

MASTEROPPGAVE

A mixed methods case study of learner and teacher perceptions of exposure to English in 6th grade at a middle school in Norway

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses learner and teacher perceptions on the effect exposure to English outside of school has on second language proficiency. To gain an insight into their perceptions regarding the topic, a mixed-method approach was used. Two groups of Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners participated in a survey, and two of their English teachers were interviewed through a focus group interview. The questions in both the survey and focus group interview were designed to identify their perceptions on the topic and illuminate the differences and correlations between the learners and the teachers' responses. The results indicated that exposure is essential for this group of Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners' English proficiency. Additionally, the results also showed that learners spend a significantly higher number of hours engaging in English activities in their spare time, as opposed to in school. The learners and the teachers' responses indicated that spare time activities were significant for the learners' proficiency. However, negative effects of exposure to media were also accounted for. The findings also revealed that motivation might be a key factor in the success of second language learning in school and the learners' spare time. Exposure to the English language through spare time activities are beneficial for this group of Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners. However, more extensive research is required to widen the scope and establish generalized findings in a wider context. The findings could be beneficial for teachers, future teachers and other researchers in the English language field.

SAMMENDRAG

Denne forskningsoppgaven analyserer elevers og læreres oppfatninger av effekten eksponering for engelsk utenfor skolen har på andrespråkkunnskap. For å få et innblikk i deres oppfatninger angående temaet, ble en kombinert metode brukt. To grupper med elever på 6. trinn fra en skole i Norge deltok i en undersøkelse, og to av deres engelsklærere ble intervjuet gjennom et fokusgruppeintervju. Spørsmålene i både undersøkelsen og fokusgruppeintervjuet ble utformet for å identifisere deres oppfatninger om emnet og belyse forskjellene og korrelasjonene mellom elevenes og lærernes svar. Resultatene indikerte at eksponering er avgjørende for engelskkunnskapene til disse to gruppene med elever. I tillegg viste resultatene også at elever bruker et betydelig høyere antall timer på å engasjere seg i engelske aktiviteter på fritiden, i motsetning til på skolen. Elevenes og lærernes svar indikerte at fritidsaktiviteter hadde betydning for elevenes ferdigheter. Imidlertid ble det også redegjort for negative effekter av eksponering for media. Funnene avslørte også at motivasjon kan være en nøkkelfaktor for suksessen til andrespråklæring på skolen og på elevenes fritid. Eksponering for det engelske språket gjennom fritidsaktiviteter er gunstig for disse to elevgruppene. Det kreves imidlertid mer omfattende forskning for å utvide omfanget og etablere generaliserte funn i en bredere sammenheng. Funnene kan være nyttige for lærere, fremtidige lærere og andre forskere innen det engelskspråklige feltet.

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1.0 Introduction

Through previous teaching practice in a wide variety of practice placements, we have encountered several ESL learners, in middle schools and secondary schools, who seemed to have a greater understanding of how to use spoken English compared to written English. From personal experience, ESL learners in the late 90s and early 2000s had a more balanced proficiency between oral and written English, as opposed to the learners of today. These perplexing experiences have led us to reflect upon and assume that modern ESL learners acquire the English language primarily through exposure outside of the classroom. Due to the increased amount of leisure time committed to listening to different media, watching films and TV shows, and playing games that primarily contain the English language, learners are significantly more exposed to the English language nowadays. Although earlier ESL learners were also exposed to English outside the classroom, media containing the English language was less available.

Considering the previous assumptions, the validity of such statements should be questioned. Therefore, we intended to research and possibly uncover the truth about the effect of English exposure outside of the classroom on Norwegian middle school ESL learners' English proficiency, according to their own and their teachers' respective perspectives. According to Lightbown & Spada (2020), first language learners primarily acquire their first language through thousands of hours of exposure from other people and the language environment that surrounds them. ESL learners, on the other hand, are less exposed to the target language than their first language. However, due to increased availability of English language sources in media today, it might be safe to assume that ESL learners are more capable of acquiring the necessary ESL skills they need through activities outside of the classroom. Based on the previous statements, the following research question has been designed:

“How do Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners and their teachers perceive the effect exposure to English outside of school has on their English proficiency?”

To investigate this, we have gathered information about the effect exposure has on ESL learners' language, according to the ESL learners themselves and their ESL teachers. Did their perceptions of the effect of exposure correlate, or did they differ significantly? With this

information, the aim was to outline the eventual discrepancies or similarities between their answers. It is important to state that this research paper does not intend to answer if exposure to the English language outside of school affects ESL learners' proficiency in general, but our purpose is to illuminate the topic and data collected for this particular case study. In addition to the latter statement, this research also intends to investigate how much time ESL learners spend on engaging with activities that contain English, as well as identifying which of them they engage with the most. We already know that Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners spend between two to three hours a week studying English in school, but how much time do they spend being exposed to the English language outside of school?

This research paper will provide a literature review of the chosen theoretical perspectives, followed by a method section which describes and accounts for the methodological choices made. After the section on methodology, the results are presented and analysed in *results and analysis*. Thereafter, the results will be linked to relevant theory and discussed further, and finally we will present our concluding remarks on the research process in general, as well as the perceived effect exposure has on Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners.

2.0 Literature review

In this section, the relevant theoretical perspectives for this thesis are presented and accounted for. Theories related to language learning, language acquisition, and how languages are learned in general are emphasised. Additionally, theory regarding exposure to English, English as a lingua franca and learning motivation will be presented.

2.1 Language learning

From the day children are born, the process of learning their native language starts. One of the main contributors to children learning their first language is the vast amount of language input they are exposed to in their immediate environment. Starting with socialization between the child and their caretakers, the child receives language input in large quantities, both from spoken language directed to them and conversation they overhear. For the child to eventually understand this large amount of language input, whether it is in their mother tongue or in a second language, the input must be comprehensible (Krashen, 1982). Lightbown and Spada (2020) emphasise that “learning takes place gradually, as the number of links between language and meaning and among language forms are built up” (p. 29). Bit by bit, the child's language develops, starting with simple words like “mom” and “dad”, eventually turning into

partially complete and full sentences. This happens because of being exposed to the language for thousands of hours (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

One important step towards children learning a language is interactions with proficient speakers of the target language. This two-way communication allows for immediate response to the child's utterances, where the interlocutor either corrects or gives praise. This one-to-one interaction provides an opportunity for comprehensible language input, where the language is adjusted to suit the child's language level (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Through this interaction, the child has an increased opportunity of language feedback, helping them understand what is said and being understood. Lightbown and Spada (2020) state that "when a child does not understand, the adult may repeat or paraphrase. The response of the adult may also allow children to find out when their own utterances are understood" (p. 28). Interacting with the language environment is essential to successfully learn a language, and the learner cannot fully learn a language through one-way exposure to the target language alone (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). This is supported by Piaget (1951) who emphasises the importance of interactions between children and the environment that surrounds them. Moreover, language is a result of the knowledge children acquire from these interactions within the environment, as well as the objects in it.

2.1.1 Language Acquisition

Stephen Krashen (1982) explains language acquisition as a subconscious process, which means that language learners are unaware, to some degree, of the acquisition taking place. Mostly, their awareness centres around the language usage, for the sake of communication. He also states that "the result of language acquisition, acquired competence, is also subconscious" (Krashen, 1982, p. 13-14). For a learner to eventually understand large amounts of language input, whether it is in their mother tongue or in a second language, the input must be comprehensible. Learning a language and acquiring one are two different processes. Second language learning finds place when paying conscious attention to the rules and form of a target language, whereas second language acquisition materialises through exposure to comprehensible samples of language (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Second language acquisition can be explained through four respective perspectives: the behaviourist, the innatist, the cognitive and the sociocultural perspective. These perspectives have, in various degrees, affected how researchers understood the process of language learning and acquisition. Although some of these perspectives have been partially dismissed in recent

years, some of their main concepts remain relevant for understanding language acquisition and learning. The different perspectives will be presented, starting with the behaviourist perspective, eventually ending with the sociocultural perspective. Krashen's monitor model will also be presented in addition to these perspectives.

Behaviourist theories are based on habit-formation, and the process of language acquisition through imitation, mimicry and positive reinforcement is heavily emphasised. Furthermore, positive reinforcement could simply be praise or successful communication within a conversation. The behaviourist perspective was especially prominent in the 1940's and 1950's, with B. F. Skinner serving as one of its most vocal advocates (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Through successful interactions with the surrounding environment, which provide positive reinforcement, learners will be encouraged to continue practicing the language until the correct habits are formed, leading to the acquisition of new language knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Indeed, Tarone and Swierzbis (2019) state that habits are the systematic productions of linguistic forms by learners, and that through frequent practice these language habits eventually change. According to behaviourist theory, errors must be corrected immediately, to prevent the errors from becoming habitual (Tarone & Swierzbis, 2019). This suggests that the teachers' role, to correct the errors of their learners, is indeed crucial. According to Lightbown and Spada (2020), shaping the learner's language behaviours depends on the quality and quantity of the language they hear, as well as how consistently the language environment that surrounds them offers reinforcement.

The innatist perspective emerged as a counter-reaction to the behaviourist perspective and is based upon a person's innate ability to acquire language, due to Noam Chomsky's critique of B. F. Skinner's behaviourist explanations for language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). In accordance with this perspective, people acquire and learn languages in much the same way as they learn other normal and biological skills, such as walking. Humans are, from early childhood, equipped with special brain-structures that help them to acquire and learn languages. Lightbown and Spada (2020) state that, according to the innatist perspective, normal children are "biologically programmed for language and that language develops in the child in just the same way that other biological functions develop" (p. 20).

Although the environment is said to have an impact on language acquisition, the innatist perspective suggests that this is only a contributor, and that "the child's biological

endowment, will do the rest” (Lightbown & Spada, 2020, p. 20). The perspective suggests that the imitation factor of the behaviourist perspective does not account for the learner’s ability to discover the language rules of the language they are exposed to, and thus cannot be solely responsible for the language that is acquired. Moreover, these innate abilities, which are specifically designed for the acquisition of language, will let learners discover and understand the basic rules of a language system on their own, through exposure to samples of natural language (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

The cognitive perspective emphasises the claim that there is no need to hypothesize whether humans are equipped with a language specific module in the brain, where its sole purpose is to acquire language. Moreover, cognitive and developmental psychologists claim that general theories on learning account for learners’ ability to learn language rules and acquire language competence. Although several linguists agree that the innatist perspective provides a plausible explanation for first language acquisition, the absence of complete success, in general, lead cognitive theorists to suggest that something more is needed for second language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

One of the main concepts of the cognitive perspective concerns information processing and its relevance to competence in the second language. Cognitive psychologists, working with information-processing in second language learning, regards “second language acquisition as the building up of knowledge that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding” (Lightbown & Spada, 2020, p. 108). To successfully learn and eventually produce a new language, learners must pay close attention to all parts of the target language at first. Lightbown and Spada (2020) state that “paying attention, in this context is accepted to mean ‘using cognitive resources to process information’ but there is a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention to” (p. 108). In the early stages of language acquisition, learners tend to pay attention to understanding single words in messages, while in later stages learners can pay closer attention to language rules. Gradually, they grow their competence in their target language to a point where new information becomes easier to process, and their ability to interpret and use the language is automated (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

Transfer-appropriate processing is another concept from psychology that sheds some light on how learners possibly retrieve and store language. Information is more accessible to

learners when it is called upon in situations similar to those where it was first acquired. Our memory can relate acquired information to a certain context, such as when we heard or read a new word for the first time (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). In other words, if a learner has learnt most of their vocabulary in a communicative context, this information might be difficult to call upon in other settings, e.g., in written vocabulary tests. On the other hand, if a learner has crammed grammar by writing it down on paper, it might be challenging to apply this acquired knowledge in a communicative context. The proficiency of learners is, in other words, dependent on the context of the acquisition.

In addition to context, the frequency in which learners receive input containing specific linguistic features, as well as how frequent language features occur together, is important for their language acquisition. As Lightbown and Spada (2020) states: “learners develop a stronger and stronger network of associations or connections between language features and the contexts in which they occur” and “eventually the presence of one situational or linguistic feature will activate the other(s) in the learner’s mind” (p. 111). In accordance with this theory, usage-based learning, learners might be able to correctly use e.g., subject-verb agreement in language production. However, this does not automatically indicate that they know the rule, but they might have been exposed to input samples of subject-verb agreement frequently enough to automatically know what to say or write (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

Standing in contrast to the cognitive perspective, where thinking and speaking are related, but separate processes, the sociocultural perspective regards the processes of thinking and speaking as closely connected. This perspective is closely based on Vygotsky’s (1978) assumption that language development is a result of social interactions. When speaking, one must think about what to say before the utterance is produced. As an outcome of communicating with others, learners can oversee their mental processes through internalising the input they are exposed to, increasing their language development. Furthermore, the process of internalisation is believed to happen when the learner engages in communication with an interlocutor within their zone of proximal development (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Vygotsky (1978) defines the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). In such situations, the support gained from the

interlocutor increases the learner's potential to perform at a higher level. Tarone and Swierzbis (2019) emphasises the importance of support when learning new language forms, and states that "the learner cannot produce them without scaffolding from knowledgeable interactive partners" (p. 20). Scaffolding, in this context, refers to language support given by the interlocutor when the learners need instruction for learning certain words and/or structures they would have been unable to learn otherwise (Tarone & Swierzbis, 2019).

The theory surrounding ZPD is, according to Lightbown & Spada (2020), loosely related to Krashen's input hypothesis, where the acquisition of language relies on external input, made comprehensible by including already known- and new language. However, the ZPD's emphasis is rather put on development and how the learner co-constructs knowledge through the mentioned interactions with an interlocutor. In situations where the learner attempts to produce language, and struggles or fails, the interlocutor can support the learner to succeed (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Furthermore, Krashen's interaction hypothesis has also been compared to the sociocultural perspective, due to the role the interlocutor has in aiding the learner's ability to understand and be understood in communication. The main difference between the two theories is noted in the way learners benefit from the input. In accordance with the input hypothesis, learners use the input as a catalyst for learning through their own internal processes, whereas the sociocultural perspective puts heavier emphasis on the conversation itself, and how the interactions between learner and interlocutor are the basis for learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

2.1.2 Krashen's Monitor Model

One of the most influential models for second language acquisition, proposed by Stephen Krashen in 1982, is the Monitor Model. Inspired by Noam Chomsky and the innatist theory in general, the model consists of five hypotheses: The acquisition/learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). These hypotheses attempt to describe the process of language acquisition as well as the distinction between acquiring and learning a language. Additionally, the model is based on the general notion that adult second language learners can activate and access the same innate language systems that they used when learning their native language as children. Krashen's Monitor Model has been particularly influential on previous language

teaching and learning and is still relevant to a high degree in recent years (Tarone & Swierzbis, 2019).

The acquisition/learning hypothesis

The acquisition/learning hypothesis is clearly stated as one of the most fundamental of the above-mentioned hypotheses, according to Krashen (1982). There are two distinct differences in the ways of acquiring and developing language competence: language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition is, as previously described, a term used to describe how learners acquire language. Much like how children learn their first language, language acquisition is a subconscious process where the learner is not usually aware of the acquisition taking place. Language acquisition differs from language learning in the fact that the learners are unaware of the rules of the language, but rather have a feeling if their utterances are right or wrong. Krashen (1982) explains this phenomenon by stating that “grammatical sentences “sound” right, or “feel” right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated” (p. 14).

