hunnicutt, 2019).

It is difficult to determine how many Norwegian people who are not heterosexual. A report from 2008 stated that 1,2 % of people identified as bisexual or homosexual. In 2022, 12% reported feeling attraction to the same gender to some degree. Younger people are more likely to report being attracted to the same gender, as well as identifying as other than heterosexual (Bufdir, 2023). Bufdir (2023) reports that, in a study from 2022, 19% of people aged 16-29 reported feeling attraction to the same gender. A study from 2020 suggested that 7% of Norwegians identified as not heterosexual (Bufdir, 2023). In addition, AVEN (n.d.) estimates that about 1% of people are asexual.

Træen (2023) suggests that there is often a dissonance between identity and sexual practice. She suggests that many people identify as heterosexual even though they practice non-heterosexuality, to avoid the consequences of identifying with a non-heterosexual identity. These consequences, such as poor mental health, self-loathing and reduced quality of life are usually due to negative attitudes towards non-heterosexuality, which can be rooted in heteronormativity (Træen, 2023; Hellesund, 2021; Save the Children, N.D; Bufdir, 2023). There might also be negative consequences when there is a dissonance between identity and sexual practices (Træen, 2023). Another explanation for this dissonance could be that people's sexual orientation may not be as stable as previously thought (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011).

At the same time, Norwegians have developed more positive attitudes towards non-heterosexual people through the years. Interestingly enough, only 6% of people have negative attitudes towards bisexual men, yet 52% of bisexual men are not comfortable with coming out (Bufdir, 2023).

## **2.2 Heteronormativity in textbooks**

The following section aims to give further background for my I wish to explore heteronormativity in the Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school. Many researchers have taken an interest in textbooks, as they are useful teaching materials. Textbooks are

mediators of knowledge, which also reflect social values. Thus, a critique of the textbook can often be considered a critique of society (Fuchs & Bock, 2018; Fuchs & Henne, 2018).

As addressed in the introduction, there are several reasons why researchers are interested in exploring heteronormativity in textbooks. Often these reasons are related to the consequences of heteronormativity and teachers' responsibility with regard to these issues (Moore, 2020; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010). For instance, Ruiz-Cecilia et al. (2020) write:

As English teachers and educators, we have the responsibility to come to grips with these issues, as the construction of identity through the learning of a new language has increasingly become more understood as being inseparable from the formation and transformation of identity (p. 2).

Due to how heteronormativity in textbooks may not accommodate all the requirements of the new Norwegian curriculum, the aim of this study is to explore heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school. I describe these aspects of the curriculum in the introduction but will briefly review some of them here. The school shall ensure students' ability to develop their identity in an inclusive environment (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). However, heteronormativity can affect classroom participation negatively and cause students to feel both excluded and unsafe (Evrpidou, 2020; Hellesund, 2021; Ryan, 2016).

There are also indicators that the Norwegian school has not been inclusive enough for queer people so far. For instance, many Norwegian queer people feel they need to hide their sexuality or gender identity. In a recent report from Bufdir (2023) 52% of bisexual men and 44% of bisexual women avoided disclosing their sexual orientation. In addition, people have more negative attitudes towards trans people than other queer people (Bufdir, 2023). Heteronormativity may also naturalize heterosexuality in such a manner that justifies boys harassing girls, which may cause girls to feel unsafe (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009).

As addressed in section, 1.1, all subjects in the Norwegian school shall be linked to the interdisciplinary subject *Health and life skills*, where it is essential for students to develop a positive self-image in childhood years (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). Queer people generally have poorer mental health than the rest of the population (Bufdir, 2023). Bufdir (2023) further claims that the Norwegian society is heteronormative in that

people assume that people are heterosexual by default and assume that people identify strictly within the gender-binary.

Heteronormativity promotes ideas of what is normal and ideal. Students can struggle emotionally when they feel like they are not normal (Brummett, 2016). Students also have a need to feel seen, accepted and loved for who they are (Jordet, 2020). Thus, heteronormativity may have negative consequences for the self-image of students who deviate or have families who deviate from heterosexual norms (Hellesund, 2021) In addition, if textbooks suggest that only a heterosexual future is a good future, queer students can have issues with imagining a good future for themselves and it can create a sense of hopelessness (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009).

In the English subject, students shall be exposed to different ways of living and thinking, and heteronormativity in textbooks may erase or marginalize sexualities or gender expressions that deviate from heterosexual norms (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020; Moore, 2020). In second grade, subjects related to families and gender may be discussed, when working towards the competence aim “participate in rehearsed dialogues and spontaneous conversations about one’s own needs and feelings, daily life and interests” (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, p. 5). This is because families are often an important part of students’ everyday life, and interests are often linked to gender (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). However, heteronormativity may cause it difficult to work towards this competence aim. In Evripidou’s (2020) study, all 18 gay, students disclosed that they felt unsafe to participate in conversations about, for instance, families, hobbies, friendships, sports, and emotions, as this could reveal that they did not align with heterosexual norms.

The analysis of my study is partially inspired by Moore’s (2020) *taxonomy of representational heteronormativity*. He describes five categories, from most heteronormative to least heteronormative. The first category is heterosexism: “where heterosexuality is explicitly valued above other forms of sexuality, or other forms of sexuality are explicitly devalued or presented as abnormal” (p. 6). The next category is heteronormative erasure, where textbooks only portray content that align with heterosexual norms, erasing anything that deviates from these norms. Moore (2020) suggests that this is probably the most common in textbooks. The third category is heteronormative categorization, where the author tries to involve non-heterosexuality, but does it in a way that marginalizes people who deviate from

sexual and gender norms. In this case, non-heterosexuality is only addressed in certain sections, often where problems with non-heterosexuality is addressed (Moore, 2020).

The fourth category is heteronormative mainstreaming, where non-heterosexual representation is included, but only if they do not disturb too many heteronormative norms. Some queer people may feel content with this category (Moore, 2020). The least heteronormative category is queer inclusion. Moore (2020) writes that “Queer inclusion is a well-balanced form of representation that features people in various forms of relationships, not all of which conform to Western heteronormative paradigms (p. 7). In this category, queer people are presented as people who have concerns other than their sexuality and gender.

### 2.2.1 Previous research

As described in section 1.2, there have been several studies exploring the focus of my study, which is heteronormativity in ESL textbooks. All the studies show that heteronormativity is prevalent in textbooks. The studies show that the textbooks and classroom materials almost exclusively present opposite-sex attraction, traditional family structures, meaning families with a mother, father and children, and an erasure of explicitly queer identities (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021; Paiz, 2015; Höhne & Heerdegen, 2018; Salami & Ghajarieh, 2016).

Ruiz-Cecilia et al. (2020) analyzed two sets of ESL textbooks for the age range 12-13. They found that heteronormativity in the textbooks is visible through family patterns, sexual affective attraction, recreational activities, risk-taking, professions, appearance, and the gender-binary system. In their analysis of family, they found predominantly traditional families with a mother and a father, with the exception of one single-parent situation. Ruiz-Cecilia et al. (2020) stress the importance of portraying diverse families:

By exclusively presenting stereotypical “traditional” models made up of a father, a mother, and several brothers and sisters, publishers prevent students from gaining insight into real issues such as family, gender roles, identity, sexual orientation, etc. that might help learners align their beliefs and assumptions with reality (p. 13).

They found no portrayals of non-binary characters, and there are many instances of gender stereotypical portrayals of characters. For instance, shopping, trying on clothes, and fashion are almost exclusively associated with women, whereas men complain about shopping (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020).

Gray (2013) analyzed ten textbooks aimed for lower levels of proficiency as he argues that these textbooks are likely to discuss the topic family. The textbooks in focus are aimed at a global market.

Just as in Ruiz-Cecilia et al.'s (2020) study, Gray (2013) found only portrayals of traditional families with a mother and father, except for one portrayal of a single parent. When uncles or aunts are portrayed with a partner, they are portrayed in heterosexual relationships. The textbooks contain only heterosexual love stories. When there are illustrations that could be interpreted as queer, the verbal text clarifies that this is not the case. One of the examples is two men who appear to live together, eat out for dinner, and cook together, where the verbal text states that they are cooking for their girlfriends. Another is of a man who dresses like the women, Marilyn Munroe, where the text clarifies that he does not enjoy dressing in this way (Gray, 2013).

The textbooks in Gray's (2013) study portrays gender in line with heteronormativity. They include content about the differences of men and women; how they shop and talk differently and eat different kinds of food. Similar findings were found in Selvi & Kocaman's (2021) study.

Paiz (2015) analyzed heteronormativity in 45 different texts and textbooks. He found that heteronormativity is prevalent in all the material, regardless of proficiency level. The materials published after 2010 have become slightly less heteronormative (Paiz, 2015).

Selvi & Kocaman's (2021) study of heteronormativity in classroom materials, reflected that the portrayals of women more often perpetuate negative stereotypes than portrayals of men. In these materials, women are often portrayed as caregivers and the ones to do chores, while men are more careless, and are interested in high-risk and activities.

### 2.2.2 Previous Norwegian studies

In the following text, I present studies that explore heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks, as this is a focus of my study. Similarly, with respect to the international studies, Norwegian studies show that heteronormativity is prevalent in Norwegian textbooks (Røthing, 2017; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010; Smestad, 2018; Demirel, 2018). This is also the case for textbooks published to accommodate LK20 (Klev & Granholt, 2022; Andresen & Drivflaadt, 2021) and ESL textbooks for lower-secondary school which are published to meet the

requirements of LK20 (Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022). However, the studies also suggest that these newer textbooks portray gender, family, and sexual diversity to a larger extent than previously (Klev & Granholt, 2022; Andresen & Drivflaadt, 2021; Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022).