Language learning, on the other hand, differs from language acquisition by the fact that the term learning entails learning, knowing, and being able to differentiate and explain the language rules in play (Krashen, 1982). In other words, the learner is aware of the correct use of syntax, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary when using English, either in spoken or written form. An assumption, among some language learning theorists, is that language acquisition only pertains to children, whereas adults exclusively have the ability to learn language. Krashen (1982) begs to differ and claims that reaching puberty and becoming an adult does not stop the learner’s potential for language acquisition. Although adult learners might not be able to attain a native language level of competence in their target language, they can, however, still “access the same natural ‘language acquisition device’ that children use” (Krashen, 1982, p. 14). Thus, adults are still able to pick up a new language without explicit attention to form and rules, but the results might not be as significant as those of children.

The natural order hypothesis

The natural order hypothesis revolves around the fact that grammatical structures are acquired and proceeds in a predictable manner. Additionally, the order in which some specific grammatical structures are acquired is, according to Krashen (1982), predictable. Some of

these tend to be acquired early, while others are acquired later. However, this prediction is based on averages in statistical data, meaning some learners might acquire the grammatical structures in a different order (Krashen, 1982). The validity of the natural order hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that several other researchers have researched and come to the same conclusions as Krashen; grammatical structures in second language learning are generally acquired in a predictable manner (Krashen, 1982).

The monitor hypothesis

As previously stated in the section for the acquisition/learning hypothesis, there is a clear difference between how second language learners acquire and learn the target language. This difference is also found, according to Krashen (1982), between how second language learners use their language competence in the Monitor hypothesis. In accordance with this hypothesis, the language acquisition is used to produce utterances and are responsible for the perceived fluency of a second language learner, whereas the learned competence functions as a monitor and editor of the already produced language (Krashen, 1982). In other words, the acquired competence is responsible for producing the words needed for communication, while the learned competence edits and modifies the language through conscious attention to language rules. To clarify, Krashen (1982) states that the monitoring process “can happen before we speak or write, or after (self-correction)” (p. 18). This monitoring process is visualized in figure 1 below.

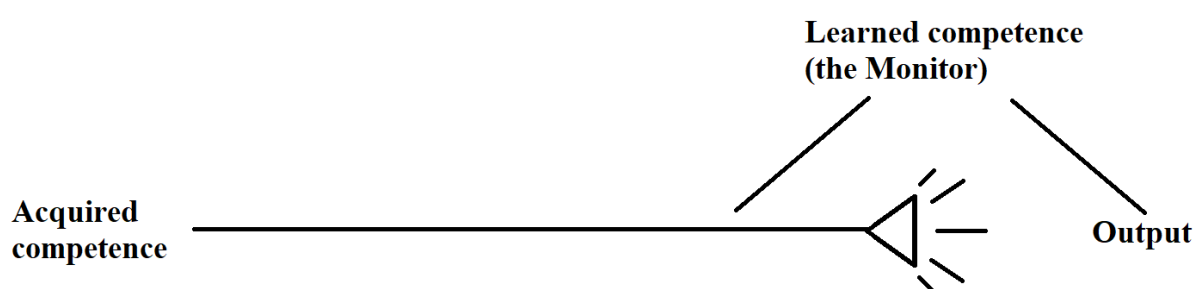


Figure 1: Acquisition and learning in second language production. From “Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition” by Stephen D. Krashen, 1982, p. 18. Copyright 1982, Pergamon Press Inc.

According to the monitor hypothesis, conscious learning and formal rules have a limited role on the performance of second language learners. For successful monitoring to take place and play a role in the language performance, three conditions must be fulfilled, according to Krashen (1982). These three conditions, and a short description of each, are the following:

1. Time. Sufficient time is crucial for second language performers, as this allows thinking about and using the rules successfully. In conversations, in general, there might not be enough time to think about and apply the correct language rules. Additionally, focusing too much on rules, in a conversation, might negatively affect the outcome of the learner's utterances and attention to what the other(s) are saying.
2. Focus on form. In addition to time, a focus on form is also necessary for effective use of the Monitor. Conscious attention to form is needed, even when time is abundant, to speak correctly. Being too involved in the conversation might limit the attention to form, causing faulty utterances.
3. Know the rule. Monitoring the acquired competence heavily relies on the learner knowing the applicable rules to edit the utterances correctly. Language is immensely complicated, and it must be considered that even the most proficient learners cannot learn every rule they are exposed to.
(Krashen, 1982)

In short, second language learners use their acquired competence when producing utterances in spontaneous communication. In any event where their acquired competence is inadequate for successful communication, they can use their learned competence to monitor and edit their utterances for adequate correctness. This depends highly on the learners having plenty of time, being conscious about their correctness, and already knowing which rules to apply (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

The input hypothesis

According to Krashen (1982), the input hypothesis concerns one of the most important questions in the field of language learning: How do we acquire language? To represent the language learner's level of acquired competence, as well as the next level which they have not yet acquired, Krashen (1982) uses the term $i + 1$. The letter i represents the learner's level of acquired competence and $+ 1$ represents the next level which has yet to be acquired. To clarify, Krashen (1982) states that "we acquire, in other words, only when we understand language that is 'a little beyond' where we are now" and that this is possible because "we use more than our linguistic competence to help us understand" (p. 22). When stating that people use more than explicit linguistic knowledge to aid them in understanding language, he claims that context is essential for understanding (Krashen, 1982). To illustrate further, a learner, who is not yet aware of the possible passive structure in sentences, can hear or read the passive phrase "the gazelle was bit by the lion" while they are watching a film or looking at a picture of a lion that has bitten a gazelle. This visual aid provides context, making the language input more comprehensible for the learner (Tarone & Swierzbis, 2019).

The general pedagogical approach towards second language teaching is based around first learning target language structure, then developing fluency using said structures in communication. The input hypothesis, on the other hand, counters this approach. Krashen (1982) substantiates the latter statement, claiming that "we acquire by 'going for meaning' first, and as a result, we acquire structure" (p. 22). Furthermore, the ability to speak fluently cannot be taught directly, but rather emerges as a byproduct of simply providing the learners with the necessary amount of comprehensible input. Learners do not tend to speak unless they feel ready for it. This happens first when the learner has personally acquired enough competence and are confident in their language production, thus not all learners start speaking at the same time. The pedagogical approach usually strays from this, making learners speak on command rather than when they feel ready for it (Krashen, 1982).

The affective filter hypothesis

Dulay and Burt originally proposed the *affective filter*, and its relevance to second language learning in 1977. Over the course of many decades, research has shown that a variety of affective variables can be linked to successful second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Furthermore, these studied affective variables can be put into the three following categories:

1. Motivation. Second language learners with a high degree of motivation, usually, but not always, perform better in the process of acquiring a second language. In other words, learners who are reluctant to learn will not acquire language as successfully as those who are motivated, in general.
 2. Self-confidence. Second language learners who are confident and have a good self-image have a tendency for increased levels of second language acquisition. Lack thereof might have negative implications on the learner's acquisition.
 3. Anxiety. Anxiety plays an apparent role in how effectively second language learners acquire language. Low personal- and classroom anxiety tend to give better results, while higher levels of anxiety negatively impact the results.
- (Krashen, 1982)

Krashen (1982) hypothesizes that the factors of the affective filter are linked more to acquisition rather than learning. He states that these factors “tend to show stronger relationships to second language achievement when communicative-type tests are used, tests that tap the acquired rather than the learned system, and when the students taking the test have used the language in ‘acquisition-rich’ situations” (Krashen, 1982, p. 30). The scope of the affective filter is dependent on whether the learner has a weak or strong filter. This means that if the learner has high levels of anxiety, it does not necessarily have negative implications on their acquisition, as long as their affective filter is weak. Learners with a strong affective filter, on the other hand, might be affected more strongly by low levels of motivation and self-confidence, in addition to high levels of anxiety, i.e. they will more likely seek less input than others (Krashen, 1982). They may understand the message, however, “the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device” (Krashen, 1982, p. 30). Those with a weaker affective filter, on the other hand, will obtain more input, and the input will have a greater impact (Stevick, 1976, in Krashen, 1982).

The figure (Figure 2) shown below aims to visualize how the affective filter affects second language learners' ability to acquire competence in their second language. Comprehensible input still maintain having the most important role in the process of language acquisition. However, the filter might affect the process of delivering input to the language acquisition device, either inhibiting or fasciliating it.

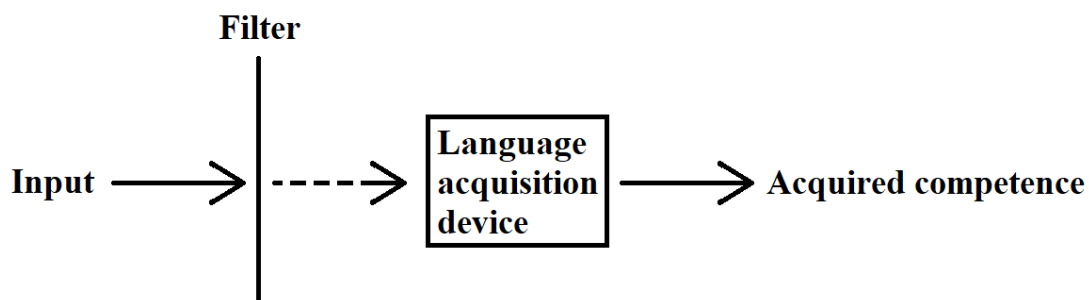


Figure 2: Operation of the “affective filter”. From “*Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*” by Stephen D. Krashen, 1982, p. 18. Copyright 1982, Pergamon Press Inc.

Despite receiving satisfactory amounts of comprehensible input, some learners might fall short of reaching a native-speaker level in their second language. This, according to Krashen (1982), happens because of their affective filter. In classrooms with high levels of comprehensible input and encouragement, as well as a low anxiety- and highly motivational environment, the levels of acquisition should, according to the affective filter hypothesis, be high (Krashen, 1982).

2.2 Exposure

Learners are exposed to the English language through a wide variety of media, both outside, and inside the classroom, which is beneficial for English teachers in Norway, as the pupils “learn English vocabulary and grammar through exposure, without an explicit focus on teaching or learning” (Munden, 2017, p. 116). She states that watching films is a handy tool for exposing the learners to the English language. The usefulness of films, in the context of English media content, can also apply to other types of audio-visual media. A potential benefit of watching films is the opportunity to listen to and read the language in combination with the context of the story. Furthermore, by being exposed to foreign words and phrases in texts, the learners “learn to guess from context, which is the most important source of vocabulary learning” (Munden, 2017, p. 116).

Using films in the English classroom is justified due to the films’ major influence and part in tweens’ lives. In addition to this, films inherit a great potential for learning because of

the stories they contain and how these stories are told. However, teachers tend to use films as rewards, making the activity of watching a film redundant. This leads to a more relaxing session, as opposed to one centred around learning (Munden, 2017). On the other hand, she states that “watching an English-language film exposes pupils to near-authentic language, especially when the film is subtitled in English and not in Norwegian” (p. 332), which makes watching films inherently useful under the right circumstances. Watching films can, in addition to language learning, introduce the learners to a variety of cultures and authentic depictions of those (Munden, 2017). Learners in Norwegian middle school should, after year seven, be able to “investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging” Utdanningsdirektoratet (Udir, 2020). In other words, films might benefit the learners’ language knowledge as well as their understanding of different cultures in the English-speaking world.

Being exposed to the target language is essential for second language learning. Learners need to practice communication to attain fluency in authentic communication outside the classroom (Munden, 2017). Travelling to a country where the target language is spoken exposes the learner to the target language in everyday situations. The exposure to the target language in Norway, however, happens quite differently. The exposure mainly consists of the few hours allocated towards language teaching in school, while the remaining exposure relies on the individual learners encounters with the language outside of school (Bjørke & Grønn, 2016). The hours allocated towards English learning in Norwegian middle schools are, according to Udir (2020), limited to 228 hours divided throughout 5th, 6th and 7th grade. Learners’ language accuracy should improve if enough time is spent practicing language patterns in communication, and the goal with language teaching is to encourage and engage in communication (Munden, 2017).

2.3 English as a lingua franca

According to the EF proficiency index, English is spoken by approximately 2.5 billion people worldwide. The majority of these speakers are second language users of English, while only approximately 400 million of them were born into an English-speaking family (EF Education First, 2022). These approximations suggest there are 2.1 billion second language speakers who have learnt English for the ease of communicating across national borders. The reason

why so many people speak English as their second language is that English is considered a global language. English being a global language does not mean that everyone in the world speaks it, or necessarily consider it an official language. Nevertheless, a vast majority of people know how to speak English, and the benefits of learning how to speak English include the ability to communicate more easily with people who do not speak your mother tongue. It does, however, require a large amount of work to master it (Crystal, 2003). In recent years, with English and its status as a global language, “the term ‘English as a lingua franca’ (ELF) has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339). Although, theoretically, any language could get the status of becoming a global language, English is the language which has attained this status because it has been taken up in several countries and taught in schools for communication globally (Crystal, 2003).

2.4 Self-determination and intrinsic motivation

For learning and acquisition to happen, the learners need an appropriate amount of motivation to push them towards the learning goal, set either by themselves or by others. Self-determination and intrinsic motivation are two central terms in motivation theory (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Intrinsically motivated conduct is characterised as engaging in activities for the joy of it, without regard for eventual rewards or consequences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In other words, motivation stems from the excitement received through participating in the activity, and the activity itself becomes the reward. In literature, the intrinsic form of motivation is regarded as the optimal type of motivation, according to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018). Self-determination, on the other hand, is described as the need to be the master of your own actions. Your actions should be based on your own premises and emerge as a result of personal interests and values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Deci and Ryan (2000) bring up three basic needs for intrinsic motivation to develop: The need for autonomy or self-determination, the need for competence, and the need for affiliation. The counterpart to intrinsic motivation is extrinsic motivation, which is characterised as motivation through external influences, such as rewards, threats of punishment, or force (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

3.0 Methodology

This section of the research paper concerns the chosen methodology, and its purpose is to present and justify the methodological choices made to conduct this study. The aims of this research will be presented in detail, as well as how the chosen methodology will aid in answering the research questions and assumptions. Furthermore, the reasoning for the choice of subjects will be accounted for, in addition to a description of the location where the data collection took place. An explanation of the research procedure will be provided, justifying how and why the specific research methods were chosen to answer the research questions. As with most conducted research, limitations are to be expected and this study is no exception to that rule. These assumed limitations will be discussed and accounted for. Finally, a description of how the collected data was analysed will be presented.

3.1 Research aims

As previously stated in the introduction of this paper, through this research we aimed to research what effect exposure to the English language through various types of media has on Norwegian middle school ESL learners' English proficiency. Through conducting digital surveys with learners and a focus group interview with their teachers, we aimed to investigate how the learners perceived the effect of English exposure, as well as if their perceptions correlated or differed from those of their teachers. We decided to emphasise the learners' and teachers' perceptions of the effect of English exposure instead of attempting to uncover a generalised truth about the effects of exposure, due to the small sample size of our case study. Despite the small sample size, this research might still provide an indication of how significant language exposure through media is to both acquiring and learning language, English specifically.

An additional aim of this research was to identify which types of popular English media were most responsible for the learners' exposure to the English language. In addition to this, the learners also reported approximately how many hours a week they spend on activities primarily containing the English language. The learners only have two to three hours of English lectures at school during a normal school week. Therefore, gaining an approximation of how many hours they spend on engaging with activities containing English outside of school provides useful information about where they are most exposed to the English language. As the availability of the English language has drastically increased throughout the

last decade, it is even more intriguing to investigate the types of media that dominates the spare time of ESL learners in Norway nowadays.

3.2 Subjects

The participants differed in terms of what they participated in. 41 ESL learners in a Norwegian 6th grade responded to an online survey, while two of their English teachers participated in a focus group interview after the survey was conducted and the results were analysed. Originally, we wanted the learners to be at least 6th or 7th graders, as we expected them to be more mature than 5th graders and generally more consciously aware of how they experienced the effect of exposure outside the ESL classroom. The participants of the survey ended up being exclusively Norwegian 6th graders. All the learners attended the same school, which is located in the south-eastern part of Norway, and were part of two separate learning groups. There was an approximate even distribution of girls and boys who participated in the survey. We chose to interview the learners' respective teachers, as they could provide first-hand information and experiences with exposure, but also because of their relationship with their learners. In that way, we could observe whether the survey-responses caught them off-guard, or if their answers correlated with those of the learners. The two teachers who were interviewed had varying degrees of experience as practicing English teachers in the Norwegian school system; one of them had worked for six years, while the other had worked for three.

In a perfect world, the sample size from the subjects could have been a lot more extensive. However, the subjects provided lots of useful information, which enabled us to illustrate both the effect and importance that the exposure to the English language outside regular classroom lessons have on this group of ESL learners' proficiency.

3.3 Location

As the aim of this research is to answer how exposure to the English language affects the process of acquisition for Norwegian second language learners in middle school, as well as their English teachers' opinion on the topic, the location in which the research would take place was a relatively simple problem to solve. To answer the research question, respondents would have to be sourced from middle schools in Norway, where English teachers were able and willing to both supply their second language learners for the survey and spend their own

time participating in an interview. In addition to locating schools with such teachers, the location of these schools was of importance. Although most of the data collection primarily were gathered through the use of web-based questionnaires, with Nettskjema.no, and online interviews with Microsoft Teams, we found it useful to be able to visit the classroom of learners ourselves and introduce and conduct the survey. This way, we knew the information given to the learners, prior to their participation, would be accurate and satisfactory. All the participating ESL learners attended the same school, and their teachers were interviewed afterwards.

3.4 Data collection

We made a web-based survey that the ESL learners responded to by the aid of the online service Nettskjema.no. Nettskjema.no is an online resource made for forming and conducting surveys and data collection, that is provided and hosted by the University of Oslo. Additionally, it is a resource with much emphasis on the security of the data collected and the participants' identities. Another reason for choosing Nettskjema.no is the possibilities for gaining access to a web-report of pre-analysed results, which made the process of analysing less time-consuming. After the survey was conducted, the participants' teacher partook in a focus group interview. The interview found place at their place of work where they were interviewed by one of the researchers, while the other researcher participated through Microsoft Teams. While the interview was being conducted, the other researcher took note of and highlighted the relevant information that the interviewees provided, as well as recorded the interview in its entirety. The recording was later used for additional analysis of the interview. Recording the interviewees' utterances gives the researcher room to focus on the conversation during an interview, as opposed to recording the information by hand (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

When it comes to ethical considerations, we sent an application (reference code 948707) to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) to receive an assessment of our chosen methods. The NSD assessed whether it was adequate in terms of the processing of personal data and to ensure that the data was processed legally. When the NSD assessed our survey, they stated that there was no need for a form of consent to be signed by the participants due to the anonymous nature of their participation. The focus group interview, on the other hand, demanded a written form of consent (See appendix 8.?) to be signed by the interviewees,

according to the NSD. The data that was handled during and after the focus group interview contained personally identifiable information. This required us to inform the interviewees of how we were to store and treat their personal information, in addition to the deletion of their personal information and the video recording on the 27th of June 2022. Additionally, the form of consent informed the interviewees about the anonymity of their contribution.

In the following section, we will explain and justify the choices we made in the process of collecting data. In section 3.4.1 we explain how the survey questions were formed as well as theory to back up our methodological choices. Additionally, the question wordings and justifications behind them are presented in and below Table 1. Section 3.4.2 concerns how the interview guide for the focus group interview was formed, as well as the theory supporting our process of data collection. Additionally, how the results from the survey and the interview guide for the focus group interview were connected are presented in and below Table 2.

3.4.1 Survey

In the process of constructing the survey, we based the questions and answer options theory regarding designing a survey, provided by Postholm & Jacobsen (2018). There are three different forms of answer options we found to be relevant for our research, which could provide the aid for categorising and analysing data: Nominal, ordinal and metric. Nominal answer options revolve around using answers to sort units into different categories. The purpose of forming such questions is to identify which group the respondent belongs to (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). One such question, in our survey, is question 4 (see table 1 below), where we asked the learners if they liked English as a language. The answers to this question enabled us to separate and compare the answers of those who enjoy English against the answers of those who do not.

Ordinal answer options, on the other hand, concern ranking the respondent's response to the connected question. These rankings often vary on a scale, ranking from low to high (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). In our survey, we chose to include several questions with ordinal answer options, such as question 8 (see table 1 below), which regards how motivated the learners are to learn English. The answer options range from "not motivated", through "somewhat motivated", to "very motivated". Ordinal forms of answer options allow for the additional categorising of responses provided, in addition to the ranking of a respondent's

answers against those of the others' (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). Lastly, we included one question that falls within the collection of metric data. In question 11 (see table 1 below), the learners were asked to provide an approximation of the amount of time they spend being exposed to English activities during a typical week. By asking such a question, we could identify the exact numerical difference between the learners' answers to the question. Additionally, these types of answers helped us to identify the learners that spend more time on English activities, as opposed to those who spend less time (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018).

During the data collection, in both the surveys and the interviews, all the questions were presented in Norwegian. To ensure that all participants understood the questions and could answer them all, without the possible constraints of using their non-native language, we decided to conduct both the surveys and interviews in Norwegian. The following survey has been translated to English, for the readers of this research paper, by the authors. After presenting our research idea to several groups of English teachers in Norway, three teachers with three sets of Norwegian middle school learners agreed to participate and aid us in the data collection. The survey was conducted with 41 learners who were given a link to the survey, supplied by us, from their teacher. The following table, Table 1, presents question wording and types of answers.

Table 1 Survey Questions

Quest ion	Question wording	Answers
1	How old are you?	Numeric answer
2	Which gender do you identify as?	Radio buttons
3	Do you think English is important to know? Why/why not?	Short answer
4	Do you like English as a language?	Radio buttons
5	Do you like working with English in school?	Radio buttons
6	How good is your written English?	Linear scale

7	How good is your oral English?	Linear scale
8	How motivated are you to learn English?	Linear scale
9	How comfortable do you feel speaking or writing in English?	Linear scale
10	Which activities, where you listen to, write, speak, or read English, do you spend time on in your spare time?	Multiple choice
11	Approximately how much time, per week, do you spend on English activities in your spare time?	Numeric answer
12	Do you feel that these activities make you better at writing and speaking English?	Radio buttons
13	Do you choose to watch films, read books, and/or listen to audio books in English to learn English?	Radio buttons
14	Do you learn most English in school, or in your spare time?	Radio buttons
15	During English lessons, do you learn best when the teacher speaks English?	Radio buttons
16	How often does the teacher speak English during lessons?	Radio buttons
17	Do you feel that you get better at English by speaking English more often?	Radio buttons
18	How often do you speak English in school?	Radio buttons
19	How often do you speak English in your spare time?	Radio buttons
20	When you watch films or TV shows in English, do you use Norwegian, English, or no subtitles?	Radio buttons
21	When I watch English films or TV shows...	Radio buttons
22	When I listen to English music...	Radio buttons
23	When I play English TV- or computer games...	Radio buttons
24	When I read an English book...	Radio buttons

25	When I listen to an English audiobook...	Radio buttons
26	Do you have a friend or family member whose native language is English?	Radio buttons
27	If yes, do you speak English with each other?	Radio buttons

Questions 1 and 2 were given to the learners to grant us the opportunity to establish categories between the answers given by the different genders and age groups. However, we chose not to emphasise the apparent differences between the different genders' and age groups' answers in the results and analysis. In question 3, the learners were granted the opportunity to provide their opinion on the importance of English as a language, in their own words. Questions 4 and 5 were given to further categorise the answers, giving an indication of the learners' relationship with English as a language and as a subject in school. Thus, after reviewing the answers from question 1 through 5, the researchers could already identify how much English is appreciated by this specific group of learners. A general hypothesis we had, before knowing the results, was that modern learners like English as a language, but do not necessarily enjoy it as a subject in school.

Questions 6 and 7 were created to put emphasis on how the respondents assessed their own English proficiency. By mapping out their self-assessed proficiency, we could, early in the process of interpreting the answers, create an image of how proficient the learners felt they were in the English language. Questions 8 and 9 aimed to ascertain if there is any correlation between the learners' appreciation for English, seen in questions 4 and 5, and their motivation and self-confidence. These questions were formed with Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis in mind, where he hypothesises that affective variables such as learner motivation and self-confidence, affects the success of language acquisition. This, in turn, might affect how much learners like working with and using the English language.

Questions 10 and 11 concern which out-of-school activities expose the learners to the English language as well as identifying how much time they spend on these activities during a normal week. The answers to these questions give an indication of how much English exposure the learners are subjected to, and which type of media is responsible for it.

Questions 12 through 14, on the other hand, deal with how consciously aware the learners are of the impact that English exposure has on their English proficiency. Additionally, by asking these questions, we get an indication of whether the learners actively choose to learn English, even outside the classroom lessons. Furthermore, question 14 puts emphasis on which arena the learners feel that they learn most of the English language: In school with their teachers or at home and in their spare time.

When it comes to acquiring language, Krashen (1982) hypothesises that comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition to take place. There are several sources of such input available to young learners in Norway, and one of these is their English teachers, if they choose to speak English during lessons. Questions 15 and 16 serve the purpose of finding out whether the learners' teachers do in fact speak English during lessons. Additionally, we wanted to investigate if the learners thought that hearing English in the classroom was beneficial for their own language learning. Although some pupils might not have the capability or maturity to reflect upon their own learning, we found it to be an interesting question to ask.

Questions 17 through 19 emphasises, in contrast to the previous paragraph about input, the learners' perception of the importance of their language output for their language learning process. A generally accepted concept in language learning theory is that oral language proficiency improves when the target language is used during spontaneous or planned communication. By asking the learners how often they speak English, either in school or in their spare time, we might gain insight into how much practice they usually get speaking English. One of the primary goals of language teaching is to encourage the learner to communicate in their target language, because learning happens through trial and error. Additionally, attaining fluency in the target language is dependent on communication practice, inside and outside of the classroom (Munden, 2017).

To map out which activities the learners received exposure from, and how much they generally understand when engaging in these activities, we asked them, in questions 20 through 25, to choose the answer most fitting with their level of comprehension in the mentioned activity. These answer options ranged from "I understand completely" to "I understand nothing at all". This, in turn, provides valuable information about whether the input given by the activities is comprehensible to the learners or not. During the first part of

the survey, in question 11, we asked the learners how much time they spend engaging with English activities in their spare time. Even though some learners might have answered that they spend a significant amount of time engaging in English activities in their spare time, it does not necessarily imply that they learn through these activities. In other words, being exposed to comprehensible input during these hours is essential for language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

We ended the survey by asking the learners whether they encounter the English language in their personal relations, in questions 26 and 27. By coding the results from the survey, we got an impression of each of the learners' proficiency through their respective answers. Some would seem less competent, whereas others seemed more competent. These questions aim to separate some learners from others, to investigate if exposure in near relations might be beneficial for second language proficiency. Thus, we could eventually unearth answers with regards to our assumption that a need to know English might affect how proficient some learners become. We chose, however, not to focus on this assumption, because the responses did not provide the relevant information.

3.4.2 Focus group interview

Through conducting qualitative interviews with English teachers in Norwegian middle schools, we wanted to gain insight into their thoughts and opinions on the topic of exposure to the English language. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the purpose of a qualitative research interview is to uncover both facts and opinions on a given subject. Additionally, we wanted to gain insight into the English teachers' opinions and perceptions of the learners' perceptions on the topic. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) states that "the interview aims at nuanced accounts of different aspects of the interviewee's lifeworld; it works with words and not with numbers" (p. 30). In other words, by interviewing the teachers about the topic of exposure, we would not receive any measurable data representing a statistical truth, but rather words and opinions on the topic for us to reflect upon.

One of the aims of this research was to gain insight into some English teachers' perceptions on the effect English exposure has on their learners' language acquisition. Do the teachers believe that it influences the learners' language learning process or not, and do they believe their learners perceive it any differently? Moreover, our research aimed to investigate

how the teachers conducted their own classroom lessons, mostly regarding the use of oral English in the classroom and the importance of English as a language in general. To get honest opinions from the teachers during the interview, unaffected by our own biased opinions on the topic, we chose to conduct the interview in an inductive approach. An inductive approach means, according to Postholm and Jacobsen (2016), that the researcher enters the field with an open mind. To do this successfully, the researcher should observe and take notes on what is stated without regard for their own preconceived opinions and attitudes towards the topic (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016).

We decided to conduct a focus group interview with our respondents. A focus group interview emphasises the different views of the interviewees about a given topic, in addition to a non-controlling researcher conducting the interview. The researcher conducting the interview is usually called a moderator, and their role during the interview is to present and guide the interviewees through the relevant topics to be discussed. The moderator should also allow the interviewees the freedom to discuss their opinions about the topic, without concern for any eventual disagreement that occurs. Disagreement during the interview is generally viewed as a positive affair for the research, as it might add valuable information that the researchers had not originally thought of (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). A focus group interview usually consists of six to ten people that is led by a moderator, according to Chrzanowska (2002). Although our research is limited to interviewing three teachers, we still wanted to conduct a focus group interview in this smaller group. The teachers had varying degrees of experience as English teachers, and we believed that a focus group interview could lead to interesting discussions between them. Moreover, a lively exchange of words between the interviewees might bring more expressive and emotional utterances, as opposed to individual and more cognitive interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

When the interview guide was constructed, we facilitated the questions to fit a semi-structured type of interview. This was a conscious choice we made, as it enables the interviewees to provide more complementary information in their answers; they are not bound to give short and precise answers exclusively. The essence of a semi-structured interview is to obtain the interviewees' description of their lifeworld, where the purpose is to interpret their descriptions of the phenomena in question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In a semi-structured interview style, the interview guide serves more as an overview of the topical questions the researcher should include in the questioning of the participants (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016).

Conducting the interview this way left room for follow-up questions when interesting thoughts about the topic came to light, which we did not intend to ask about in the first place. Questions such as “you mentioned ... earlier?” and “could you elaborate more on ...?” enable the researcher to gather additional information about the topics the interviewees provide (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016).

As explained in the previous chapter, 3.4.1, the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and the questions have subsequently been translated for this research paper. We did this in benefit of the respondents, making sure they understood every question and were able to answer them as accurately as possible. The teachers who participated in the focus group interview were chosen because their learners participated in the survey. Two English teachers in a Norwegian middle school were interviewed, with varying degrees of experience in the field. The following table, Table 2, illustrates the wording of the questions in the interview guide, that were used to conduct the interviews.

Table 2 Interview questions

Questions	
1	How long have you worked as an English teacher in the Norwegian school system?
2a	Do you believe that English is an important language/subject for Norwegian pupils to learn?
2b	Why/why not?
2c	What do you think the pupils answered when they were asked? (Show results from survey question 3)
3a	When you teach English, do you primarily speak Norwegian or English with your pupils?
3b	Why/why not?
3c	Do you believe speaking English to learners who do not understand everything that is being said has value for their learning?

3d	Do you think your pupils believe the teacher speaking English to be important for their learning? (Show results from survey questions 15 and 16)
3e	Why do the learners answer that they learn best when the teacher speaks Norwegian?
4	English teachers in Norwegian schools are, according to Munden (2017), privileged because Norwegian pupils are exposed to the English language daily through a vast variation of different media (films, TV shows, social media, audiobooks, etc.). What do you think about this claim?
5a	The world has, in recent years, steadily become more globalized, and the access to English spoken media are more available now than ever. Have you noticed a significant change in Norwegian pupils' English proficiency the last 10-20 years?
5b	Have you noticed any differences in how English is taught now as opposed to when you yourself attended middle school?
6	To what extent, in your belief, is this exposure essential for the development of Norwegian pupils' English proficiency?
7	What do you think the pupils themselves think about the effect of exposure to English outside of school?
8a	What do you think the learners have answered to the question regarding where they learn English best?
8b	Our survey shows that (show results from survey questions 12, 13, and 14). Are you surprised by these results?
8c	Why/why not?
9	Our survey also shows that (show results from survey questions 17, 18, and 19). What do you think about this?
10	Do you have any additional thoughts about this subject which, in your opinion, could aid this research further?