Røthing & Svendsen (2010) researched why queer pupils may experience internalized homophobia, by analyzing Norwegian textbooks and teaching. They relate the analysis of the textbook to how this can affect students' perception homosexuality. The study found that while heterosexuality is treated as the default throughout the books, homosexuality is only addressed in certain sections. Røthing & Svendsen (2010) write "Both teaching and textbooks in Norwegian schools reflect the assumption that all students are heterosexually oriented and will lead a heterosexual life, with the exception of homosexual students, who are addressed in special sections" (p. 7). Further, Røthing & Svendsen (2010) suggest that the way homosexuality and heterosexuality are portrayed in the books may have contributed to internalized homophobia among queer students.

Andresen & Drivflaadt (2021) explored how family structures and sexual orientation is portrayed in illustrations in 19 Norwegian textbooks for lower-secondary concerning the subjects Norwegian, social science and religion. They found that 50,3% of the portrayals consist of traditional family structures. Andresen & Drivflaadt (2021) determined that 3,1% of the illustrations are of single parents, while 34,4% were of children illustrated with a parent, where their family structure is not explicit. 2,3% of the depictions are of families with same-sex parents. When it came to the portrayals of the relationships. 88% are heterosexual couples, and 12% homosexual couples. Further, Andresen & Drivflaadt (2021) state that the depictions of families and relationships in the textbooks reflects diversity in Norwegian society to a large extent.

Klev & Granholt (2022) studied heteronormativity in textbooks for secondary school. In their study, they compared sets of social science textbooks which accommodated the requirements of LK06 and LK20. They suggest that even though newer textbooks seem to be more inclusive, they still contribute to producing heteronormativity in school.

Gåsvær (2022) studied queer representation and intersectionality in four Norwegian ESL textbooks for 9th grade. His study suggests that when queer people are represented, they are mostly represented by homosexual boys, who otherwise are homogenous, white, and cisgendered, thus silencing other queer identities. Several other studies contain similar

findings (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011; Höhne & Heerdegen, 2018). Gåsvær (2022) further states that when queer people are represented, it is under heteronormative conditions.

Smestad (2018) explored queer issues in Norwegian textbooks across several subjects. Publishers provided him a total of 129 textbooks and 59 of them contains queer related issues. In the English subject, he was provided 20 textbooks by publishers and found that eight of these discuss queer issues. Of these, 19 textbooks are for eight to tenth grade, and one for fifth to seventh grade. Queer issues are only discussed in the ones for eight to tenth grade, in the English subject. The publishers provided ten textbooks from first to second grade, and one textbook for the subject science contains queer issues.

All over, queer issues in the textbooks are mostly presented in tenth grade, which Smestad (2018) proposes is far too late. When queer people are discussed, it is mostly regarding gay men and lesbians. Trans people, however, are mentioned in a total of four pages, two of which contains misinformation regarding trans people. As in Røthing & Svendsen' (2010) study, the textbook positions the learner as a supposed heterosexual person who can have opinions about "the homosexuals", which reproduces heteronormativity (Smestad, 2018).

As briefly discussed in section 1.2, while there are several studies concerning heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks, my literature search suggests that there is a lack of Norwegian studies that explore heteronormativity in textbooks for primary school, especially in the earlier grades (see *appendix 3*). Smestad (2018) explored how queer issues are portrayed in the textbooks which he was provided by publishers. However, exploring how queer issues are presented in textbooks, is not fully representative of how heteronormative the textbooks are. Exploring heteronormativity in a textbook also involves considering heterosexuality's position (Ludwig, 2016; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010). While Smestad (2018) considered how heterosexuality is presented in relation to queer issues, he does not further analyze the textbooks where queer issues are not included. In addition, the study found that out of the ten textbooks the publishers provided for first to fourth grade, only one addresses queer issues.

Moreover, my literature search suggests that there is a lack of studies that explore heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for earlier grades in primary school. In Smestad's (2018) study he was not provided any books from the English subject in these grades. There also appears to be a lack of studies that explores heteronormativity in textbooks

for primary school, published to accommodate LK20. My research question *How heteronormative are Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school?* aims to partially fill this research gap, by analyzing heteronormativity in the Norwegian ESL textbook, *Quest 2: My own book*.

There are several reasons for why it is important to consider heteronormativity in a textbook for second grade. In the English subject, students in this age group are to participate in dialogues regarding their feelings, interests, and daily life (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). When working with this competence aim, some topics which may be affected by heteronormativity are likely to be discussed, such as gender and families. For instance, heteronormativity perpetuates the idea that girls and boys have distinct interests and behaviors due to their assigned sex at birth (Ludwig, 2016). Therefore, by analyzing a textbook for second grade, I can assess whether it encourages the students to freely talk about their interests, or if they may be limited by heteronormativity. Another topic that is likely to be addressed is *family*, as it is an important part of the students' daily lives. If heteronormativity is dominant in the portrayal of families, this may limit the students from talking about families in a manner that reflects reality (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020).

### 2.2.3 The case of Quest

To answer the research question, I explore heteronormativity in *Quest 2*. During this research, I contacted the publishers of *Quest*, regarding whether they had any guidelines or thoughts about who they include in their textbooks with respect to gender, families, and sexuality. The editor responded on behalf of *Quest* (see *appendix 1*).

The editor emphasizes that it is important for the publisher to represent diversity in the textbook as a natural part of everyday life. The publishers have attempted to challenge gender stereotypes in the textbook and wish to be inclusive in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disabilities. He gives some examples of how they have attempted to challenge gender stereotypes, such as portraying a girl who plays video games, a boy in a dress and a girl in a suit. He further states they have portrayed a family where the child has two fathers in *Quest 3*. The editor states that they are open to suggestions on how to portray gender and sexual diversity as a natural part of life.

The editor further states that *Quest 2: My own book* is the main textbook where they focus on the topic family. He writes that they have portrayed diverse families but that they

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could have been even more inclusive. In addition, he stresses that there are many choices to consider when creating a textbook (see *appendix 1*).

### 3 Method

As established in section 1.3, I have analyzed *Quest 2* to explore my research question *How heteronormative are Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school?*. To answer this question, I have explored if the textbook contains characteristics of a heteronormative portrayal of gender, family, and sexuality through a multimodal content analysis. These characteristics are defined in section 3.2. I analyzed how the textbook portrays gender, family, and sexuality, through its illustrations, verbal texts, and activities. Thereafter, I considered whether the textbook contains characteristic of a heteronormative portrayal of:

-Gender

-Family

-Sexuality

The multimodal content analysis involves that I have explored the presence of various gender expressions, various family structures and presentations of sexuality. I have also, to some degree, considered how these are presented in *Quest 2*. I further elaborate how I applied my method in section 3.3.

This chapter contains a definition of heteronormativity and a short description of the textbook in question. Also included is a description of the procedure of this study which includes justifications of choice of method. Further, there is a discussion on the reliability and validity of this study, as well as ethical issues.

#### 3.1 Quest

As mentioned in section 1.3, the textbook in question, *Quest* has previously won the *Best European Learning Materials Award*, and has recently been edited to accommodate LK20 (Aschehoug, n.d.). The authors state that the communication is central throughout the entire learning material and that the textbook shall assist the teacher in creating situations where communication for the students is necessary and natural (Lien et al., 2020). One of the primary objectives of *Quest* is to provide students with extensive exposure to the English language from an early stage (Lien et al., 2020).

The particular textbook analyzed in this study to answer the research question is *Quest 2: My own book*, which is a combined textbook and workbook. In addition, there are audio tracks that the students can listen to, which I do not have access to. However, transcriptions of

the audio tracks are written down in the teacher's guide. The textbook consists of 79 pages. There are illustrations on every page, various activities and texts. There are chapters dedicated to the topics: everyday language practice, school, family and home, clothes, Christmas, the kitchen, birthdays, parks, and time and travel.

### **3.2 Heteronormativity**

To identify heteronormativity in textbooks, I explore how the textbook portrays gender, family, and sexuality. Heteronormativity in a textbook may be explicit or implicit (Moore, 2020). Explicit implies that the textbook states that gender expressions, sexualities or families that align with heterosexual norms are superior, or devaluating those who do not align with these norms. In previous studies, heteronormativity was often visible implicitly, through predominately or exclusively portraying families, genders and sexualities that aligned with heteronormativity (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021).

Ludwig (2016) suggests that heteronormativity causes heterosexuality to serve "as an imagined 'normality'". This study explores if the textbook promotes this imagined normality through the portrayals of gender, family, and sexuality.

Based on the theoretical background, I have formulated the following as characteristics of heteronormativity:

1. The textbook portrays genders as mutually exclusive and distinct groups.
2. The textbook portrays traditional family structures as more ideal than other family structures
3. The textbook portrays only a heterosexual life as a good life

If the textbook contains the first characteristic of heteronormativity, the textbook's portrayal of gender is heteronormative. As described in the literature review, a heteronormative depiction of gender involves that people's behaviors, interests, and appearances are in accordance with their assigned sex at birth (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Ludwig, 2016; Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). Illustrations in textbooks are merely representative of people. The characters do not have an assigned sex at birth per se. Therefore, I have considered whether the textbook portrays genders as mutually exclusive, without considering assigned sex at birth, as this is not present in the textbook.

The textbook's portrayal of families is heteronormative if it contains the second characteristic. As the characteristic implies, a heteronormative depiction of families involves that a traditional family structure is universally good, and other family structures are less so (Anderssen & Hellesund, 2009). The term, *traditional family structures*, refers to families where there are two parents in the same household.

The portrayal of sexuality is considered heteronormative if the textbook contains the third characteristic. The portrayal of sexuality in textbooks can for instance be analyzed through discussions of sexuality, couples, families, stories about love, identities and when characters show romantic or sexual interest (Ruiza-Cecilia et al., 2020; Gray, 2013; Røthing & Svendsen, 2017).