The questions in the interview guide were formed to match a selection of the survey questions. This was done to identify the differences in perception between working English teachers and their learners. Thus, the correlations or eventual discrepancies between the teacher- and learner group's answer could be accounted for. As previously stated, the learners' age might have an implication on the way in which they reflect upon and answer the

questions, whereas the teachers' maturity and experience in the field would allow them to answer more accurately. Moreover, the teachers' perspective on the effect of exposure to the English language outside of the classroom might differ from that of the learner; they might be more inclined to side with the way in which English is taught in school, rather than attributing learning to activities outside of the classroom.

During the interview, the interviewees were asked "what do you think the pupils themselves think about the effect of exposure to English outside of school?". The reasoning behind this question was to identify their preconceptions of their learners, before showing them the actual results of the survey. They were then shown examples from the results of the survey conducted with their group of learners. This was done to gauge their reactions to their learners' answers, as well as to ask for their opinions and thoughts about the results. Finally, we asked the interviewees if they had any finishing remarks or additional thoughts about the topic, which could be helpful for our research.

3.5 Limitations

In this section the potential limitations of the study will be accounted for.

3.5.1 General limitations of the study

Although the aim of this study is to identify how exposure to the English language and its benefits are perceived by ESL learners and ESL teachers, the scope of this research is limited by the small number of subjects interviewed and questioned. This indicates that the findings of this research cannot be generalized for the broader understanding of the effects of English exposure on Norwegian ESL learners' second language acquisition, but rather as the results of a case study. However, the findings might be of help to teachers or researchers in the field by indicating the state of the subject in a certain part of Norway, as well as opening the possibilities for further research with a larger scope. Additionally, the results of the research could inspire future and contemporary ESL teachers.

A limitation with younger participants is the possibility for joke-submissions and insincere conduct. Due to the anonymity of the survey, the learners will know that their contributions, either serious or not, cannot be traced back to them. Although any such joke-submissions might be easily identifiable in the review of the results, some amount of extra

work is required to remove them. Another possible limitation to consider in this study is the possibility that the subjects are not sufficiently able to assess the effect exposure to English has on their own ESL proficiency. Considering the subjects' age in middle school, which ranges from 10 to 13 years, their judgement might not be fully developed, and their answers may not reflect the whole truth. However, no answer reflects the whole truth, and the learners' responses should be considered their truths.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity in research refers to whether a research method is suitable to investigate the research in question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Validity is, in other words, a measurement of whether what is being researched is researched in an honest and correct manner. The scientific validity is often based on whether the researcher is measuring what they intend to measure through the research (Kerlinger, 1979). In a broader perspective, valid qualitative research should result in valid scientific knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In other words, if the research leads to results that offer answers to what is being researched, the method can be considered valid. As for quantitative studies, "validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured" (Heal & Twycross, 2015). Thus, research where the purpose is to e.g., explore commonly used phonemes, but rather measures oral production of language, would be invalid.

As for our study, we opted to use a mixed-method approach, where we conducted both a quantitative survey of a group of 6th grade second language learners, as well as a qualitative focus group interview with their teachers. A mixed-method approach is a method where, in a single study, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to collect and analyse data. The mixed-method approach opens the opportunity to understand the topic through both qualitative and quantitative phenomena (Creswell, 1999). The aim of the survey was to gather information about the learners' exposure to the English language outside of the classroom, as well as their thoughts about the topic of language learning and exposure in general. The questions (See Table 1) range from general question about their motivation to learn and their fondness for the English language to more specific questions about their habits regarding spare time spent exposed to English. Therefore, our quantitative research method is to be considered valid, as the questions used to gather information were constructed to answer what we intended to research.

3.5.3 Reliability

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) states that reliability is treated in coherence with the question about whether a result can be reproduced in a similar fashion by other researchers at another time. Thus, if a researcher can use the exact same research method previously executed by another researcher, the method is reliable. Although if each researcher follows the same research method, their results will vary slightly, because the researchers who conduct the interviews and analysis of the data cannot be expected to act in the exact similar way. Another difference that may occur between the researchers' conduct is the application of follow-up questions during the interview. One of the researchers might ask follow-up questions during the interview, which the other researcher would not ask. Therefore, this might create a noticeable variance between our results compared to the results of other researchers using the same method. A high level of reliability is preferable, however, too much emphasis on it might discourage variation and creative thinking (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In other words, we deem our method reliable as it can be reproduced in some degree by other researchers, although the results of the reproductions might vary.

3.6 Data analysis

As previously stated, the data collection and analysis of this research paper has been conducted through a mixed method approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods allows the researcher to build on the strengths of both approaches (Creswell, 2012). While quantitative approaches yield statistical data and averages concerning the topic in question, qualitative approaches offer the opportunity to explore the opinions of the respondents more freely. The act of combining both methods expands the dimensions of the study and provides results that are more reliable (Dörnyei, 2007).

The results and analysis of the survey and the focus group interview has been analysed and presented separately in section 4.1 and 4.2 in this thesis. This was done to give a clear presentation of the data from the different methods of data collection and to separate the learners' answers from the teachers' answers. Presenting the respective results and analyses separately might also make it easier for the readers to locate specific responses from the separate groups to specific questions. Additionally, the data gathered from both the surveys and the focus group interview were organised into tables and figures (diagrams). The tables give a clear representation of the exact data collected, whereas the figures more easily

illustrate the distributions of the participants' responses. In the discussion, the survey and focus group interview results will be further analysed and compared to each other and relevant theory.

4.0 Results and analysis

Below, the results and analysis of the data collection are presented. The survey results are presented chronologically following the same progression as seen in Table 1 Survey Questions. The results from the focus group interview are presented in the same manner (see Table 2 Interview Questions), starting at question 1 and following through to the last question.

4.1 Survey

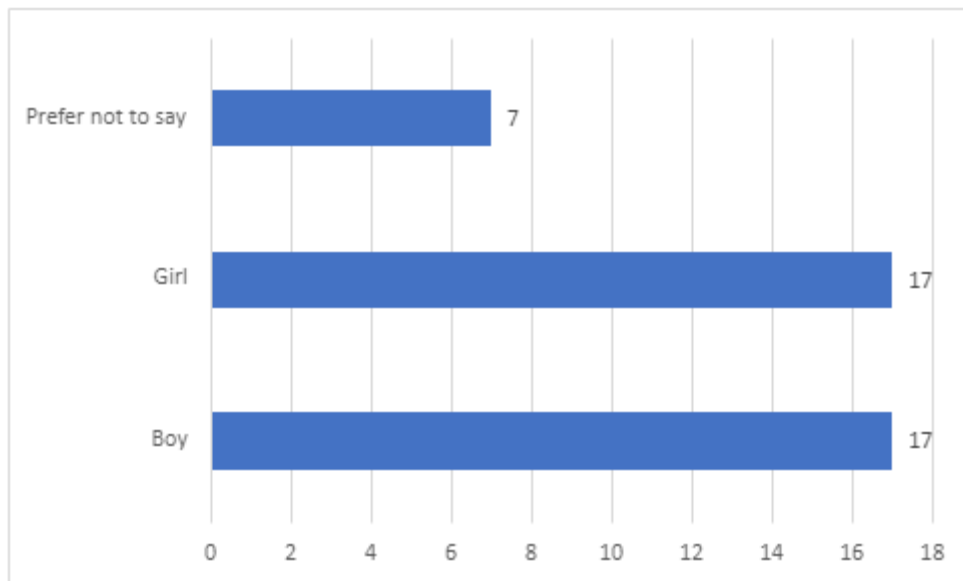
Table 3 Results survey question 1

How old are you?

Answers	Amount	Percentage
11 (eleven)	25	60,9 %
12 (twelve)	16	39,1 %

Question 1 regarded the participants' respective ages, and since all 41 of them attended 6th grade, at the time of their responses to the survey, their answers to the question ranged between 11 and 12 years old. 25 (60,9%) of the participants reported that their age was 11, while the remaining 16 (39,1 %) of the participants were 12 years old. This age difference might not affect the quality of the responses, as the gap between their ages rather small. If, on the other hand, the participants' age would range from e.g., 10 to 14, the quality of the responses might have shown some inconsistencies.

Figure 3 Results survey question 2



Of the 41 participants who responded to the survey, 34 (82,9%) of them chose to disclose the gender they identified as (see figure 3). The distribution between those who identified as boys and those who identified as girls was even: 17 (41,4%) boys and 17 (41,4%) girls. The remaining 7 (17,1%) of the participants chose not to. The benefit of separating the genders could be the potential to identify any general differences in the answers of boys or girls respectively. This was the initial intention behind including a question about gender in the survey, but we ultimately decided not to include these differences in the process of analysis the data.

Figure 4 Results survey question 3

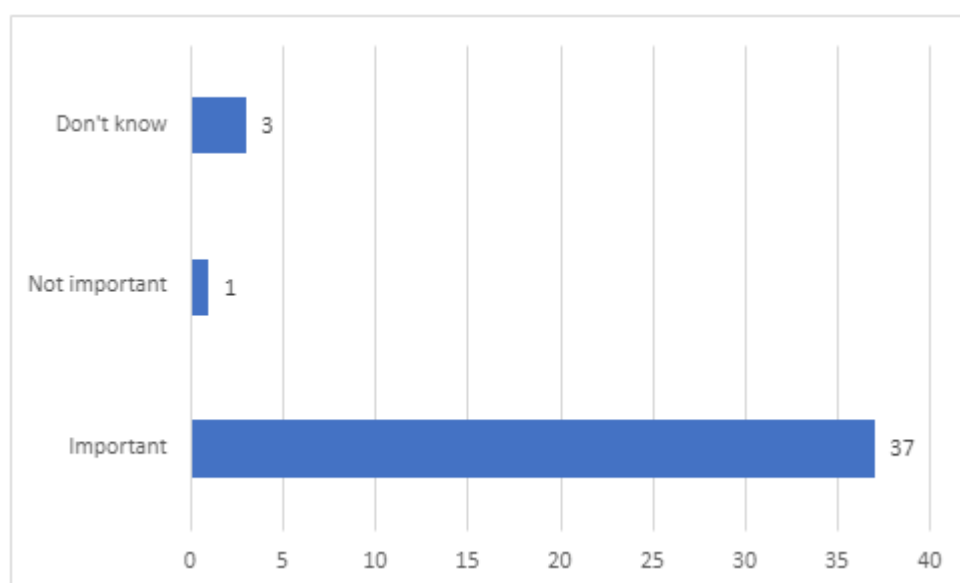


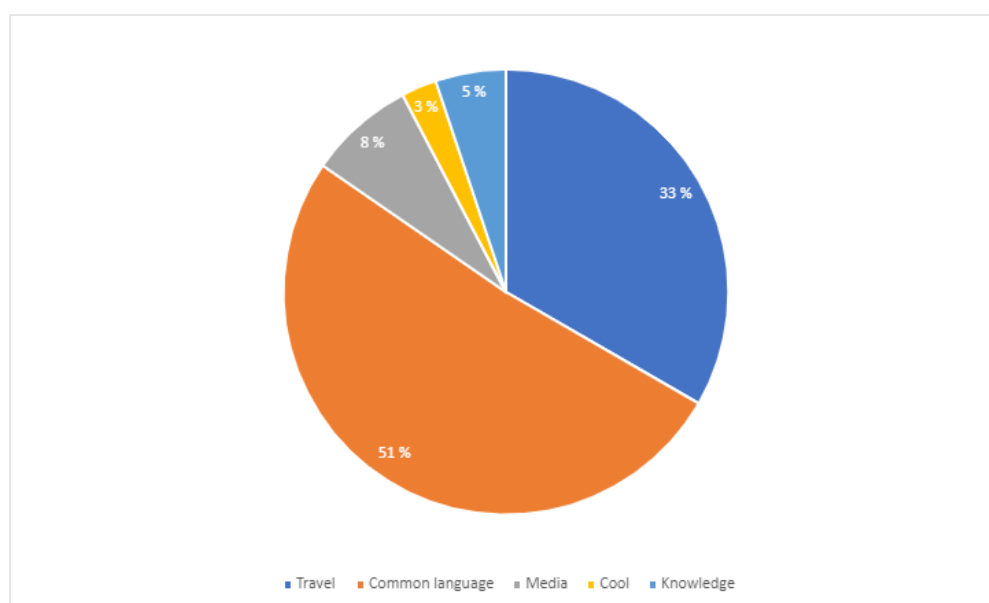
Table 4 Results survey question 3

Do you think English is important to know? Why/why not?

Answer	Amount	Percentage
Important	37	90,3 %
Not important	1	2,4 %
Don't know	3	7,3 %

As question 3 yielded qualitative data in the form of short answers, it was necessary to code the participants' answers to turn the responses into quantitative data. The first coding regarded whether the participants deemed English important to know or not (see table 4). Most responses (90,3%) indicate that the participants regard English as an important language to know. Only 2,4% of the responses claim that English is not important, and the remaining 7,3% of the participants did not know whether they regarded it important or not. It is safe to conclude that most of the 6th grade second language learners in our study value English as a language and understand the importance of it.

Figure 5 Results survey question 3



The second coding of the results in question 3 was done with regards to the participants' justifications behind deeming English an important language to know. The short answers of the participants formed the foundation for the categories and are depicted in the sector diagram above (see figure 5). They differed in both length and preciseness. However, we managed to divide the responses into five respective categories. 33% of the responses attributed the importance of English to the ability to travel to foreign countries, whereas 51% of the responses were tied to the importance of having a common language for communication with people of differing nationalities. These two categories represent the majority of the responses (84%), while Media (8%), Cool (3%), and Knowledge (5%) represent the minority of the responses (16%).

Table 5 Results survey question 4

Do you like English as a language?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	38	92,7 %
No	3	7,3 %

Table 6 Results survey question 5

Do you like working with English in school?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	24	58,5 %
No	17	41,5 %

A general agreement between most of the participants was that English as a language is likeable (see table 5). Of the 41 responses to question 4, 38 (92,7%) of the participants like English as a language, while only 3 (7,3%) dislike it. When it comes to the responses regarding working with English in school (see table 6), on the other hand, the results show a more even distribution between the answer options. While most of the participants like English as a language, only 24 (58,5%) of them like working with English in school, whereas 17 (41,5%) dislike it.

Figure 6 Results survey question 6

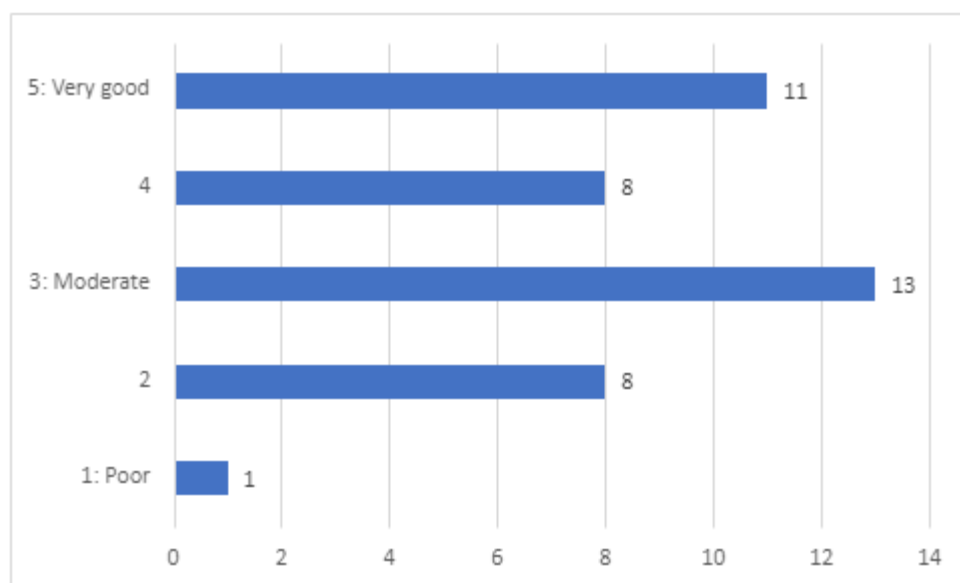


Table 7 Results survey question 6

How good is your written English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
1: Poor	1	2,4 %
2:	8	19,5 %
3: Moderate	13	31,7 %
4:	8	19,5 %
5: Very good	11	26,8 %

Figure 7 Results survey question 7

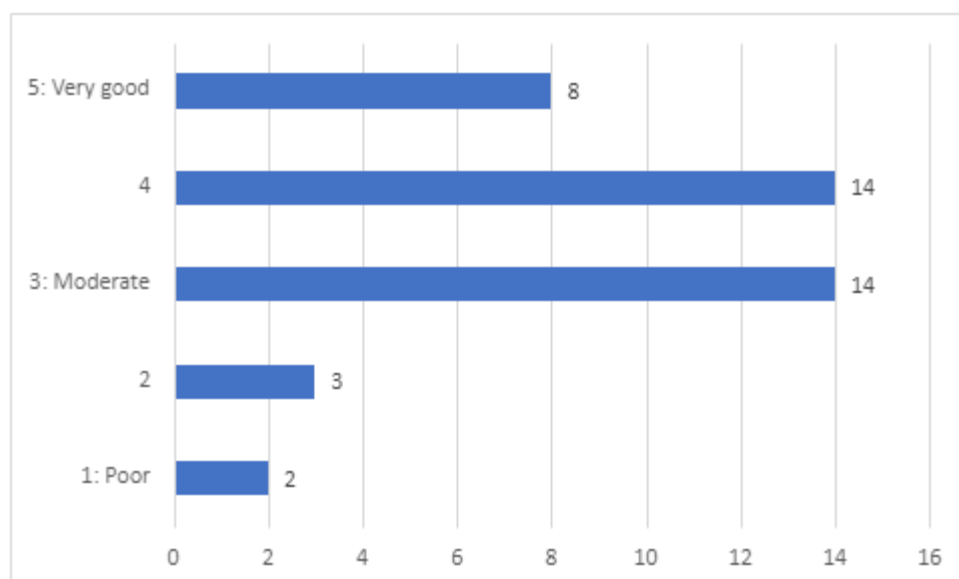


Table 8 Results survey question 7

How good is your spoken English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
1: Poor	2	4,9 %
2:	3	7,3 %
3: Moderate	14	34,1 %
4:	14	34,1 %
5: Very good	8	19,5 %

To map out how proficient the participants felt they were in the English language, we asked them to rank their written and oral proficiency on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represented poor proficiency and 5 represented very good proficiency (see tables 7 and 8). This enabled us to locate eventual discrepancies between the participants' perceptions of their oral and written proficiency. As previously stated, we feel that Norwegian learners of English are generally more orally proficient. However, the responses to these two questions do not indicate any conclusive difference between the participants' perceived oral and written proficiency.

Figure 8 Results survey question 8

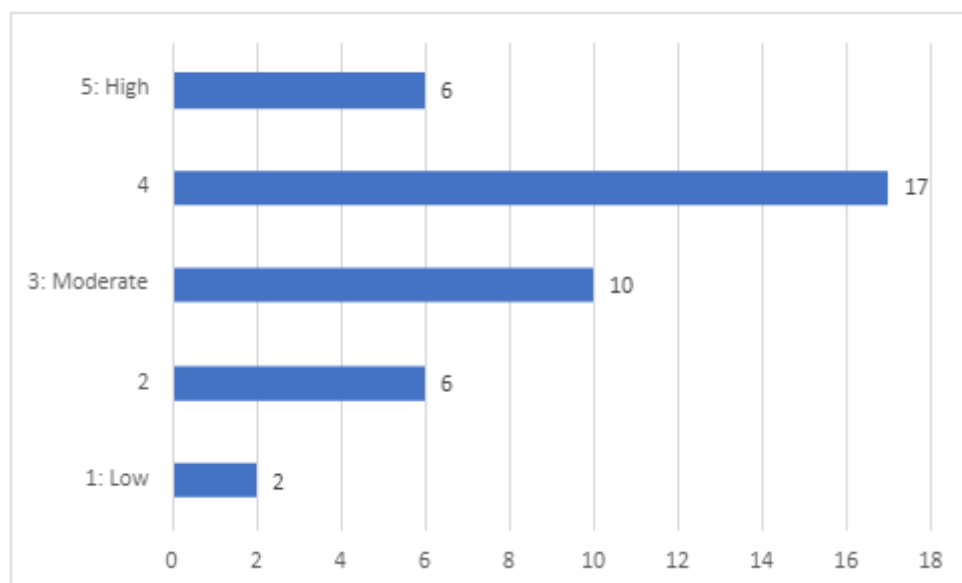


Table 9 Results survey question 8

How motivated are you to learn English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
1: Low	2	4,9 %
2:	6	14,6 %
3: Moderate	10	24,4 %
4:	17	41,5 %
5: High	6	14,6 %

The results of question 8 show that most of our participants are highly motivated towards learning English (see table 9). 56,1% of the participants answer that they are above average to highly motivated, 24,4% answered that they are moderately motivated, and only 19,5% of the participants show a below average to low motivation towards learning English. The high amount of motivation towards learning might be closely connected to the results seen in question 3, where 90,3% of the participants answer that English is an important language to know.

Figure 9 Results survey question 9

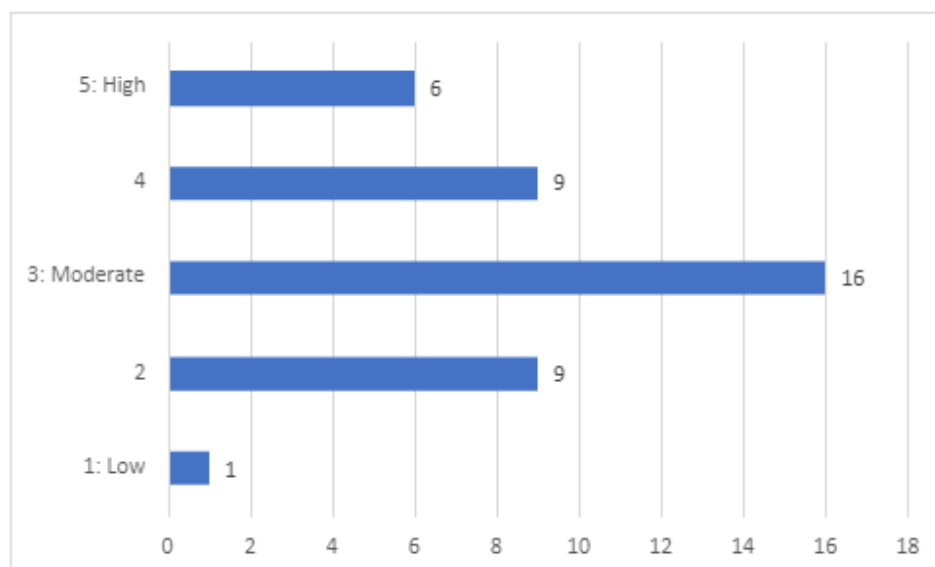


Table 10 Results survey question 9

How comfortable do you feel speaking or writing in English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
1: Low	1	2,4 %
2:	9	22 %
3: Moderate	16	39 %
4:	9	22 %
5: High	6	14,6 %

When it comes to how comfortable the participants are with speaking and writing English (see table 10), the results of question 9 shows that most of them (39%) are moderately comfortable with it. Additionally, the results indicate that the participants are generally more comfortable speaking and writing English, than they are uncomfortable doing it. In fact, 36,6% of them responded that they rank their comfortability with the English language from above average to high, whereas only 24,4% report below average to low.

Figure 10 Results survey question 10

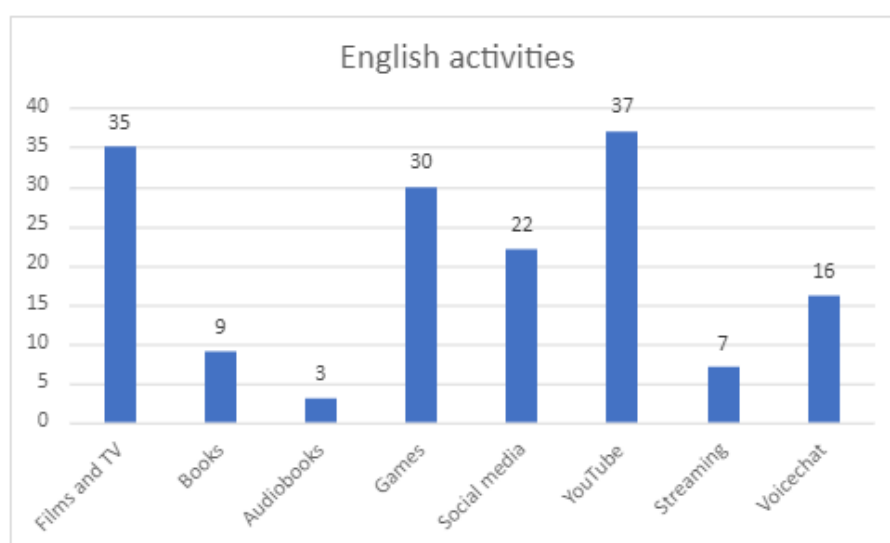


Table 11 Results survey question 10

Which activities where you listen to, write, speak or read English, do you spend time on in your spare time?

Activities	Amount	Percentage
Films and TV	35	85,4 %
Books	9	22 %
Audiobooks	3	7,3 %
Games	30	73,2 %
Social media	22	53,7 %
YouTube	37	90,3 %
Streaming	7	17,1 %
Voice chat	16	39 %

As for time spent on English activities in the participants' spare time (see table 11), the results from question 10 indicate that most of them either spend time on watching YouTube (90,3%), films and TV shows (85,4%), or playing video games (73,2%). The least common activities include reading books at 22%, listening to audiobooks at 7,3% and watching streams at 17,1%. The activities that are primarily used for communication are also common among the participants; social media at 53,7% and voice chat at 39%. The common denominator in these results is that the activities primarily containing a combination of audio and video are more popular among our participants.

Figure 11 Results survey question 11

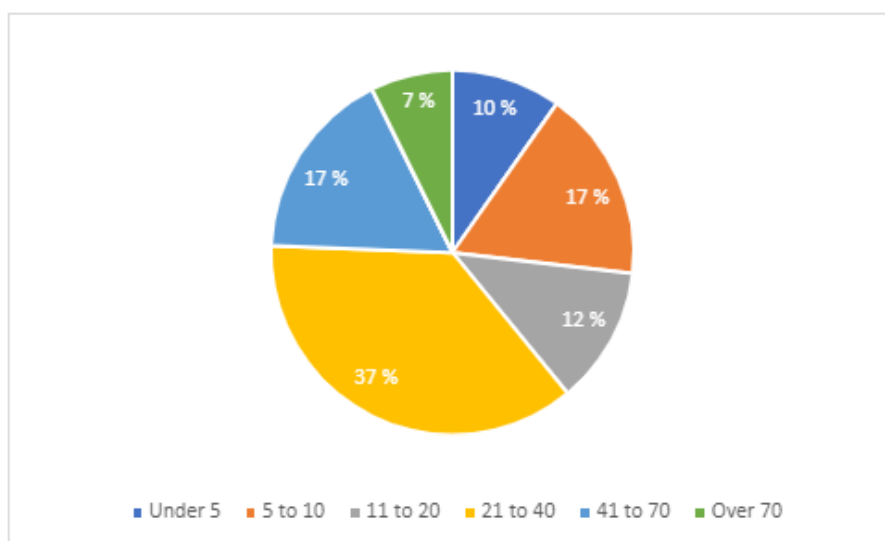


Table 12 Results survey question 11

Approximately how much time, per week, do you spend on English activities in your spare time?

Categories	Amount	Percentage
Under 5 hours	4	9,8 %
5 to 10 hours	7	17,1 %
11 to 20 hours	5	12,2 %
21 to 40 hours	15	36,5 %
41 to 70 hours	7	17,1 %
Over 70 hours	3	7,3 %

When it comes to the number of hours the participants spend on activities containing the English language (see table 12) there were considerable differences in their responses. The participants were prompted to answer the question with a number between 0 and 168, which would represent their total number of hours spent in a normal week. The results show vast differences in the participants time spent, and we saw the need to code their answers to make the process of sorting out the results easier. The responses ranged from 2 hours at the lowest

and 90 hours at the most. The categories were constructed to match the participants answers and were based on those numbers. The results indicate that most of the participants spend between 21-40 hours (36,5%) a week engaging in activities that contain English. A small proportion of the participants spend under 5 hours (9,8%) and over 70 hours (7,3%), respectively, on the activities.

Although one of the participants stated that they spent approximately 90 hours per week on English activities, we initially thought this to be less likely. However, all the participants' approximations have been included, as even the most outrageous answers might provide an insight in the learners' perceptions of the number of hours they spend on the activities every week. Some participants may not spend 90 hours per week on these activities, but it might reflect the fact that they do indeed spend an enormous amount of time on them.

Table 13 Results survey question 12

Do you feel that these activities make you better at writing and speaking English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	29	70,7 %
Yes, but only for spoken English	8	19,5 %
Yes, but only for written English	0	0 %
No	2	4,9 %
I don't know	2	4,9 %

There is, without a doubt, safe to assume that the participants strongly believe that the activities they engage in strengthen their English proficiency (see table 13). 70,7% completely agreed with the question they were asked, whereas 19,5% only felt that the activities strengthened their oral proficiency. Nevertheless, the overall results show that 90,2% of the participants feel that being exposed to English in their spare time has a positive effect on their

second language learning. Only 4,9% of the participants stated that they did not believe that the exposure made them better, and 4,9% were not certain.

Table 14 Results survey question 13

Do you choose to watch films, read books and/or listen to audio books in English to learn English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes, I do that consciously	10	24,4 %
No, I don't think about it	17	41,5 %
Sometimes	14	34,1 %

The majority of the responses to question 13 show that the participants seldom choose to engage in English activities with an intent to learn English (see table 14). 41,5% state that they do not think about it, while 24,4% of them do. The remaining 34,1% of the participants answer that they consciously choose to engage in English activities for learning sometimes. These numbers indicate that the participants are mostly exposed to English without choosing it, and, by 90,2% of the participants' account (see table 13), English activities make them better at English.

Table 15 Results survey question 14

Do you learn most English in school, or in your spare time?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
In school	6	14,6 %
In my spare time	23	56,1 %
Equally as much at school and in my spare time	7	17,1 %
I don't know	5	12,2 %

According to the participants, there is a staggering difference between where they learn the most English - in school or in their spare time (see table 15). Most of them (56,1%) believe that they learn most English in their spare time, whereas only 14,6% believe that they learn most of it in school. This indicates that they value English activities in their spare time more than formal English education in school. It might seem as though the participants have not considered how learning the basics have aided them in learning the structures and syntax of the English language. As for the remaining 12 participants, 7 of them (17,1%) stated that they learn equally as much English in school and in their spare time, and 5 of them (12,2%) did not know where they learnt most.