### **3.3 Procedure**

As already established, I have analyzed if the textbook contains characteristics of heteronormativity to explore if the portrayals of gender, sexuality and family are heteronormative. To explore this, I applied a multimodal content analysis. As the textbook consists of both verbal text and illustrations a multimodal analysis was necessary. A content analysis allowed me to consider the content of the textbook (Mackey & Gass, 2012). A multimodal content analysis allowed me to both consider the content of the textbooks, as well as how the content is portrayed.

The approach was primarily qualitative, which allows a thorough, in-depth exploration of heteronormativity in the textbook (Mackey & Gass, 2012). The study involved some quantitative coding, which involved for example considering how frequently certain family structures are portrayed (Mackey & Gass, 2012).

In addition to conducting a multimodal content analysis, I contacted the publishers and asked if they had any policies or thoughts regarding who they presented in their textbooks with respect to gender and sexual diversity. The response of the editor is summarized in section 2.2.2 and attached in *appendix 1*.

Firstly, I identified any portrayals of gender, family, and sexuality in *Quest 2*. I also included tasks that are related to these topics. Sexuality is only portrayed through relationships or lack of relationships in family structures, so these were further analyzed

together. The textbook does not, for example, contain love stories, discussions about sexuality or love, or identity markers such as gay, bisexual, or lesbian.

I conducted the multimodal, qualitative content analysis in accordance with Mackey & Gass (2012), who describe content analysis as follows: “[it] involves coding data in a systematic way in order to discover patterns and develop well-grounded interpretations” (p. 191). I have coded the various attributes concerning the portrayals of gender, sexuality, and families. This allowed me to discover patterns to consider if the textbook contains any characteristics of heteronormativity (Mackey & Gass, 2012).

The coding was written down manually in predesigned tables in *Word*. To explore if the textbook contains the characteristic: *the textbook portrays genders as mutually exclusive and distinct groups*, I chose to explore if certain attributes of the genders are mutually exclusive. I considered whether certain attributes are portrayed in only one gender, as well if the portrayals were gender stereotypical. Therefore, I coded the appearance, behavior, and interests of the genders.

To explore if the textbook contains the characteristics of heteronormativity with respect to family and sexuality, I chose to analyze to what degree each family is in focus, in what contexts they are portrayed and how they are portrayed. When analyzing how they are portrayed I did not code the data, but rather wrote an analysis as a text.

I applied different types of coding, depending on what I observed in the textbook (Saldaña, 2016). For instance, when describing the appearance of characters, I would often apply descriptive coding, which uses a short word or phrase to describe the content. I would apply codes such as “red”, “short hair”, or “wearing a dress”. Moreover, I applied In Vivo coding, where the code consists of a word or phrase from the textbook (Saldaña, 2016). When coding illustrations, which was a large section of the analysis, I applied the semiotic approach: denotation. Denotation involves considering what is depicted in the pictures, without considering what ideas the pictures communicate (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Thus, the pictures were mostly coded using descriptive coding.

### 3.3.1 Gender

I explored if the textbook contains the following characteristic in order to ascertain if the portrayal of gender in *Quest 2* is heteronormative : *The textbook portrays genders as*

*mutually exclusive and distinct groups*. In the analysis, I focused on which attributes could be found in each gender, in order to assess if they are portrayed as mutually exclusive groups. Before analyzing the portrayal of genders, I prepared *Table 1*. However, I was open to changing the table depending on what I found in the textbook. I applied two separate tables where I analyzed the same attributes, one for adults and children, as there may be different gender roles for adults and children.

I determined the characters' genders based on the verbal text: through names, pronouns, or titles. Therefore, I did not decide a character's gender based on their appearance. Gender portrayals of babies and toddlers were not analyzed as there were a total of two representations of characters in this age group. I applied a table for each page I analyzed in the textbook.

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Hair		
Clothes		
Clothes color		
Other appearance		
Action		
Interests		
Possessions		
Context		

**Table 1**

I chose to analyze above attributes, as they are central aspects of gender expressions (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). When denoting *hair*, I focused on hair length and hairstyles. *Short hair* was defined as hair that did not cover ears due to length. When considering colors on clothes, I did not consider nuances such as teal or burgundy, but rather basic color terms such as red, yellow, blue, and brown. I did, however, assess whether the colors were bright or dark. This was useful to consider as dark colors are traditionally masculine and bright colors feminine (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Meland, & Kaltvedt, 2019)

After coding all the portrayals of gender where the characters’ gender is stated or strongly implied in the verbal text, I noticed one page where the learner was asked to count boys and girls. Therefore, I once again contacted the publishers to ask how they intended learners to know the characters’ gender. The editor stated that the task was intended to be a task with no correct answer and that there was no way of knowing the characters’ gender (see *appendix 1 & 2*). Therefore, the learners could count however they wanted. As the remaining characters’ gender is open to interpretation, I decided to adjust how I approached the remaining of the data.

To further explore if the genders are portrayed as mutually exclusive groups, I chose to explore if there are any characters who had a combination of traditionally feminine and masculine traits. Section 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 form the basis of my assessment of which traits are feminine and masculine.

3.3.2 Family and sexuality

I applied *Table 2* for the analysis of portrayals of families and sexuality. In this case, I devoted one table to each family.

<b>Composition</b>	
<b>Context</b>	
<b>Pages including parent/s</b>	
<b>Pages excluding parent/s</b>	
<b>Families in focus on the page</b>	

**Table 2**

The above attributes were coded to explore whether *Quest 2* contains the characteristics described in section 3.2 of a heteronormative portrayal of family and sexuality. To explore if the textbook contains these characteristics of heteronormativity, I firstly needed to know what kind of family structures and sexualities the textbook portrays. Thus, *Composition* refers to who is portrayed as family members. I assessed the family composition through a combined denotation of the illustrations and coding of the verbal text.

Moreover, I analyzed to what degree each family is in focus and how often each family is portrayed. If families with traditional family structures are more in focus than other family structures, this may be an indicator of heteronormativity. However, I also took into consideration that families which consist of mother, father and children are likely the most common family composition in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2021; Bufdir, 2023). Therefore, if traditional families are portrayed more frequently than other families, it can be considered descriptive.

I also considered what is the focus in the portrayals. Thus, *Context* refers to what the focus is when the families are portrayed. If non-heterosexuality is only portrayed in certain sections, this may indicate that heterosexuality is the default (Røthing & Svendsen, 2010).

In addition, I considered *how* the families are portrayed, to see if there are any differences in the portrayals of the different family structures. Here, I noted facial expressions, body language and use of colors in the illustrations and considered the connotations of these portrayals.

Also, I assessed if the family members are individualized or homogenized. If traditional families are individualized and other families are homogenized, this could indicate that traditional families are portrayed as more ideal (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Characters are individualized if they are illustrated with individual attributes, such as clothing, color of clothing, hair styles or striking different poses (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Individualization encourages us to empathize with characters. Homogenized portrayals, however, involves portraying the characters that have similar attributes. It causes us to distance ourselves emotionally from the character and it can signalize that people who share certain traits are all the same (Ledin & Machin, 2020).

When assessing if the portrayal of families is heteronormative, the focus was on the family as a whole and the well-being of the children. This is because of how families are an important part of students' daily life and that heteronormative portrayals of families limits students' ability to talk about diverse families, and perhaps even their own family (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020).

However, when analyzing the portrayals of sexuality, the focus was on the parents. This included considering whether parents who are not in a heterosexual relationship were portrayed at all, and how they are presented.

After analyzing, I considered if the textbook contains each characteristic of heteronormativity.

At the end of my research process, I, once more, contacted the editor. I sent him a summary of the results and asked for him to comment on the findings. There is more on this in section 5.4.

### **3.4 Evaluation**

In this section I discuss the validity and reliability of my research. Mackey & Gass (2012) write “In the context of coding, validity is concerned with the degree to which the coding categories and procedures allow for accurate and meaningful interpretations to be made about the construct in question” (p. 204). As earlier research demonstrates, heteronormativity in textbooks is often concerned with family structures and gender roles. As my research focused on the abstract concept of heteronormativity, it was crucial for me to operationalize the terms I apply in order to enhance the validity of the study. For this reason, I formulated characteristics of a heteronormative portrayal of gender, families, and sexuality (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018),

Reliability in analyzing involves that if the procedure was to be executed multiple times, the categorizations would be the same each time (Mackey & Gass, 2012). Therefore, I needed to have consistent criteria for my coding. To make my coding more reliable I designed tables (Mackey & Gass, 2012). If the coding of this study was to be executed multiple times, there might be some minor differences, for example in terms of color. I have not used nuances when describing colors, although it has sometimes been difficult to consider whether a color is, for instance, orange or brown, or pink or purple.

Validity and reliability could have been strengthened by having at least two people code the material. However, this has been an individual project and the coding is affected by my own understanding of the world (Mackey & Gass, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). To reinforce the validity and reliability of this research, I have written a detailed description of the process, which allows researchers to replicate the research (Mackey & Gass, 2012)

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

As a researcher, I have both individual and institutional autonomy. Because I have autonomy, I also have responsibility. Therefore, I have considered several ethical issues with respect to this study. For instance, I have responsibility regarding other researchers. During this research, I have read previous literature on heteronormativity, textbooks, and methods. This literature has been referred to and built on throughout the text in accordance with the criteria of APA 7th. All previous work is credited, and the results are my own (NESH, 2022). To my best knowledge, I have portrayed other researchers' work and the textbooks correctly (NESH, 2022).

The present research has not been funded in any way, nor have I knowingly tried to promote any particular agenda or point of view in this research. My research is unbiased and thus fulfils the criteria defined by NESH (2022).

## 4 Results

As established, I conducted a multimodal, content analysis to answer the research question. In this chapter, there is a presentation of the results of the analysis of how gender, family and sexuality is portrayed in *Quest 2*. I discuss how these results answer how heteronormative *Quest 2* is in the discussion chapter. In this chapter, there is a presentation of the findings from the analysis of how gender is portrayed. Thereafter follows a summary of how families and sexuality are portrayed in the textbook. They are, however, discussed in two separate sections in the discussion chapter.

### 4.1 Gender

To measure if the portrayal of gender is heteronormative, I based my assessment on the following statement: *the textbook portrays the genders as mutually exclusive and distinct groups*. To consider if the textbook portrays boys and girls, and men and women, as mutually exclusive, this section explores whether there are certain attributes that are portrayed in only one gender. I also consider whether feminine attributes are exclusively depicted in portrayals of girls, and if masculine attributes are only depicted in portrayals of boys.

There are 25 portrayals of individual children where their gender is denoted in the verbal text. There are portrayals of 85 individual children where their gender is not clear. On the other hand, there are only seven portrayals of individual adults where their gender is clear according to the criteria formulated in the method chapter. There are three pairs which are referred to as “mother and father” or “grandmother and grandfather”, but the textbook does not state specifically who is who.

When the character’s gender is denoted, there are some attributes that are portrayed in only one of the genders. These are mostly related to appearance. This is more common in the portrayal of adults than children. The majority of the illustrations include characters where their genders are not stated. In these portrayals learners and teachers can interpret a character’s gender as they wish. Several of these characters have traits that are both traditionally masculine and feminine.

## 4.1.1 Children

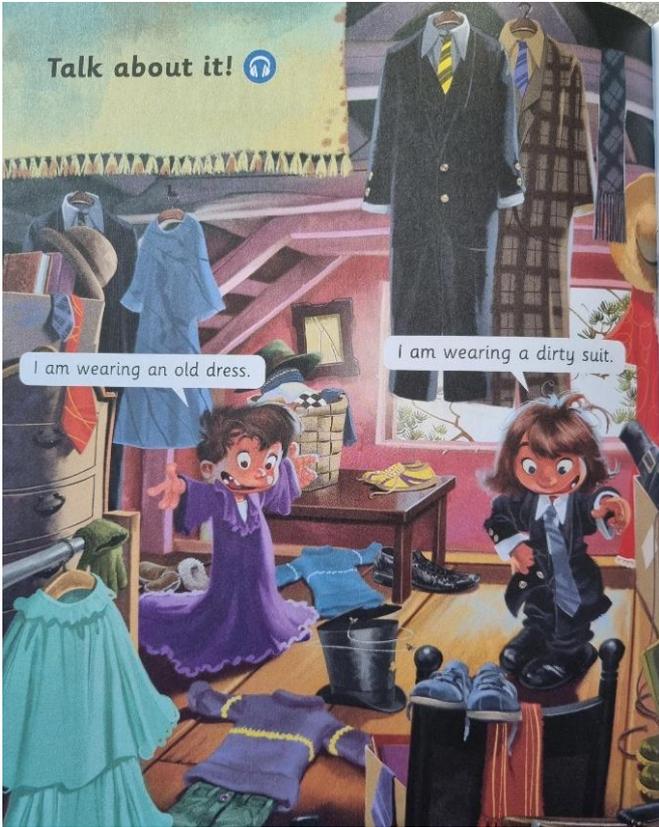
*Table 1* summarizes the findings of the analysis of the portrayal of children where the character's gender is stated. In the method chapter, I state that I intended to analyze whether girls and boys have different interests and possessions. However, there is not sufficient data regarding characters' *interests* and *possessions* in the textbook. These were therefore not included in the table. There are five cases where the characters' interests are stated, however all of these are in the context of describing activities they enjoyed doing with their families. This made it difficult to consider which family members enjoy the activity. Often there is no means for knowing which characters own certain possessions. Otherwise, there is only one incident where it is clear that a boy owns the possessions in question.

	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b><i>Hair</i></b>	Boys and girls do not have the same kind of hairstyles	Boys have short hair  Girls have least chin-length or longer hair
<b><i>Clothes</i></b>	Boys and girls wear the same kinds of clothes  Girls wear traditionally masculine clothes  There is one instance of a boy wearing feminine clothing	Girls wearing dresses and one boy wearing a dress  Both girls and boys wearing t-shirts, pants, shorts and jackets
<b><i>Clothes color</i></b>	Boys and girls mostly wear the same colors.  Both genders wear dark and bright colors.  Pink is only depicted on girls.	Boys and girls wearing green, purple bright yellow  Girl wearing black clothes  Three girls wear pink shoes, and one girl wears a pink shirt.
<b><i>Action</i></b>	Boys and girls do the same kinds of activities  Boys do traditionally feminine activities.	A boy and a girl trying on clothes  A boy and a girl shopping  Boys and girls playing with and nurturing animals

	Girls do traditionally masculine activities	A girl climbing in a tree
<b>Context</b>	Boys and girls are portrayed in the same contexts.	Family and home Cooking Clothes Christmas Animals Travelling

**Table 3**

In the cases where each character’s gender is denoted, the only attribute that is exclusively portrayed in one of the genders is that of hair-length. In every case, boys have short hair in such a manner that it does not cover their ears. The girls’ hair is chin-length or longer. Only girls have hairstyles such as ponytails or pigtails.



**Figure 1 illustration from page 28**

In *Quest 2*, girls and boys wear the same kind of clothing. There are two instances of girls wearing dresses and one of a boy wearing a dress. In the same page (see *figure 1*), his sister is trying on a suit and tie. In this case, the children are trying on old clothes from their attic, which are too big for them. Both these children are smiling and thus look happy.

To further explore if the portrayal of gender is heteronormative, I considered if there are any colors that only one gender wears on their clothing or accessories. Mostly, both genders wear the same colors. The only color which is not portrayed in both genders is pink, commonly associated with girls (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). Both boys and girls are wearing both bright and darker colors.

Both genders also do the same kinds of activities. *Figure 1* depicts a boy and a girl trying on clothes. On another page, the same characters are shopping for clothes, whereas shopping and trying on clothes are considered more feminine activities (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020). *Quest 2* portrays boys doing activities that are more feminine activities such as nurturing and caring for animals and cooking. Girls are portrayed doing more masculine activities such as climbing trees (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020).

Moreover, to explore if gender portrayals are heteronormative, I analyzed characters where their gender is not denoted, and the characters had feminine and masculine traits. There are several examples of characters having both feminine and masculine traits.

*Quest 2* includes illustrations where characters with longer hair are wearing traditionally masculine colors, and characters with shorter hair are wearing traditionally feminine colors (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). Several characters with long hair are wearing blue, green and dark colors. Another character has chin-length hair and has dark green and blue colors on their clothing. There is also a character with short hair who is wearing a pink jacket.

*Figure 2* depicts a character with short hair who is wearing a blue hoodie and what appears to be a pink skirt. It is not easy to determine for certain that the character is wearing a skirt, as the illustration is cropped. However, the garment looks similar to the other skirt in the same illustration and is drawn differently from pants in other illustrations. I therefore consider it a skirt, but there is no guarantee that students will regard this garment as a skirt. Regardless, this character has masculine attributes, being short hair and a blue hoodie, and feminine

attributes, being a skirt that is pink (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019; Røthing, 2011).



Figure 2: Illustration from page 15

In addition, *Quest 2* portrays characters with masculine appearances who are doing feminine activities. An example is a character with the gender-neutral name Kim. They have short hair, green and blue clothing and is picking flowers. Picking flowers can be considered a gentle activity and therefore feminine (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). In addition, there is a character with short hair, dark t-shirt and blue pants who is standing still, holding a rabbit. These actions can be considered feminine as they appear nurturing and gentle (Renold, 2005) These two characters are depicted in *figure 8*, in *appendix 4*.

*Quest 2* also portrays characters with more feminine appearances doing rougher activities which can therefore be considered masculine (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). *Figure 3* illustrates a character with long hair who is wearing a purple bathing suit. They are diving and approaching a jellyfish.



Figure 3: Illustration from page 76

#### 4.1.2 Adults

Further, I explored if men and women have mutually exclusive attributes to consider if *Quest 2* has a heteronormative portrayal of genders. As there are few portrayals of adults where gender is denoted, I will not summarize these findings in a table, but describe them briefly in the following text. There are portrayals of seven adult characters where gender is denoted. There seem to be slightly greater gender differences in the portrayals of adults than the children, although only in terms of appearance. As with the children, when their gender is stated, women have longer hair and men have short hair, or no hair. Women are the only ones to wear dresses and the three women that are portrayed are all at some point wearing a dress.

*Quest 2* portrays both women and men with feminine attributes, such as being caregivers, doing gentle activities, and being linked to chores (Selvi & Kocaman, 2021). *Figure 5* depicts both a single father and a single mother. The single father does gentle activities with his daughter, such as playing Scrabble and Bingo. *Quest 2* also portrays a father and a mother decorating a Christmas tree (see *appendix 4, figure 7*). In another illustration on the same page, the father appears to be serving food. Another example of both women and men being linked to chores, is a page where a mother and father comments on their son's messy room.

There are some portrayals of adults where the character's gender is not stated, and thus are open to interpretation. Some of these portrayals include both feminine and masculine characteristics. Perhaps the most interesting example of a character with both feminine and

masculine traits is *figure 4*, which depicts a character who has long hair, is wearing red high heels, a dress, and is very muscular. This person is also lifting weights. The purpose of this illustration is to illustrate the word *strong*. Long hair, red heels, and a dress are feminine traits, while being *strong* is a masculine gender expectation (Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019; Renold, 2005). Another example of characters who have both masculine and feminine traits is a character with short hair and moustache who is wearing bright colors, including pink.