Table 16 Results survey question 15

During English lessons, do you learn best when the teacher speaks English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	10	24,4 %
No	18	43,9 %
I don't know	13	31,7 %

Table 17 Results survey question 16

How often does the teacher speak English during lessons?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Never	6	14,6 %
A little	26	63,4 %
Often	9	22 %
Always	0	0 %

When asked whether they learn best when their teacher speaks English or not (see table 16), most of the participants (43,9%) stated that they did not. 24,4% of the responses reflected that the teacher speaking English was beneficial for learning, while a surprising 31,7% did not

know. Although it is understandable that some learners do not think about how certain activities effect their learning, we did not expect such a high percentage of the participants responding in that manner. On the other hand, when asked about how often their teachers speak English in the classroom (see table 17), most of the participants (63,4%) stated that their teacher speak English occasionally, whereas 6% stated that the teacher never speaks English. The answers do indeed differ, due to the participants' individual perceptions on the matter. 9% stated that the teacher speaks English often, while none stated that the teacher always speaks English. In other words, their teachers seem not to speak much English during lessons.

Table 18 Results survey question 17

Do you feel that you get better at English by speaking English more often?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	22	53,7 %
No	5	12,2 %
I don't know	14	34,1 %

53,7% of the participants felt that their English proficiency is strengthened by speaking English more often (see table 18). Although this amounts to only about half of the responses, only 12,2% of the participants stated that speaking English more often does not increase their English proficiency. These numbers imply that the general perception of spoken English is that a higher frequency of it should be beneficial for English learning. As with the results from question 15, many participants (34,1%) could not conclusively answer question 17 with "Yes" or "No".

Table 19 Results survey question 18

How often do you speak English in school?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Never	8	19,5 %
A little	28	68,3 %
Often	5	12,2 %
Always	0	0 %

Table 20 Results survey question 19

How often do you speak English in your spare time?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Never	4	9,8 %
A little	22	53,7 %
Often	14	34,1 %
Always	1	2,4 %

When comparing the responses to questions 18 and 19 (see tables 19 and 20), the majority of the participants state that they speak a little English both in school (68,3%) and in their spare time (53,7%). The most interesting result is, however, that more of them seem to speak English often in their spare time (34,1%), compared to those who speak often in school (12,2%). Additionally, none of the participants submitted that they always spoke English in school, while one participant (2,4%) stated that they always do in their spare time. Another interesting result is that the number of participants who never speak English doubles in school (19,5%) compared to those who never speak English in their spare time (9,8%).

Table 21 Results survey question 20

When you watch films or TV shows in English, do you use Norwegian, English, or no subtitles?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I use Norwegian subtitles	21	51,2 %
I use English subtitles	4	9,8 %
I don't use subtitles	16	39 %

When asked what kind of subtitles the participants used when watching films or TV shows (see table 21), the majority of them (51,2%) reported primarily using Norwegian subtitles. Although 61% of the participants stated that they understand what is said in English films and TV shows without the use of subtitles (see table 22), it is not surprising that most of them still use Norwegian subtitles. Most TV shows and films that are broadcasted or streamed in Norway come with Norwegian subtitles already applied. Only 9,8% of the participants reported using English subtitles, while the remaining 39% of them claimed to not use any subtitles at all.

Table 22 Results survey question 21

When I watch English films or TV shows...

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I understand what is said, without reading subtitles	25	61 %
I read the subtitles when there are words I don't understand	12	29,3 %
I need to read the subtitles to understand what is said	3	7,3 %
I don't watch films or tv shows in English	1	2,4 %

When the participants were asked whether they use subtitles when they watch English-language films or TV shows (see table 22), 61% reported that they understand everything that is said without having to read the subtitles. 29,3% stated that they use and read subtitles when there are words they do not understand, whereas only 7,3% needed subtitles exclusively to understand what is said. One of the participants (2,4%) reported that they did watch films in English. This indicates that the vast majority of the participants understand the English language well enough not to rely on subtitles while watching films or tv shows in English.

Table 23 Results survey question 22

When I listen to English music...

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I understand what the song is about	21	51,2 %
I understand some of what the song is about	16	39 %
I don't listen to the lyrics	3	7,3 %
I don't listen to music in English	1	2,4 %

Approximately half (51,2%) of the participants who answered the survey reported that they fully understand English songs and what the lyrics are about (see table 23). The results also show that 39% of them understand some of the English lyrics, but not all of it, while 7,3% of them reported not listening to the lyrics at all. Although English music is widespread in the media, occurring in films, TV shows, radio, etc., 2,4% of the participants reported never listening to English music at all. In retrospect we have realized that we should have included an answer option for “I don’t understand what the song is about”, as this might have been a more accurate answer for some of the participants.

Table 24 Results survey question 23

When I play English TV- or computer games...

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I understand what is said and what the story is about	26	63,4 %
I understand some of what is said and what the story is about	9	22 %
I understand the story, but not what is said	0	0 %
I don't care about the story or what is being said	2	4,9 %
I don't play TV- or computer games in English	4	9,8 %

As for the participants' understanding of the English language when they play TV- or computer games (see table 24), 26 (63,4%) of them reported that they understand everything that is said and what the story is about. 22% stated that they understand some of the input they receive from playing the games. None of the participants reported that they understand the story, but not the words when playing. As some only play for the pure enjoyment of games, and do not bother with trying to understand the language content, only 4,9% stated that they do not care about both the story and what is being said, which is interesting. In the planning stages of this survey, we consciously added this answer option because we hypothesised that many players, if not most, play games without paying attention to the story. We were, as shown in these results, sorely mistaken. The remaining 9,8% reported that they do not play TV or computer games in English. Additionally, we were positively surprised by the number of participants that play games in English as a staggering 90,2% reported that they do.

Table 25 Results survey question 24

When I read an English book...

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I understand the text in its entirety	6	14,6 %
I understand most of the text	21	51,2 %
I understand a bit of the text, and need to look up certain words	4	9,8 %
I understand nothing	0	0 %
I don't read books in English	10	24,4 %

In contrast to the previous questions, regarding comprehension in various English activities (TV shows and films, music, and TV- or computer games), few participants reported that they understand the text in English books in its entirety (see table 25). Only 14,6% of them reported understanding everything. About half (51,2%) of the participants understand most of the text in English books, and 9,8% stated that they understand some of the text but need to look up certain words that they do not understand. An interesting find in these results were the number of participants (24,4%) who reported not engaging in reading English books. Compared to the previous English activities, TV shows and films at 2,4%, music at 2,4% and TV- and computer games at 9,8%, reading English books can, by the reports given during this survey, be considered less popular. This did not come as a surprise as the results from question 10 (see table 11) already show that English activities containing a combination of both audio and video is more popular among the participants.

Table 26 Results survey question 25:

When I listen to an English audiobook...

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
I understand everything that is said	13	31,7 %
I understand some of what is said	9	22 %
I understand a bit of what is said	2	4,9 %
I understand nothing	1	2,4 %
I don't listen to audiobooks in English	16	39 %

When it comes to the participants' level of comprehension when they listen to audiobooks in English (see table 26), 31,7% stated that they understand everything that is said, whereas 22% reported that they understand some of what is said. 4,9% of them understand a bit of what is said, while one participant (2,4%) understand nothing when listening to audiobooks. The majority of the participants (39%) reported that they do not listen to audiobooks at all. In the previous table (see table 26), 24,4% of the participants reported that they did not read books in English at all. This correlates well to the number of participants who do not listen to audiobooks in English (39%), as they seem to enjoy and spend more time on activities that combine the use audio and video (see table 11).

Table 27 Results survey question 26

Do you have a friend or family member whose native language is English?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Yes	7	17,1 %
No	34	82,9 %

Table 28 Results survey question 27

If yes, do you speak English with each other?

Answer option	Amount	Percentage
Always	0	0 %
Sometimes	3	42,8 %
A little	2	28,5 %
Never	2	28,5 %

Of the 41 participants who responded to the survey, only seven (17,1%) of them answered that they have a friend or family member whose native language is English (see table 27). Of those seven, three (42,8%) stated that they sometimes speak English with them (see table 28), two (28,5%) stated that they speak a little English with them, and the remaining 2 (28,5%) never speak English with them.

4.2 Focus group interview

In this section the results from the focus group interview are presented. As previously stated, the questions from the focus group interview and their respective results are presented in the order the questions were asked during the interview (see table 2). The results have been tabulated and analysed in that same order.

Table 29 Results interview question 1

How long have you worked as an English teacher in the Norwegian school system?

Respondent	Answer
R1	In their third year as an English teacher. Master's degree in English.
R2	In their sixth year as an English teacher. 30 study points in English.
R1	Study points does not matter as much in middle school. It is the pedagogical aspects that are most challenging in middle school.

R2 Agrees. They have no use for complex language knowledge in primary school.

Keywords: Pedagogical aspects, complex language knowledge

When the interviewees were asked about their experience as working English teachers in the Norwegian school system (see table 29), they both answered differently. R1 had the least experience of the two, only having worked for three years at the time of the interview, while R2 had six years of experience. Their qualifications also differed substantially. R1 had completed their master's degree in English during their teacher training, while R2 had completed teacher training with the minimum required amount of study points (30sp.) to be allowed to teach English in middle school. However, their views on the required competence to teach English to learners in middle school were similar. Both indicated that study points and complex language knowledge is unnecessary, but rather emphasised the importance of pedagogy. In other words, a focus on classroom management is far more important than formal language competence when teaching English to 6th grade second language learners.

Table 30 Results interview question 2a-c

2a: Do you believe that English is an important language/subject for Norwegian pupils to learn?

2b: Why/why not?

2c: What do you think the pupils answered when they were asked?

Respondent	Answer
R1	(Q2a) Absolutely.
R2	Extremely important.
R1	(Q2b) Might need it, and even though they might not think about, they need it already. One of the most important subjects they have.
R2	Will always encounter English throughout life. Important.
R1	(Q2c) A natural part of their daily lives. They might not think that it is important, but I believe they think it has always been there and coexists beside the Norwegian language.

R2 Not as confident using English, even though they use English words in their daily lives. I do not believe they are as confident in English as they are in Norwegian. They use it without thinking about it.

Keywords: Extremely important, English throughout life, need for English, English and Norwegian coexists, less confident in English

When asked about the importance of the English language for Norwegian learners (see table 30), the interviewees were in full agreement. It was apparent that they considered English to be an essential skill in an ever-globalising world. As for the follow-up question “why/why not?” (see table 30), R1 considered English to be the most important subject they have, as they need to know English to understand the vast amount of input they are exposed to, which often is in English. R2 answered that learners will always encounter English throughout their lives, thus making it even more important. When it came to the interviewees’ assumptions for what the learners had answered on the same question (see table 30), R1 stated that the learners would most likely say that English is always present, but that they do not necessarily think too much about it. R2, on the other hand, assumed that they display less confidence in using English compared to Norwegian. However, R2 was confident about the fact that they use English without being consciously aware of it.

Table 31 Results interview question 3a-c

3a: When you teach English, do you primarily speak Norwegian or English with your pupils?

3b: Why/why not?

3c: Do you believe speaking English to learners who do not understand everything that is being said has value for their learning?

Respondent	Answer
R2	(Q3a) Speaks mostly Norwegian, but they wish to speak more English in the future. Tries to start off the lessons in English. Uses Norwegian to make them understand. Answers learner-questions in English and repeats the answer in Norwegian.
R1	Agrees. It is difficult to know whether the learners understand or not, when explaining things in English. They have to explain it once

again later in class. To build a culture for speaking English in the classroom, it must be done from the start of a semester.

R1	(Q3b) It is difficult to implement.
R2	The act of switching to only speaking English for English lessons is probably harder for the learners than the teachers.
R1	Oral activities demand more time and planning from the teacher.
R2	(Q3c) Yes, the more English you hear, the more natural it becomes.
R2	There might be much English they hear but do not fully understand, while playing games or watching movies. They pick up pieces of the language here and there.

Keywords: Mostly Norwegian, Norwegian for comprehension, Norwegian for efficiency, translates, English-speaking culture, hard to implement, harder for learners, time consuming, input is positive, acquire piece by piece

The teachers primarily speak more Norwegian than English during English lessons (see table 31). They both try to speak English whenever they can, however, they often tend to use Norwegian to make the learners understand them. R1 adds that it is difficult to know if the learners understand everything if English is spoken. Speaking primarily English usually results in additional explanations afterwards. However, when asked about the significance of speaking English even when the learners do not understand fully (see table 31), R2 claimed that English becomes natural for the learners as they hear more of it. They acquire the language piece by piece through different sources of input, even when not fully comprehending the content. Nevertheless, as the learners' first language is Norwegian, using the first language guarantees comprehension in most settings. Although some learners might understand and benefit from English input alone, others might not.

In order to establish an English-speaking environment in the classroom, R1 stated that this must be implemented from the beginning of a semester. When asked why (see table 31), R1 emphasised the difficulty of implementing it. R2 followed up by stating that switching to speaking English exclusively for English lessons is challenging for the learners when they normally only speak Norwegian in school. Additionally, R1 explained that oral exercises and activities are time consuming for the teachers.

Table 32 Results interview question 3d-f

3d: Do you think your pupils believe the teacher speaking English to be important for their learning?

3e: Why do the learners answer that they learn best when the teacher speaks Norwegian?

3f: Do the learners become more comfortable when you speak Norwegian?

Respondent	Answer
R2	(Q3d) It is uncertain whether they notice when we speak English or not.
R1	No, I think they answered that we speak English seldom. Additionally, they probably say that they learn more when teachers speak Norwegian.
R1	(Q3e) It might be based on confidence.
R1	(Q3f) Yes, but they need time for practicing speaking English to break the barrier and become comfortable speakers.
R2	Many might play and speak English in their spare time, but for those who do not do this, school is the only arena where they speak English and become more comfortable. If they have become confident speakers of English in school, they can more easily use the language when travelling or communicating with foreigners. It is probably wise to encourage them to speak English outside of school as well.

Keywords: Unaware of spoken English, learn more from spoken Norwegian, confidence, practice for comfort, break the barrier, school as only English arena, confidence for communication, encourage speaking English

According to R2, it is uncertain whether the learners notice when the teacher speaks English during English lessons (see table 32). Moreover, R1 believes that the pupils think they speak English rather seldom, in addition to the general belief that they think they learn more when the teacher speaks Norwegian. The results from survey question 16 (see table 17) indicate that most of the learners (63,4%) believe their teachers speak English “a little”, which correlates with R1’s assumption. Additionally, according to the reports from survey question 15 (see table 16), 43,9% of the learners did indeed attribute most learning to lessons where the teacher

speaks Norwegian. When asked why the learners might believe this (see table 32), R1 assumed it was a question of confidence. Both interviewees expressed that they felt the learners became more comfortable when they speak Norwegian in English lessons. However, R1 added that although the learners are more comfortable with Norwegian, they need time for practicing English and becoming more comfortable speakers themselves (see table 32). For some learners school is the only arena where they speak and listen to English, according to R2. This increases the importance of spending school hours to practice English to strengthen their confidence in communicational situations.

Table 33 Results interview question 4

English teachers in Norwegian schools are, according to Munden (2017), privileged because Norwegian pupils are exposed to the English language daily through a vast variation of different media (films, TV shows, social media, audiobooks, etc.). What do you think about this claim?

Respondent	Answer
R1	Yes. This is essential for the northern part of Europe (Scandinavia). In other European countries, such as Italy and Germany, dubbing is more prevalent, while there is less dubbing in Scandinavia.
R2	Yes. The learners are familiar with the language before they even attend first grade. This is because of the availability of English media.
R2	We are privileged as teachers because Norwegian learners are exposed to English daily.
R1	If everything containing the English language was dubbed, we would have lost a lot of learning potential.