Figure 4: Illustration from page 55

## 4.2 Family and sexuality

Further, I have explored if the portrayals of families and sexuality are heteronormative. The portrayal of family is heteronormative if the textbook contains the following characteristic: *The textbook portrays traditional family structures as more ideal than other family structures.* Likewise, if the textbook contains the following characteristic, the portrayal of sexuality is heteronormative: *The textbook portrays only a heterosexual life as a good life.* To explore if the textbook contains these characteristics, I here summarize what kind of family structures are in the textbook, to what degree they are present and how they are portrayed.

As addressed in section 3.3, in *Quest 2*, sexuality is only portrayed through the family structures, which involves who the adults are or are not in a relationship with. As all the relationships, or lack of, are presented in the context of portrayals of family, these results overlap with the analysis of family. Therefore, I present the results of how the textbook portrays family and sexuality in the same section.

*Quest 2* contains a total of eight different families. There are four portrayals of traditional families and two portrayals of families with single parents. In addition, there are

two portrayals of a child with an adult in the park, where their family structure is undetermined as there are no verbal texts (see *appendix 4, figure 8*).

Further, the textbook has a blank page where the student can draw and write about their own family. In this way, students' own families can be incorporated into the textbook. Also, the teacher's guide suggests an activity where the students create portraits of an imagined family, and arrange a display called "*no families are the same*".

Traditional families are portrayed more frequently and seen doing more various activities than the other families. One of these, Ant's family (see *appendix 4, figure 6*), is portrayed most frequently in the chapter which introduces the term family. His family feature in six pages where at least one family member is portrayed, and four pages include most of his family. *Figure 5* depicts the page which includes the other four families in this chapter. They are portrayed in four separate illustrations, all on the same page, with the same amount of space for each. Two of these illustrations are of traditional families and two of families with a single parent.



Figure 5: Illustration from page 20

Also, *Quest 2* contains portrayals of a traditional family celebrating Christmas (see *appendix 4, figure 4*) and New Year's Eve over the space of two pages. The children in this family are also in focus on two other pages, in one of these they are talking with their parents on their phones.

In the chapter which focuses on the topic family, all the families are portrayed in bright and colorful illustrations. When the families are introduced, all the characters are faced towards the reader and most of the characters are smiling. They also have open, welcoming body language, and their faces are clearly visible. These depictions present the characters and families as friendly, welcoming, happy, and pleasant.

All the characters in each family have different traits, and thus all are depicted as individuals, rather than homogeneous groups (Ledin & Machin, 2020). This is because all family members stand in different positions and have different colors on their clothing. In addition, most family members wear different kinds of clothing.

## 5 Discussion

In this chapter, I describe the limitations of my research. Thereafter, I discuss the findings in relation to the research question, the theory and previous research described in the literature review chapter. Then, I discuss the possible implications of these findings.

### 5.1 Limitations

One important limitation of this study is time. I have had one semester in which to focus solely on my thesis. As a result, I chose to conduct a thorough exploration of heteronormativity in *one* textbook, rather than a shallower exploration of multiple. If I had had more time, I would have analyzed either another of *Quest's* textbooks for young learners or another Norwegian ESL textbook for second graders, in addition to *Quest 2*. The first option would have allowed me to explore even more thoroughly the presence of heteronormativity in *Quest's* textbooks for young learners. The latter would have allowed me to explore more widely heteronormativity in Norwegian ESL textbooks for second graders.

Another limitation is that I have limited access to literature. I mostly have access to literature provided by the university college I attend, libraries and free literature. Also, there have been several weeks where the university college's library has had issues with accessing articles from the database, *Taylor & Francis online*. This happened towards the end of my research process. I know that this database contains several articles that are relevant for my study, meaning I only had access to abstracts to potentially useful and relevant articles. I realize that such problems can occur at any time and for any researcher and it is the researcher's task to make the most of what is available. I have done this to the best of my ability and look forward in the future to reading the articles that are currently unavailable.

### 5.2 Findings

There are no occurrences of explicit heteronormativity in the portrayals of gender, family, and sexuality, in *Quest 2*. Neither does the textbook have any of the characteristics of heteronormativity. I was surprised by this finding, as it is contrary to previous studies which suggest that heteronormativity is prevalent in both ESL and Norwegian textbooks (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Gray, 2023; Paiz, 2015; Røthing, 2017; Røthing & Svendsen, 2010; Smestad, 2018). Previous studies also suggest that heteronormativity persists in textbooks

published in accordance with LK20, including ESL textbooks (Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022; Klev & Granholt, 2022; Andresen & Drivflaadt, 2021). In addition, my literature review suggests that Norway is a heteronormative society with persistent gender norms (Hellesund, 2021; Træen, 2023; Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019; Bufdir, 2023). *Quest 2*'s lack of heteronormativity can indicate that the publishers have had a conscious effort to portray gender, families, and sexuality inclusively. Accordingly, *Quest 2*'s editor's response in private communication with myself supports my suggestion (see *appendix 1*). Further, *Quest 2* contains only illustrations, not photographs. It is reasonable to assume that they have consciously decided to illustrate diverse portrayals.

*Quest 2*'s lack of heteronormativity can also indicate that Norwegian society is becoming less heteronormative, as textbooks reflect societal values (Fuchs & Bock, 2018; Fuchs & Henne, 2018). Studies of textbooks published in accordance with LK20 do suggest that the textbooks are becoming more inclusive in their portrayal of queerness, however, they also indicate that these textbooks are heteronormative (Tuhus, 2022; Gåsvær, 2022; Klev & Granholt, 2022; Andresen & Drivflaadt, 2021).

There is a considerable room for interpretation in this textbook, as there are many illustrations with no verbal texts. Gray (2013) found that textbooks often clarify in the verbal text that characters are heterosexual or that they are uncomfortable with challenging gender norms if the illustrations could suggest otherwise. As this is not the case for *Quest 2*, it is an indication that *Quest 2* does not promote heterosexual norms. In the following section, there is a discussion of the findings.

### 5.2.1 Gender

As first described in section 3.2, to assess whether the portrayals of gender can be considered heteronormative, the characteristic defined in this study is: *the textbook portrays genders as mutually exclusive and distinct groups*. There are several reasons for arguing for why *Quest 2* does not contain this characteristic. One is that the gender of a character is most often not stated. This is the case of 85 of the characters who are children. This leaves teachers and learners free to interpret characters' gender. Many of these characters also have both masculine and feminine attributes. Accordingly, when I contacted the editor, he stated that we have no means of knowing a characters' gender merely by just looking at them (see *appendix 2*).

Another reason is that there are several portrayals where characters challenge gender stereotypes. When characters have both masculine and feminine traits, this indicates that the genders are not portrayed as mutually exclusive or distinct groups. According to Erickson-Schroth & Davis (2020), children will often present as either hypermasculine or hyperfeminine. This is not the case in *Quest 2*. Rather, a lot of the characters are quite androgynous. There are several instances of characters with longer hair who wear dark colors, where long hair is considered feminine and dark colors masculine. There are also characters with short hair who wear pink, whereas short hair is considered masculine, and pink is considered feminine (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020).

The character that is portrayed with short hair, a blue hoodie and a pink skirt is particularly interesting with respect to challenging gender stereotypes (see *figure 2*). There is no verbal text that indicates the gender of this character. Short hair is strongly associated with boys, and skirts and pink are traditionally associated with girls (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Røthing, 2008, Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019). As the illustration is cropped, this character wearing a skirt can easily be missed or interpreted otherwise. Nevertheless, this is contrary to the findings in Gray's (2013) study, where the verbal text in the textbooks strongly indicates how the learner should interpret pictures. For instance, when a man dressed up as a woman, the textbook notes that he did not enjoy this. In *Quest 2*, however, a character can have short hair, a blue hoodie, and a pink skirt, without any verbal text.

There is also a portrayal of a boy wearing the feminine garment dress and a girl wearing the masculine garment suit. Both these characters are smiling. This finding could support that the textbook does not portray genders as mutually exclusive groups, since two children are enjoying wearing clothes that are traditionally worn by the other gender. Accordingly, when I contacted the editor, he includes this portrayal as an example of how the textbook challenges gender stereotypes (see *appendix 1*). However, the clothes are too big for the children, which can be interpreted that the clothes are not actually meant for them. I argue that this interpretation is not in line with the other gender portrayals in *Quest 2*.

In addition, *Quest 2* portrays children with feminine appearances doing masculine activities and characters with masculine appearances doing feminine activities. This is in how the textbook portrays characters who look feminine doing rougher activities, such as climbing trees or approaching a jellyfish. Also, *Quest 2* does this, as they portray children with masculine appearances cooking food and doing soft and gentle activities, such as nurturing

animals and picking flowers (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020; Renold, 2005; Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019).

Where characters' genders are clearly denoted in *Quest 2*, there are few traits that are found in only one of the genders. The only recurring trait for children is that boys have short hair, and girls have longer. As the creators of *Quest* otherwise seem to portray genders as diverse, this finding might suggest that hair-lengths might be persistent gender norms in Norway. In Meland & Kaltvedt's (2019) study, the kindergarten staff responded negatively to a girl having short hair. Likewise, as a student teacher, I have had similar experiences, where student teachers have misidentified students' genders because of their hair length. Nevertheless, I argue that the textbook mostly does not promote gender norms that are to do with hair length, as the majority of the portrayals do not denote characters' genders, and several characters are androgynous. There are 25 portrayals of children where I could clearly determine the character's gender and 85 portrayals where I could not.

Another trait that is only portrayed in one gender is that only girls wear the feminine color pink. However, there are only four instances of girls wearing pink, meaning that pink is rarely portrayed on clothing where gender could be determined. As already addressed, there are also characters with short hair who wear pink clothing. Therefore, this finding does not suggest that *Quest 2* portrays genders as mutually exclusive.