Keywords: Exposure essential, dubbing, familiar with English, English media availability

According to our interviewees, English teachers in Norwegian school are indeed privileged, due to the massive amount of language input the learners are exposed to in their spare time (see table 33). R1 addressed the less frequent dubbing of English media in Norway, compared to other European countries such as Germany and Italy. R2 described the benefits of less dubbing by claiming that the learners are familiar with the language even before they attend

1st grade. Teachers in Norway nowadays would have lost a significant amount of learning potential for their learners if all English media was exclusively dubbed.

Table 34 Results interview question 5a-b

5a: Have you noticed a significant change in Norwegian pupils' English proficiency the last 10-20 years?

5b: Have you noticed any differences in how English is taught now as opposed to when you yourself attended middle school?

Respondent	Answer
R2	(Q5a) For the six years they have worked in school, the frequency of English words appearing in conversation has increased, due to apps such as TikTok. Even though they use the words, it does not necessarily mean they understand them.
R1	Times have changed since for example 1985.
R1	(Q5b) Yes. When I was young, we learnt English with emphasis on vocabulary tests and cramming words and phrases. This almost never occurs nowadays.
R2	I have enjoyed English since secondary school, and this exposure to English has helped me increase my overall English grades tremendously. English activities outside of school has been positive for my learning. The learners have that opportunity as well. English content is more accessible now, as opposed to before when you had to download or purchase content yourself.
R1	It is very available.

Keywords: Increased English word frequency, TikTok, use does not equal understanding, times have changed, emphasis on vocabulary, English exposure helped, English activities positive, more accessible English content now

When asked about whether the interviewees had noticed a significant change in Norwegian pupils' English proficiency the last 10-20 years (see table 34), R2 stated that the frequency of English words that appear in conversation between their learners has risen. They attribute this

rise in frequency to apps, such as TikTok, where most of the content includes conversational English. R1 also stated that times have changed since for example the 1980's. When it comes to eventual differences in the teaching of English nowadays compared to the past (see table 34), both interviewees reported interesting experiences and thoughts about their own English training in school. R1 said that the emphasis back then was put more on vocabulary tests and grammar cramming. It is therefore fair to assume that they insinuate that there was more focus on written proficiency in school before, according to R1's statements. R2 also presented an example of their English training, which was characterised by large amounts of exposure to the English language through leisure time activities such as listening to podcasts. They had to, however, download or purchase the content for themselves, whereas today's selection of varied media is more available and often free to use.

Table 35 Results interview question 6

To what extent, in your belief, is this exposure essential for the development of Norwegian pupils' English proficiency?

Respondent	Answer
R1	I believe it is positive that they are exposed to English as much as they are, but they are also exposed to profanity and slang words. But they primarily acquire a lot, which is positive.
R2	We could also have managed to teach them English without the high levels of exposure today. Then, we would have to focus more on basic skills and words. When they start attending school, they have heard many English words from before. On the other hand, it would have been more challenging to be a teacher if they did not possess any English skills at all.
R1	To learn a language you have never heard before would be more challenging.
R2	Learning English is not as frightening when people around you already know it.

Keywords: Exposure positive, slang words and profanity, exposure aids acquisition, exposure non-essential, pre-formed vocabulary, common language

According to the responses retrieved from question 6 (see table 35), the exposure to English through media containing the English language can affect the learners' English proficiency both positively and negatively. The positive effect is an increased amount of acquisition, and the potential negative effect is the possibility for picking up slang words and profanities, according to R1. R2 believes that the increased amount of exposure is positive as well, but claims that teachers in Norway would still be able to teach their learners English. They would, however, need to shift the focus of the training towards exercises emphasising basic skills and vocabulary. While they claim they would be able to teach their learners, R2 still admits the task would be challenging if their learners had no prior knowledge or experience with the language. As stated by R1, learning a new language without ever hearing it before would be extremely challenging for the learners. R2 also chimes in and mentions that learning a language is less frightening when the surrounding social environment knows English as well.

Table 36 Results interview question 7

What do you think the pupils themselves think about the effect of exposure to English outside of school?

Respondent	Answer
R1	I do not believe that they think about it.
R2	English is simply just there, always. I do not know if they think much about it.
R1	I believe that they think about that English is used, but not why.

Keywords: Not conscious, English always present

R1 and R2 agreed when it came to their learners' perceptions on the effect exposure has on their attainment of the English language (see table 36). They both believed that their learners did not think about the effect of exposure at all. English simply exists alongside the learners, but they do not necessarily pay any mind to why it does.

Table 37 Results interview question 8a-c

8a: What do you think the learners have answered to the question regarding where they learn English best?

8b: Our survey shows that (show results from survey questions 12, 13, and 14). Are you surprised by these results?

8c: Why/why not?

Respondent	Answer
R1	(Q8a) Some have probably responded that they learn best at home. While they spend only 2-3 hours learning English in school, some of them might spend 6+ hours playing games at home, constantly exposed to the language. They receive a lot of quantity training at home.
R1	(Q8b) It does not come as a surprise.
R2	It does not come as a surprise. Even though it is probably not correct grammar that they learn, they will acquire more informal English. I think it is positive.
R1	There are few who considers the learning potential from English activities outside of school. None of them launches TikTok for English learning.
R2	Agrees. It happens without them reflecting upon the effect. The more proficient learners probably choose to engage in English activities for learning.
R2	(Q8c) When they spend more time on English activities at home, they might feel that these make them better in English, compared to the few hours they get in school.
R2	The learners who believe that they learn most in their spare time probably have dislike for working in school, which results in less learning. Then, they rather pick up language at home.

Keywords: Learn best in their spare time, time difference, constant exposure, quantity training, unsurprising, informal word acquisition, not conscious, TikTok, proficient learners choose activities for learning, time equals proficiency, time difference, disliking school equals less learning

Question 8a, 8b and 8c of the interview regarded where the learners learn English best and the expectations the teachers had towards the survey results (see table 37). R1 was relatively certain that some reported that they learn best through spare time activities. They justified this by stating that some learners spend a considerable amount of time being exposed to English in their spare time, while they are only exposed for two to three hours in school per week. When shown the results from survey questions 12, 13 and 14 (see tables 13, 14 and 15), the interviewees were not surprised about the fact that over half (56,1%) of their learners reported learning most English in their spare time. R2 questioned the learning potential of the activities and stated that the learners probably do not learn proper grammar from them. R1 elaborated further by stating they believed that the learners are not necessarily aware of all the learning that takes place when they engage in such activities. On the other hand, R2 implied that some specific learners indeed might choose to engage in such activities for the purpose of learning.

When asked to justify why they were unsurprised by these results, R2 brought up the time aspect once again, claiming that the learners probably feel that the increased number of hours in their spare time amount to more learning compared to the few they get in school. They also added that learners who generally dislike attending school believe they learn most in their spare time. This dislike of school activities might single-handedly result in less learning.

Table 38 Results interview question 9

Our survey also shows that (show results from survey questions 17, 18, and 19). What do you think about this?

Respondent	Answer
R1	It is odd that some learners do not think speaking English often helps their language learning.
R2	If we (teachers) would speak English more often, we would also become better at it.
R2	It is correct that the majority of them speak a little English in school. Those who report never speaking English in school are probably those who actively choose to not speak English, and that rather speaks Norwegian when asked to speak English.

R2	(About learners who reported never speaking English in school): It depends on how comfortable they are, and who they communicate with. It might be easier to speak with a person you play games with who does not see you. The lack of demands, that the teacher imparts on the learners in school, such as “Now you will discuss this ...” makes speaking English easier. Additionally, choosing the topic to speak of yourself might be easier.
R1	It is a different setting. A bit less formal.
R2	The learners might think it is scarier to speak English in the classroom, as others might hear them speaking there.

Keywords: Speaking for learning, choose not to speak English, comfort and interlocutors, demands interfere, topic-freedom, different settings, anxiety

The interviewees were surprised by some of the learners’ response to question 17 in the survey (see table 18), where 12,2% reported that they did not believe in speaking English more often increases their English proficiency. R2 claimed that even teachers will eventually become more proficient in English when they speak it more often (see table 38). Both R1 and R2 were not surprised by the results from survey question 18 (see table 19), as most of their learners do not speak English during lessons, unless they are asked to. R2 explained the number of learners who reported never speaking English in school (19,5%) to probably be those who actively choose to speak Norwegian when asked to respond in English.

The results from survey question 19 (see table 20) illustrate that a significantly smaller portion of the learners reported never speaking English in their spare time (9,8%), compared to those who never speak English in school (19,5%, see table 19). This emerges as a matter of comfort, as many learners might feel anxious when speaking English in school, as opposed to freely choosing who to interact with in their spare time, according to R2. Additionally, the learners are also free to choose which topic to confer about and which words to use when speaking outside of school. R1 mentioned the setting differences: Formal settings versus informal settings.

Table 39 Results interview question 10

Do you have any additional thoughts about this subject which, in your opinion, could aid this research further?

Respondent	Answer
R1	I believe that our learners generally are on a lower level of English proficiency than what is expected of 6 th graders. There are more weak than strong learners.
R2	Even though they perform well on glossary tests, the words they are tested in are easy.
R1	We have previously assessed our learners and the results show that they should have been better in many areas.

Keywords: Lower level, less proficient, glossary, room for improvement

At the end of the interview, the interviewees were asked if they had any final remarks which potentially could aid the research further (see table 39). R1 and R2 both responded that they perceived their group of learners to be generally less proficient in English than the average Norwegian 6th grade second language learner. R1 elaborated further by stating that some of their learners were sufficiently proficient for their age group, but that the majority of them were not. This perception of the learners was based upon results from previous tests conducted with the learners. If their learners were more proficient, the results from the survey might have turned out differently. However, the aim of this case study has never been to measure the proficiency of this group of Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners, but rather to illuminate learner- and teacher perceptions regarding the effect that exposure to the English language has on this group of learners' English proficiency.

5.0 Discussion

This section will compare and discuss the results from the survey and focus group interview, in addition to backing it up with the relevant theoretical perspectives presented in the section for the literature review. We will discuss the findings we found most significant to our thesis.

Table 40 The importance of the English language

Learner perceptions (quantitative)	Teacher responses (qualitative)	Concepts
Important (90%)	Extremely important for learners.	English as a lingua franca

A staggering 90% of the learners believed that English is an important language to know. The perceptions of the interviewees did, unsurprisingly, not differ to those of the learners as they both agreed strongly upon the fact that English is extremely important for learners and probably one of the most important subjects in school. Looking at the justifications for why the English language is important to know, the learners were generally like-minded. Most of their reports suggested that common language (51%) and travel (33%) were the basis for English's importance. In other words, based on these numbers the learners see value in English due to its relevance for the ease of communicating with people of other nationalities. It is safe to assume that the learners acknowledge English as the current language for international communication, seeing as they report needing it for travel and communication with foreigners.

This important aspect of knowing the English language, brought forward by the learners, is already known as ELF (English as a lingua franca). ELF refers to “communication in English between speakers with different first languages” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339). In other words, knowing the English language is a great advantage when attempting to communicate with other people, as opposed to other languages (Crystal, 2003). The interviewees also elaborated on the importance of knowing English and suggested that it is important due to its presence in the world and that there exists an inevitable need to know it. This “presence in the world” the interviewees speak of might refer to the vast amount of people who speak English, either as their first or second language. According to the EF English Proficiency Index there are an estimated 2,5 billion English speakers in the world, where an approximate 400 million of them have English as their first language (EF Education First, 2022). With an approximated 8 billion people in the world and such a high number of English speakers, the chances of encountering the language in communication is high. The “presence” the interviewees mentioned might also refer to the enormous presence that the English language has in different media.

Table 41 The importance of exposure to input

Learner perceptions (quantitative)	Teacher responses (qualitative)	Concepts
Exposure is beneficial: 90%	Exposure is essential	Input hypothesis
	Familiarised with English	Exposure
	Exposure aids acquisition	Transfer-appropriate processing
		Language learning

There is no doubt about the benefit that input through exposure to English has on ESL learners' English acquisition. Exposure to the target language is essential for learning a new language (Bjørke & Grønn, 2016, p. 36). The results from the survey show that 90% of the learners also believe that exposure to the English language, through various activities, increases their proficiency. Although some of the learners (19,5%) only believed exposure through activities increased their oral proficiency, the majority (70,7%) saw a benefit to both written and oral proficiency. It is no surprise that some state that exposure exclusively aids oral proficiency, as most of the reported input was activities that included both audio and video combined. They might believe that being exposed to spoken English only helps their oral proficiency, and that they need exposure to written English to become better at writing. This might be true, due to transfer-appropriate processing. When a learner is mainly exposed to spoken English, they can more easily relate to the acquired information in an oral setting, compared to applying it to a written setting (Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

Similar to the statements given by Bjørke and Grønn (2016), the interviewees also regarded exposure as essential to learn a new language. They stated that learners become familiarised with English through exposure outside of school, and that this helps when learning language in school. In other words, teachers benefit from the input learners are exposed to outside of school, as this leads to additional English acquisition (Munden, 2017). However, some of the language the learners are exposed to might be beyond the level of language they have acquired. According to the results of survey questions 20 to 25 (see tables 21 to 26), some learners reported that they did not fully comprehend the language they are presented in the English activities they engage in. According to Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, being exposed to language which includes acquired language and language yet to

be acquired (i+1) is essential for new acquisition to take place. In other words, even though the learners do not fully comprehend the language they are exposed to, the exposure provides i+1 which might lead to language acquisition. The input hypothesis correlates with the responses given to interview question 3c (see table 31), where the interviewees were asked if speaking English to learners is beneficial even if they do not fully understand the message, R2 stated that English becomes more natural the more you hear it and that learners acquire language piece by piece.

Despite the many positive aspects of exposure, there might also be some negative ones. During the interview (see table 35), R1 claimed that English activities potentially might expose the learners to profanity and informal language, which might be unfortunate. If the majority of the interactions learners have with the English language include frequent use of “unwanted” language, the learners might start using that same language. In accordance with the statements of Piaget (1951), interactions between the learner, their language environment and the knowledge acquired through these interactions result in language development. Therefore, the chances of acquiring “unwanted” language are high, as most of the available free content online is monitored by no-one other than the creator. As the learners report that they spend between 2-90 hours per week engaging with English content at home (see table 12), as opposed to the two to three hours they get at school per week, it is likely that some learners interact more with “bad” content than “good” content.

Table 42 Time spent being exposed to English

Learner perceptions (quantitative)	Teacher responses (qualitative)	Concepts
36% spend between 21-40 hours per week	2-3 hours per week	Second language
	Time equals proficiency	acquisition/learning
	Time consumption	Input hypothesis
		Monitor hypothesis

In Norway, the amount of time allocated towards the English subject in middle school is approximately two to three hours per school week (Udir, 2020). This number pales in comparison to the reported number of hours the learners spend engaging with activities including the English language in their spare time. Unsurprisingly this group of 6th graders

reported spending between 2-90 hours, where the majority of them (36%) spend between 21-40 hours per week. According to the interviewees, time spent exposed to English equals increased learner proficiency. This statement correlates well with Lightbown and Spada's (2020) explanation regarding how first language learners acquire language. Through exposure to thousands of hours of language input, first language learners develop their language piece by piece. It is safe to assume that second language acquisition benefits from time in much the same way as first language acquisition, however the time allocated towards teaching English to Norwegian 6th graders in school is limited. It is highly probable, therefore, that the vast number of hours the learners spend exposed to comprehensible input in their spare time is essential for their second language acquisition. This in turn allows teachers to focus on language learning, through conscious attention to form and rules (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). The importance of both the language acquired through exposure and the rules learned in school become apparent when attempting to communicate. Acquired language is used to produce the words needed, while learned rules and form are used to edit those words into correct utterances, according to Krashen's (1982) monitor hypothesis.