In the seven portrayals of adults where their gender is denoted, there are a few more traits that are portrayed in only one of the genders, which I describe in 4.1.2. This might be related to how few portrayals there are of adults where their characters' gender is clearly denoted. This reduces diversity as fewer portrayals leave fewer opportunities for diverse portrayals. These portrayals alone are not sufficient in themselves to determine if the textbook has a heteronormative portrayal of gender. Nevertheless, both women and men are portrayed with feminine attributes, such as being a caregiver, doing gentle activities, or being linked to chores. As a contrast, in Selvi & Kocaman's (2021) study these attributes are predominately depicted in the portrayals of women, whereas men often are portrayed as careless. In addition, the portrayals of adults with undetermined gender that have both traditionally feminine and masculine traits suggests that there is no intention of portraying men and women as mutually exclusive groups. The editor's statement in private communication with myself, where he states that they wish to portray gender diversity, also supports this argument (see *appendix 1*).

I was generally surprised by the lack of traditional gender norms in *Quest 2*, as Meland & Kaltvedt's (2019) study suggested that gender norms are persistent in Norway. For instance, a persistent norm is that boys should be strong (Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019). However, when *Quest 2* illustrates the word *strong*, the creators chose to illustrate a muscular person with otherwise feminine attributes.

Whereas *Quest 2* portrays genders with many overlapping traits, previous studies found that textbooks and classroom materials tend to have stereotypical gender portrayals (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021). Gray's (2013) and Selvi & Kocaman's (2021) studies even found that classroom materials tend to emphasize how girls and boys, and women and men are different. As *Quest 2* does not do this, this further supports that *Quest 2*'s gender portrayals are not heteronormative.

### 5.2.2 Family

To assess whether the portrayals of families can be considered heteronormative, the characteristic formulated in this study is *the textbook portrays traditional family structures as more ideal than other family structures*. There are several reasons as to why *Quest 2* does not meet this characteristic. The most important one is that the families are all portrayed in a similar, positive manner. Therefore, the textbook does not portray traditional families as more ideal than other families, as they are portrayed in a similar way.

As discussed in section 4.2, the family members in each family are individualized rather than homogenized. This indicates that all the families are portrayed as equally good family constellations (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Also, this individualization allows students to empathize with the characters.

Another argument is that out of the eight families, only four are traditional families. There are two portrayals where the verbal text states that the characters are single parents, and two undetermined family structures. The undetermined family structures consist of an adult that is depicted with a child who clearly resembles the adult, but there are no verbal texts. Since there are no verbal texts in these depictions, students can contribute with their own knowledge in interpreting the characters. These findings match the editor's statement in private communication with myself, that *Quest 2* has diverse portrayals of families (see *appendix 1*). Most previous studies found that textbooks predominately contain portrayals of traditional families (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Gray, 2013). I consider it a surprising finding

that in *Quest 2*, only four out of eight families are traditional families, as so many studies suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, my finding matches Andresen & Drivflaadt's (2021) finding where they found that only half of the portrayals in textbooks consist of traditional families.

Two out of eight families in *Quest 2* have single parents, whereas two of ten households with children are families with single parents (Statistics Norway, 2018). In comparison, Andresen & Drivflaadt (2021) found that 3% of illustrations of families are of single parents, in their study of Norwegian textbooks for lower-secondary. Ruiz-Cecilia et al., (2020) found one portrayal of a single parent when analyzing two textbooks. Gray (2013) found one portrayal of a single parent when analyzing ten textbooks. While previous studies suggest that textbooks underrepresent single parents, this is not the case for *Quest 2* (Andresen & Drivflaadt, 2021; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020; Gray, 2013). As 25% of the family constellations in *Quest 2* are of single parents, this indicates that *Quest 2* does not contain a heteronormative portrayal of families.

Another indicator that the portrayals of families are not heteronormative relates to the activities in the textbook and the teacher's guide. In an activity in the teacher's guide, the students are asked to create an imaginary family. Thereafter the class are asked to make an display called "no families are the same". A heteronormative portrayal of families involves that traditional families are depicted as better than other family structures (Anderssen & Hellesund, 2009). However, there are no indicators in how a family should be, when calling a display "no families are the same". In addition, there is an activity in the textbook where the students are allowed to draw their own families into their own textbook on a mostly blank page. Once again, there are no indicators of what a family should be like. Therefore, these activities do not indicate heteronormativity.

These results show that traditional families are given more space than other family structures, which might reflect reality. Although it is difficult to determine exactly how many children live in households with non-traditional family structures, traditional families appear nonetheless to be most common (Statistics Norway, 2021; Bufdir, 2023). As such, these portrayals can be considered a reflection of reality, rather than normative.

### 5.2.3 Sexuality

In this section, I discuss whether the portrayal of sexuality in *Quest 2* is heteronormative. The material referred to in this section is the same as that discussed above, but with a focus on

sexuality. The following characteristic is used to consider whether the portrayal of sexuality is heteronormativity: *the textbook portrays only a heterosexual life as a good life*. In *Quest 2* sexuality is presented as part of family life.

The textbook does not contain this characteristic of heteronormativity. This is partly because heterosexuality is portrayed to a low degree. As already established, in previous studies, sexuality is included in the textbook through relationships, identity markers, stories about love, explicit information about sexuality, and characters showing romantic or sexual interest (Ruiza-Cecilia et al., 2020; Gray, 2013; Røthing & Svendsen, 2017). None of these are present in *Quest 2*. As it portrays sexuality to such a low degree, it also portrays heterosexuality to a low degree.

*Quest 2* only portrays sexuality in its portrayal of families, and half of these include parents in a heterosexual relationship. There are likely more families than this where the children have parents in a heterosexual relationship in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2018; Bufdir, 2023). Therefore, it seems that *Quest 2* portrays heterosexuality to a minimal degree. As it portrays heterosexuality to such a low degree, the textbook does not portray heterosexuality as an imagined “normality” (Ludwig, 2016). The textbook’s low degree of portrayal of heterosexuality indicates that the textbook’s portrayal of sexuality is not heteronormative. This is contrary to Røthing & Svendsen’s (2010) study and Smestad’s (2018) study, where the textbook positions the learner as a supposed heterosexual person, who will live heterosexual lives.

Another reason for why *Quest 2* does not contain this characteristic is that the textbook portrays non-heterosexual lives for the adults as good lives. As described earlier, the textbook portrays two families where the verbal text confirms that the children have a single parent, meaning that these parents are not in a heterosexual relationship. Both parents are smiling in the portrayals, and bright colors are predominant, indicating that they are happy. This indicates that a heterosexual future is not the only viable future for the children.

At the same time, there are two separate portrayals of an adult with a child, which has no verbal text. Here, teachers and learners are free to interpret the characters as they wish. Gray (2013) found that if an illustration or picture could be interpreted as queer in any manner, the verbal text would contain information which hindered this interpretation. If *Quest 2* were to contain a large degree of heteronormativity, there could be a verbal text that clarified that for example: this child spent time with their mother while their father was at

home, indicating that adults should be in heterosexual relationships. This is not the case in *Quest 2*. These illustrations are open to interpretation, the children could, for example, be spending time with their gay aunt or uncle, single parent, or homosexual parent.

As in several previous studies (Gray, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020) there are no portrayals of same-sex couples. However, characters are only depicted in romantic relationships if they are parents, and there are only four depictions of romantic relationships. It is somewhat rare to have same-sex parents in Norway. According to statistics, about 1700 children live with same-sex parents, although this number is most likely not accurate (Bufdir, 2023) and there are about 1 million children in Norway. In addition, this is only one textbook. Whether one textbook contains homosexual pairings or not is not sufficient data to consider if the textbook is heteronormative. It would be difficult to include all kinds of family constellations in one textbook, and by including two undetermined family constellations in *Quest 2*, students are free to interpret these families as they wish. In addition, the editor states that there is a portrayal of a homosexual couple in *Quest 3* (see *appendix 1*). I find this information interesting considering that Smestad's (2018) study suggests that queer issues or characters are rarely included in Norwegian textbooks for grades 1-4 prior to LK20.

### 5.3 Implications

In the following section I will discuss the possible implications of the findings in light of previous research and the curriculum.

The lack of heteronormativity in the textbook is in accordance with the requirements of LK20. *Quest 2* is not likely to contribute to any of the harmful effects of heteronormativity, which are addressed in the literature review, as *Quest 2* does not contain heteronormativity.

#### 5.3.1 Core values

The lack of heteronormativity in *Quest 2* works towards the curriculum's core values. As established in section 1.1, an aspect of the curriculum's core values is *identity and cultural diversity*. The school should give cultural insight which allows the student to develop their identity "in a diverse and including environment" (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020, p. 6). The *Quest 2*'s lack of heteronormativity can encourage diversity and inclusivity in the class. The lack of heteronormativity may also support the students' ability to develop their

identity. This is because the textbook portrays diverse gender expressions and families. The diverse portrayals of gender expressions and families can reflect the diversity in the classroom.

Gender diversity may be prominent in second grade, as children can have a sense of their gender identity already at three years old (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020). In Norwegian society, people tend to have quite negative attitudes towards trans people and people generally tend to react negatively when people act outside of gender norms. These attitudes are often transferred to children from a young age (Bufdir, 2023; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). These attitudes will not contribute to an inclusive classroom environment. The textbook may contribute to students accepting gender diversity by portraying genders as groups with many overlapping traits.

*Quest 2*'s portrayals of families may contribute to an inclusive environment and reflect the diversity in the class. *Quest 2* portrays diverse families, and emphasizes that all families are different, which allows students to feel included irrespective of the composition of their family as they see similar families reflected in the textbook (Evripidou, 2020; Hellesund, 2021).

Moreover, the textbook's portrayals of sexuality may contribute to an inclusive environment. This is because of how the textbook does not promote that students should be heterosexual to be "normal" and rather portrays heterosexuality to a minimal degree. The low degree of sexuality may allow students who are not interested in romance or attraction feel included (Ryan, 2016; Mitchell & Hunnicutt, 2019).

As established, there are however no homosexual relationships in this particular textbook. Students may struggle to feel included if they do not see their identities reflected in learning materials. However, I argue that students who experience same-sex attraction do not to see themselves reflected in *every* learning material, as long as they can see themselves reflected in some of the learning materials. In addition, the editor states that there is a portrayal of a family with two fathers in *Quest 3* (see *appendix 1*), which can make non-heterosexual students and students with same-sex parents feel seen.

Another aspect of LK20's core curriculum is *human dignity*, which involves that the school should facilitate for students' belonging, as well as acknowledge and appreciate differences (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). *Quest 2* acknowledges differences in its portrayal of gender and families. Its colorful and inviting illustrations encourages appreciating for these differences.

*Quest 2* works towards the curriculum's aspect of core values *democracy and participation*, which is described in section 1.1. Its lack of heteronormativity can counteract prejudice and discrimination, as heteronormativity can be considered an oppressive ideology (Castro Varela et al., 2016). The way *Quest 2* portrays diverse gender expressions and families promotes values such as mutual respect and tolerance. This is because heteronormativity causes behaviors and identities that deviate from heterosexual norms to be seen as less, which means that a lack of heteronormativity can prevent these issues (Brummett, 2015; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Evripidou, 2020).

There is especially a tendency to have a lack of mutual respect and tolerance towards students who deviate from gender norms (Renold, 2005; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Bufdir, 2023). *Quest 2*'s diverse gender portrayals suggest that each gender must *not* act, look, and behave in certain ways. Therefore, it does not encourage students to police gender norms, which often is done through bullying (Renold, 2005; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009).

### 5.3.2 Health and life skills

Further, LK20 includes the interdisciplinary subject *health and life skills*, which partially aims to promote sound mental and physical health for students (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). Heteronormativity can negatively affect students' mental health and many Norwegian queer people struggle with their mental health (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Bufdir, 2023). *Quest 2*'s lack of heteronormative gender, family and sexuality portrayals can prevent these negative impacts. At the least, it does not contribute to these issues. When it comes to the lack of a heteronormative gender portrayal, the textbook does not promote the idea that each gender must act, look, and behave in certain ways. This may contribute to the students feeling seen and accepted as they are, thus promoting their mental health (Jordet, 2020). Erickson-Schroth & Davis (2020) suggest that children have a sense of their gender identity as early as the age of three. Therefore, a lot of second graders will have a sense of their gender. Portraying genders as diverse can prevent students from feeling like they are wrong (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Ryan, 2016).

There might be some implications in how short hair is only portrayed in boys and long hair is only portrayed in girls. It may be the case that this gender norm may still be persistent in Norway; that boys should have short hair, and girls have longer hair. The possible danger of promoting gender norms is that students who deviate from these norms may experience

negative reactions, harassment, or violence (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). As the textbook exclusively portrays short hair on boys and long hair on girls, this may promote this gender norm, which can cause students to react negatively to students who challenge these norms. Negative reactions can have a negative impact on the students' mental health (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Jordet, 2020).

Nevertheless, all the portrayals where gender is not denoted may counter these possible implications. As described in section 5.2.1, I argue that the textbook mostly does not promote this norm. The portrayal of the character with short hair who wears a pink skirt especially challenges gender norms. There are several ways to interpret this character, all which challenges gender norms. The character could be a boy, who wears a pink skirt; a masculine girl, who has short hair and a blue hoodie; or a non-binary character (Røthing, 2011; Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2020).

The portrayal of sexuality is in accordance with the interdisciplinary subject *health and life skills*. The portrayals have potential to contribute to a sound mental health for the students, by portraying non-heterosexual lives as good lives. This can enable more students to imagine good futures for themselves (Røthing & Svendsen, 2009). It can both be positive for students who do not wish to be in a heterosexual relationship because they are homo- or bisexual, and students who may not wish to be in a relationship at all, because they are, for instance, aromantic or asexual. Moreover, it can help students who may not want to live heterosexual lives to feel less deviant and wrong (Hellesund, 2021). It is important to portray non-heterosexual lives as good lives, as some students consider suicide as a reasonable reaction to not being heterosexual (Hellesund, 2021; Røthing & Svendsen, 2009; Røthing, 2011).

### 5.3.3 Different ways of thinking and living

In the English subject, students should be exposed to different kinds of thinking and ways of living (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2020). The lack of heteronormativity in this textbook allows students to be exposed to different kinds of thinking and living. This could have been challenging if genders are portrayed as mutually distinct and exclusive, as this would limit diversity in the portrayals of the genders. Nevertheless, *Quest 2* portrays diverse gender expressions, as any character can have both masculine and feminine traits.

The textbook also exposes the students to different ways of thinking and living in its portrayal of families. This is by illustrating traditional families, single parents and two

undetermined family structures, as well as how the teacher's guide emphasizes that families are all different. These portrayals are likely to reflect the diversity of families in the classroom and may therefore aid the students in better understanding the world they live in (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020).

#### 5.3.4 Competence aim

A competence aim for second grade in English is that the students should: "participate in rehearsed dialogues and spontaneous conversations about one's own needs and feelings, daily life and interests" (The Norwegian Directorate of Education, p. 5). Heteronormativity may cause students to feel excluded and avoid participating in conversations (Evrpidou, 2020; Ryan, 2016). For instance, in Evripidou's study (2020), students avoided participating in class discussions, in fear that their interests and feelings did not align with heteronormativity. Therefore, a lack of heteronormativity can allow students to participate in conversations. The way in which *Quest 2* portrays gender supports students' ability to talk freely about interests and daily life without the limitation of gender expectations. *Quest 2*'s diverse family portrayals may also support students to talk about their own families.

## 5.4 Comments from editor

As mentioned at the end of section 3.3.2, I contacted the editor after conducting my study, and asked if he could comment on the results on behalf of the publishers of *Quest*. I have included his reply in *appendix 5*. In his response, he considers it positive that *Quest 2* is found to be not heteronormative. Further, he writes that although the main purpose of the textbook is to aid students in learning English, it is important for the creators of *Quest* to present aspects of an optimistic and diverse world. The publishers especially focus on including diverse illustrations in the earlier grades, as illustrations are more vital in these than later grades. The editor further states that when they request illustrations from the illustrators, they emphasize that they wish to illustrate diversity in the textbooks and that they carefully consider what the illustrations should include.

The editor's statements concur well with my findings, as *Quest 2*, indeed, contains diverse portrayals of gender, families, and sexuality. In section 5.2, I suggested that a reason for why *Quest 2* lacks heteronormativity is that the authors made a conscious effort to have diverse portrayals. The editor's reply supports my claim, as the publishers carefully consider

the illustrations they include in textbooks for young learners, and that they focus on portraying diversity.

This statement combined with my findings can indicate that illustrations easier allow for diverse portrayals. The publishers' focus on portraying diversity can both have positive benefits for students and prevent negative impacts. As addressed previously, positive benefits include promoting students' mental health, an inclusive environment, and values such as mutual respect and tolerance. *Quest 2* can also prevent negative impacts such as bullying and students feeling wrong and excluded.

## 6 Conclusion

Due to the potential consequences of heteronormativity for students, the aim of this study has been to answer the research question: *How heteronormative are Norwegian ESL textbooks for primary school?*. To answer this question, I have analyzed the portrayal of gender, family and sexuality in *Quest 2* to see if there are any characteristics of heteronormativity. I have also discussed the implications of the presence of heteronormativity in my findings.

No characteristics of heteronormativity, defined in section 3,2, were found in the textbook. *Quest 2* portrays the genders with overlapping attributes. The only recurring exception is that, where gender is denoted, only boys have short hair and girls longer. Regardless, in most character portrayals, their gender is undetermined and many of these challenge gender norms.

Moreover, all the families are portrayed in a similar, positive manner, as the illustrations of the families are colorful and bright. Most family members have welcoming body language and are individualized, which encourages students to empathize with the characters. Traditional families are portrayed more frequently, but as it is the most common family structure in Norway, I do not consider this normative. Finally, the textbook does not portray *only a heterosexual life as a good life*, as single parents are portrayed as happy, and heterosexuality is portrayed to a minimal degree.

Therefore, based on the definition of heteronormativity in this study, the textbook is not heteronormative. The implications of these findings are that these portrayals support the requirements of LK20, as they may reflect diversity in the classroom, promote sound mental health, an inclusive environment, tolerance, and acceptance.

### 6.1 Further research

I suggest that researchers should focus more on how heteronormativity in textbooks can affect a variety of queer people, for instance, aromantic or asexual people, as previous studies tend to focus on people who experience same-sex attraction. By gaining more knowledge in this area, we can better ensure that all students feel included in the classroom.

As my literature search suggests that there is a lack of studies that investigate heteronormativity in Norwegian textbooks for primary school that are published to accommodate LK20, I suggest that this should be further researched. This is especially the

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case for earlier grades and can be done in various subjects for various grades. This would give valuable knowledge about how our current textbooks can affect students, especially queer students.

## 7 Additional comments

If I were to conduct this research again, I would have assessed if *Quest 2* portrays characters who align with gender norms as better than characters who do not. This would give even greater insight in if the portrayal of gender is heteronormative.

I am very grateful for this experience as I have learned a lot. At the beginning of this process, I was mostly interested in exploring how inclusive textbooks are of queer people. Through reading literature, I have learned that how textbooks position heterosexuality is equally important. Executing this research has made me aware of implications classroom materials can have.

I have been made aware of and adjusted a lot of my own biases, especially in terms of gender norms. I believe that this can help me meet students in a way that makes them feel acknowledged, seen and respected for who they are. In addition, I have learned how to assess whether classroom materials are heteronormative. I wish to apply this knowledge as a teacher, both when I assess materials I use in the classroom, and if I am given the opportunity to contribute to assess what materials my school will buy.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1

Email 1

«Hei,

Jeg ser at du har spurt om vi har noen retningslinjer rundt hvem som inkluderes i lærebøkene med tanke på kjønn, familie og seksualitet. Jeg skal forsøke å svare så godt jeg kan på vegne av Quest 😊

Som redaktør for læreverket Quest er det jeg som har hovedansvaret for dette, og selv om hovedformålet med læreverket er å legge til rette for at skolebarna skal lære seg engelsk, har man naturligvis en del tanker om hvordan innholdet kan presenteres på en måte som ivaretar mangfold (bl.a. etnisitet, seksualitet/kjønn og funksjonsevne).

I Quest 2 er det ett kapittel om hjem og familie, og det er primært her tematikken berøres direkte. I dette kapitlet har vi valgt å inkludere «tradisjonelle» familiesituasjoner (mor, far, barn+ulik etnisitet) og familiesituasjoner med kun en voksen med barn. Jeg la ved fire bilder som gjenspeiler noe av innholdet, inkludert hvordan Zoom, verkets gjennomgangsfigur, presenterer sin familie. Vi kunne ha presentert et enda bredere utvalg og enda større mangfold, men det er fryktelig mange hensyn å ta.

Det finnes en god del eksempler på hvordan man utfordrer tradisjonelle kjønnsrollemønstre i de andre Quest-bøkene, fra hjem med flere fedre (Quest 3) til jenter som gamer (Quest 4) for å nevne noe. (Parallelt med dette har vi også forsøkt å inkludere mennesker med nedsatt funksjonsevne i tillegg til etnisk mangfold, men dette er litt på siden av det du ba om).

Jeg vet ikke om dette svarer på alt du lurer på, men jeg ønsker at det kommer frem at vi tar tematikken på alvor, og forsøker å være vårt ansvar bevisste når det gjelder å presentere mangfold som en naturlig del av verden vi lever i. Samtidig er det viktig å nevne at vi lever i en verden i stadig utvikling, og at vi som forlag hele tiden må gjøre en løpende vurdering av om det man utgir er i tråd med tiden vi lever i. Derfor stiller vi oss også åpne for tilbakemelding og diskusjon rundt slike og andre spørsmål.

Ta gjerne kontakt hvis du har innspill eller spørsmål.

Med vennlig hilsen

**Mads Conradi**

Redaktør

Aschehoug skole»

### Appendix 2

Email from editor 2

«Hei,

Oppgaven er åpen, det er ingen fasit, og elevene står fritt til å telle som de selv ønsker. Det er heller ikke mulig å se om vedkommende i hijab er gutt eller jente. Hovedintensjonen med denne siden (og alle tilsvarende sider med samtalebilder i hele Quest-serien) er å øve seg på å bruke både nye

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ord/fraser samt noen av de man kan fra før inn i en ny setting som et ledd i systematisk oppbygging av språkferdighetene, og da er det prioriteringer rundt dette som har kommet i første rekke. Hovedtemaet er klasserom/skole, og ord som gutt, jente, pult, bøker står nevnt som noe de skal telle fordi dette er ord man har lært tidligere i Quest.

Som jeg nevnte i forrige svar, er det mange hensyn å ta. Det vil ikke være mulig i en engelskbok for syvåringer å gjenspeile vår utrolig komplekse verden med alle dens nyanser. Men vi kan gi elevene verktøy til å øve seg på å møte verden og dens borgere med nysgjerrighet, dialog og samarbeid, for å nevne noe.

Håper dette svarer på spørsmålet.

Riktig god helg 😊

Med vennlig hilsen

**Mads Conradi**

Forlagsredaktør

Aschehoug Undervisning”

### Appendix 3

Literature search

DATABASE	DATO	SØKEORD/KOMBINASJON	ANTALL TREFF	KOMMENTARER
Oria Hiof	27.04.23	Heteronormativity + textbooks	142	Included literature the library does not have access to
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity + textbooks + primary	21	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity + textbooks + primary	11	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity /Heteronormative + EFL / ESL /TESOL / ELT	126	
Oria		Heteronormativity/Heteronormative + EFL/ESL/TESOL / ELT + textbooks/textbook	39	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative + EFL/ESL/TESOL / ELT + textbooks/textbook	12	

		+ primary/elementary		
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative + EFL/ESL/TESOL / ELT  + textbooks/textbook  + primary/elementary	4	Here I adjusted for the database to only show articles
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative  + textbooks/textbook  + primary/elementary	45	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity + textbooks + language teaching	31	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative  + textbooks/textbook  + primary/elementary  + Norway /Norwegian	5	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative  + textbooks/textbook  + primary/elementary  + Norway /Norwegian	4	Only articles.  All four articles are the same article. Smestad (2018). Lgbt issues.
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative  + textbooks/textbook  + primary/elementary  + Norway /Norwegian  +Engelsk/Engelske/engelskfaget	0	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/Heteronormative  + textbooks/textbook  + Norway /Norwegian	14	
Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativitet/skeive/LHBT + Lærebøker	27	

Oria	27.04.23	Heteronormativitet/skeive/LHBT + Lærebøker  + Engelske/Engelskfaget	2	
Oria	27.04	heteronormativitet /skeive/LHBT + barneskole/barneskolen/småtrinnet/ begynneropplæring	2	
Oria	27.04	heteronormativitet /skeive/LHBT + barneskole/barneskolen/småtrinnet/ begynneropplæring  + lærebøker	0	
Oria	27.04	Heteronormativitet + fagfornyelsen/ LK20 + lærebøker/kunnskapsløftet 2020	0	
Oria	27.04	Heteronormativitet/skeive + lærebøker	5	Published 2020 or later
Idunn	27.04	Heteronormativitet + lærebøker	3	
Idunn	27.04	Heteronormativitet + lærebøker + engelsk/engelskfaget/engelske	0	
Idunn	27.04	Heteronormativitet + lærebøker + barneskolen/småtrinnet/begynneropplæring		
Education Source	27.04.23	Heteronormativity  + esl /english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language	7	I used terms the database suggested after typing in ESL.
Education source	27.04.23	Heteronormativity  + esl /english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language  +textbook OR textbooks	1	

Education Source	27.04.23	Heteronormativity + esl /english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language  +textbook OR textbooks  +primary OR elementary OR young learners	0	
Academic search premier	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/ heteronorm/ heteronormative/ heterosexism  + esl/ english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language	4	
Academic search premier	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/ heteronorm/ heteronormative/ heterosexism  + esl/ english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language  +textbook/textbooks	1	
Academic search premier	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/ heteronorm/ heteronormative/ heterosexism  + esl/ english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language  +textbook/textbooks  +Elementary / primary	0	
Academic Search Premier	27.04.23	Heteronormativity/ heteronorm/ heteronormative/ heterosexism  + esl/ english as a second language/ esol/ english speakers of other languages/ tesol/ enl/ english as a new language  +Elementary / primary	2	
Oria	03.05.23	Skeive barn	59	

Oria	03.05.23	skeive barn/ skeive elever/ LHBT elever +skole /klasserommet/undervisning	18	
Oria	03.05.23	skeive barn/ skeive elever/ LHBT elever / homofile elever / homofile barn + engelskfaget /engelskundervisning/ språkopplæring	0	
Oria	03.05.23	Esl/ english as a second language/esol/ english speakers of other languages / tesol + queer students	51	
Oria	03.05.23	Esl/ english as a second language/esol/ english speakers of other languages / tesol + queer students + primary school / elementary school	6	
Oria	08.05.23	Allonormativity/ amatonormativity	46	
Oria	08.05.23	Allonormativity / amatonormativity + textbooks	6	
Oria	08.05.23	Allonormativity / amatonormativity + esl/ elt/ efl / tesol	0	
Oria	08.05.23	Heteronormativity + asexuals / aromantics / asexuality / aromanticism		
Oria	08.05.23	Heteronormativity + asexuals / aromantics / asexuality / aromanticism + textbooks	1	
Oria	08.05.23	Heteronormativity + asexuals / aromantics / asexuality / aromanticism + classroom/school	24	

Oria	08.05.23	heteronormativitet /heteronormative + aseksuelle / aseksualitet / aromantiske	0	
Oria	08.05.23	aseksuelle ELLER aseksualitet ELLER aromantiske	23	
Oria	08.05.23	aseksuelle ELLER aseksualitet ELLER aromantiske + skolen /klasserommet	1	

Appendix 4



Figure 6: Illustration on page 18



Figure 7: Illustration on page 38



Figure 8: Illustration on page 60

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## Appendix 5

Hei,

Først og fremst er det hyggelig at boken man har laget ikke oppleves som heteronormativ og at fokuset man har hatt i prosessen har gjort at mangfoldet kommer fram.

Det må også nevnes at hovedformålet med boka jo "bare" er at barn skal kunne øve seg og lære engelsk. Vi har likevel vært opptatte av, der det er mulig og naturlig, å presentere deler av en optimistisk og mangfoldig verden der folk har like muligheter uavhengig av kjønn, alder, etnisitet og funksjonsgrad. I tillegg er vi, spesielt på de lavere trinnene der illustrasjonene spiller en større rolle, prisgitt et godt samarbeid med illustratører som kan faget sitt og forstår seg på illustrasjonsbeskrivelser. I illustrasjonsbeskrivelsene som gikk ut til illustratørene, er mangfoldsperspektivet tydelig spesifisert og man har gått flere runder fra skisser til ferdige illustrasjoner.

Håper disse innspillene kan være til nytte i slutfasen du nå er i.

Med vennlig hilsen

**Mads Conradi**

Redaktør

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