56% of the learners reported that they learn most English in their spare time. This is unsurprising, as all the learners also reported spending an equal number or more hours engaging with English in their spare time compared to in school. The interviewees also considered it to be unsurprising that the learners value the quantity of training at home more than that in school. There might be a touch of some truth to the learners' beliefs, as the English training during the three years in middle school amounts to a total of 228 hours (Udir, 2020), while the learners' self-reported yearly exposure amounts to between 104 to 4680 hours in their spare time (see table 12). Although these numbers indicate a high amount of exposure outside of school, further research is required to determine whether the learners acquire and possibly learn more in their spare time or in school.

Table 43 The significance of engaging in English activities

Learner perceptions (quantitative)	Teacher responses (qualitative)	Concepts
YouTube: 90%	English availability	Second language
Films and TV shows: 85%	Increased word frequency	acquisition/learning
Games: 73%		ZPD
		Exposure

While all the activities presented in the survey were represented in the learners' answers to which of them they engaged with in their spare time (see table 11), three of the activities stood out as most popular among them; YouTube (90%), Films and TV shows (85%) and Games (73%). These three types of media share certain similarities, which might be contributing factors to why they are so popular among the learners. One similarity is that they are examples of audio-visual media, media where audio and video are combined to create the final product. The audio-visual nature of these activities might be the reason why they are so popular, as the story is presented with both audio and visual aids. This audio-visual media might also be beneficial for the learners, making the language more comprehensible, seeing as they hear English words while presented with visual context (Tarone & Swierzbins, 2019). Additionally, according to Krashen (1982), context is essential for understanding. Most of the learners (90%) also believe that English activities increase their English proficiency (see table 13). The audio-visual and context-based nature of the most popular activities might possibly be a huge contributor to their increased learning. As the interviewees stated, English content is easily available these days (see tables 33 and 34), making it easier for the learners to access content they can learn from.

Another similarity is that the activities mostly are characterized by one-way communication, except for some games where the players can communicate with each other. Although one-way communication is a great source of exposure to input, the learners possibly miss out on the benefits of two-way communication. Two-way communication in interactions between a learner and their language environment is essential to successfully learn a language; a learner simply cannot learn a language properly through one-way exposure to the target language exclusively (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of ZPD, the support gained from an interlocutor in a conversation will contribute to the

increase of the learner's potential for a higher level of language performance. Munden (2017) also emphasises the importance of practicing communication for attaining fluency when they engage in authentic communication outside the classroom. An example from the focus group interview which illustrates the possible negative effects of one-way communication is that the learner's English word frequency increases, but that they do not fully understand the words (see table 34). This can also be tied towards behaviouristic views on mimicry (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). However, mimicry has no value when the learners do not know the meaning of the words they are mimicking.

Table 44 The impact of learner motivation for increasing proficiency

Learner perceptions (quantitative)	Teacher responses (qualitative)	Concepts
Like English as a language: 93%	Anxiety	Motivation
Like working with English in school: 59%	Comfort and interlocutor Dislike for school	Affective filter hypothesis

When the learners were asked about if they like English as a language, 93% of them responded positively. This indicates that they indeed enjoy engaging with the language or see value in knowing it. As 90% of the learners think English is important to know, this does not come as a surprise. This might indicate that they possess high levels of intrinsic motivation for learning the language (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). The motivation might be knowledge-based, as the learners might find knowing the language useful to understand the English they encounter throughout their lives. The learners might also want to be able to communicate successfully in English, which motivates them to learn. In other words, such learners have an inner drive, an intrinsic motivation, to engage themselves with the English language for enhancing their language skills. Without proper motivation, the task of learning a language might be incredibly difficult. On the other hand, when the learners were asked if they like working with English in school, 59% of them reported that they liked it. This is indeed interesting, and it suggests that even though they do like English as a language, they do not necessarily like working with it in school.

One of the possible reasons for the increased share of participants who dislike working with English in school is possibly connected to anxiety for speaking in front of others in school, according to the interviewees (see table 38). Even though many of the learners (39%) reported that they speak English in voice chats (see table 11), this setting is different as the learners themselves choose who they interact with and the topic of conversation. In school, the teacher demands and chooses the topics the learners should talk about, according to the interviewees, which again can cause anxiety and reluctance to speak. The learners' motivation and levels of anxiety affect how successfully they acquire language in communicative settings. High motivation and low levels of anxiety, e.g., in a private chat room where the learner speaks with a friend, usually facilitate language acquisition if comprehensible input is present. On the other hand, low motivation and high levels of anxiety inhibits the process of delivering the input to the language acquisition device, even when comprehensible input is abundant (Krashen, 1982). To summarise, comfort, anxiety, motivation, communicative settings and liking or disliking school might affect how effectively language is acquired and is possibly the reason why some of the learners reported not liking working with English in school. This might in turn affect whether the learners choose to engage in communicative activities in English in the classroom.

6.0 Conclusion

This thesis has investigated how Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners and their teachers perceive the effect exposure outside of school has on their English proficiency. In addition, this study set out to identify the amount of time learners spend engaging with activities that contains the English language, as well as which activities they engage with. It is evident that this case study is limited by the small number of subjects that participated in the surveys and interview, and that the findings from this research cannot be generalized to a wider context. This study does, however, provide useful information about this group of 6th grade learners and their teachers' perceptions on the effect exposure has on the learners' English proficiency. Many of their perceptions correlate closely with theory on language acquisition and exposure, however some findings indicate that further investigation would be beneficial.

The results show that the learners and teachers strongly agree that English is an important language to know. The value of English was closely related to its relevance for communication, either while traveling or as a common language. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that learners do indeed perceive a positive effect of

exposure to English outside of school for their proficiency. While the vast majority of them believe it strengthens both written and oral skills, a substantial amount only believe exposure helps their oral skills. This is most likely due to transfer-appropriate processing. Exposure familiarises the learners with English, which in turn aids the process of language learning in school. The study has also found that there is value in exposing learners to language beyond what they fully understand, as they acquire language piece by piece, which is also supported by the input hypothesis. Moreover, the high number of hours the learners allocate towards engaging with English activities expose them to large quantities of comprehensible input, which reportedly is essential for English teaching in Norway. This, in turn, allows the teachers to focus their teaching more towards form and rules, as much of the input has already been provided elsewhere. Due to the vast variety of media learners engage with, the chance of them interacting with a higher degree of “bad” content increases. Thus, there is a high probability that some learners acquire informal slang and profanity, which can be unfortunate.

Another significant finding relates to the most popular type of English media the learners engage with: Audio-visual media. This type of media can be considered to be highly effective for language acquisition and a contributor to learning, as the combination of sound and picture provides language input in context. Such audio-visual and context-based media are, under the right circumstances, positive contributors of comprehensible input for language learning. If we factor in the vastly greater amount of time learners engage with English in their spare time compared to in school, in combination with the previously mentioned benefits of English media, the implications of spare-time activities should not be taken lightly. Most of these activities do, however, not include two-way communication, which has proven benefits of increasing learner proficiency.

It has become apparent that almost all the learners regard English as both important and likeable. Interestingly, this is not synonymous with an appreciation of working with English in school. Based on the results, it is highly likely that the activities they engage with in their spare time are fuelled by intrinsic motivation, whereas the extrinsic factors of in-school activities are more demanding, which might decrease some learners’ motivation. Factors such as comfort, anxiety, motivation, communicative settings, a liking or disliking of school affects the effectivity of language acquisition. It might also be safe to assume that the high number of learners who reported that they do not like working with English in school is because of one or more of these factors.

Even though this research is based upon a single case study of two groups of 6th grade ESL learners and their teachers, including limited views on a significant topic in English language teaching, the implication of this study is to bring attention to the importance of the exposure to English that happens outside of school. As previously mentioned, the scope of this study is rather narrow, but it offers valuable insights into the perceptions of some Norwegian 6th grade ESL learners and their teachers on the topic. The findings that have emerged can and should also be beneficial for other researchers, teachers, and future teachers in the English language field. Further work needs to be done to widen the scope and possibly establish substantial generalised findings in a wider context. It is a well-known fact that exposure is essential for acquiring language, but more extensive research is needed to determine whether exposure to English activities also have significant implications for language learning in Norway. This study has only scraped the surface of exposure's implications on ESL learning in Norway, and there is still plenty potential for further research.

7.0 Literature

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10.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey-Nettskjema.no

Side 1

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne *

Hvor gammel er du? *

Hvilket kjønn identifiserer du deg som? *

☐ Gutt

☐ Jente

☐ Ønsker ikke å oppgi

Syns du det er viktig å kunne engelsk? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? *

Liker du engelsk som språk? *

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

Liker du å jobbe med engelsk på skolen? *

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

Verdi



Hvor komfortabel føler du deg med å snakke og skrive engelsk? *

Ikke komfortabel

Noe komfortabel

Veldig komfortabel

1

2

3

4

5

Verdi



Side 3

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne *

Hvilke aktiviteter bruker du tid på i fritiden, hvor du lytter til, skriver, snakker eller leser engelsk? *

Du kan velge flere aktiviteter.

- ☐ Filmer og TV-serier på engelsk
- ☐ Bøker på engelsk
- ☐ Lydbøker på engelsk
- ☐ TV- og dataspill på engelsk
- ☐ Sosiale medier (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, osv.)
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Streaming (Twitch, osv.)
- ☐ Voicechat (Discord, Messenger, Skype, Omegle, osv.)

Omtrent hvor mye tid, per uke, bruker du på aktiviteter som inneholder engelsk på fritiden? *

Svar i antall timer.

Det er 24 timer i ett døgn, og 168 timer i én uke.

Man er gjerne våken omtrent 112 timer i uken.

Føler du at disse aktivitetene gjør deg bedre til å skrive og snakke engelsk? *

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Ja, men bare til å snakke bedre engelsk
- ☒ Ja, men bare til å skrive bedre engelsk
- ☐ Nei
- ☐ Vet ikke

Velger du å se på film, lese bøker, lytte til lydbok på engelsk for å lære deg engelsk? *

- ☐ Ja, det gjør jeg bevisst
- ☐ Nei, det tenker jeg ikke på
- ☐ Noen ganger

Lærer du mest engelsk på skolen, eller på fritiden? *

- ☐ På skolen
- ☐ På fritiden
- ☐ Like mye på skolen og fritiden
- ☐ Vet ikke

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne *

Lærer du best i engelsktimen når læreren snakker engelsk? *

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

☐ Vet ikke

Hvor ofte snakker læreren engelsk i engelsktimene på skolen? *

☐ Ingenting

☐ Litt

☐ Ofte

☐ Hele tiden

Føler du at du blir bedre i engelsk ved å selv snakke engelsk ofte? *

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

☐ Vet ikke

Hvor ofte snakker du engelsk på skolen? *

☐ Ingenting

☐ Litt

☐ Ofte

☐ Hele tiden

Hvor ofte snakker du engelsk på fritiden? *

☐ Ingenting

☐ Litt

☐ Ofte

☐ Hele tiden

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne *

Når du ser på en film eller TV-serie på engelsk, bruker du norske, engelske eller ingen undertekster? *

- ☐ Jeg bruker norsk tekst
- ☐ Jeg bruker engelsk tekst
- ☐ Jeg bruker ikke undertekster

Når jeg ser på engelsk film eller TV-serie *

- ☐ Forstår jeg det som blir sagt, uten å lese undertekster
- ☐ Leser jeg underteksten når det er ord jeg ikke forstår
- ☐ Må jeg lese teksten for å forstå hva som blir sagt
- ☐ Jeg ser ikke på film på engelsk

Når jeg lytter til musikk på engelsk *

- ☐ Forstår jeg hva sangen handler om
- ☐ Forstår jeg noe av hva sangen handler om
- ☐ Jeg hører ikke etter hva som blir sunget
- ☐ Jeg hører ikke på musikk på engelsk

Når jeg spiller TV-/dataspill på engelsk *

- ☐ Forstår jeg det som blir sagt og hva historien handler om
- ☐ Forstår jeg noe av det som blir sagt og hva historien handler om
- ☐ Forstår jeg hva historien handler om, men ikke det som blir sagt
- ☐ Bryr jeg meg ikke om historien eller hva som blir sagt. Jeg bare spiller
- ☐ Jeg spiller ikke TV-/dataspill på engelsk

Når jeg leser en bok på engelsk *

- ☐ Forstår jeg alt av teksten
- ☐ Forstår jeg det meste av teksten
- ☐ Forstår jeg litt av teksten, men må søke opp enkelte ord for å forstå helheten
- ☐ Forstår jeg ingenting
- ☐ Jeg leser ikke bøker på engelsk

Når jeg hører på en lydbok på engelsk *

- ☐ Forstår jeg alt som blir sagt
- ☐ Forstår jeg noe av det som blir sagt
- ☐ Forstår jeg litt av det som blir sagt
- ☐ Forstår jeg ingenting
- ☐ Jeg hører ikke på lydbøker på engelsk

Obligatoriske felter er merket med stjerne *

Har du en venn eller et familiemedlem som har engelsk som førstespråk? *

Hvis du er fra Norge er norsk ditt førstespråk.

Hvis du er fra England, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Sør-Afrika, osv. er engelsk ditt førstespråk.

☐ Ja

☐ Nei

Hvis ja, snakker dere engelsk med hverandre?

☐ Alltid

☐ Noen ganger

☐ Lite

☐ Aldri

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Intervjuguide semistrukturert fokusgruppeintervju

1. Hvor lenge har du/dere jobbet som engelsklærer i den norske skole?
2. Mener du/dere at engelsk er et viktig språk/fag for norske elever å lære?
 - a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
3. Når du/dere underviser i engelsk, snakker dere primært norsk eller engelsk med elevene?
 - a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
4. Engelsklærere i den norske skole er, ifølge Munden (2017), privilegerte fordi norske elever blir eksponert til det engelske språk på daglig basis gjennom en god variasjon av forskjellige medier (film, tv, sosiale medier, lydbøker, etc.). Hva tenker du/dere om denne påstanden?
5. Verden har, de siste årene, blitt stadig mer globalisert, og tilgangen på engelskspråklige medier er mer tilgjengelig nå enn noensinne. Har du/dere lagt merke til en signifikant endring i norske elevers engelskkompetanse de siste 10-20 årene?
6. Føler du/dere at den ubevisste eksponeringen, som skjer på norske elevers fritid, påvirker deres engelskferdigheter betydelig?
 - a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
7. Til hvilken grad, mener du/dere, er denne ubevisste eksponeringen essensiell for utviklingen av norske elevers engelskferdigheter?
8. Hva tenker du/dere elevene selv mener om effekten av ubevisst eksponering til det engelske språk på fritiden?
9. Spørreundersøkelsen vår viser at ... Er du/dere overrasket over disse resultatene?
 - a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
10. Spørreundersøkelsen vår viser også at ... Hva tenker du/dere om det?
11. Er det noen tanker du sitter igjen med nå, som du tenker kan bidra ytterligere til vår undersøkelse og masteroppgave generelt, som du ønsker å tilføye?

Appendix 3: Form of consent

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

“The effect of unconscious exposure to English on second language learners in middle school”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å *finne ut mer om effekten den ubeviste eksponeringen til det engelske språk utenfor skolen har på norske elevers kompetanse i engelsk*. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å undersøke til hvilken grad ubevisst eksponering til det engelske språk påvirker engelskkompetansen til norske elever på 7. trinn. Vi ønsker spesifikt å undersøke elevers egen oppfatning av hvilken effekt deres eksponering til det engelske språk, på fritiden, har på deres engelskferdigheter. I tillegg, ønsker vi å få et innblikk i hvordan lærerne til disse elevene oppfatter effekten av nevnt eksponering, og om elevenes og lærernes meninger om temaet samsvarer, eller ikke.

Undersøkelsen utføres i sammenheng med en masteroppgave. Masteroppgavens omfang vil være på omtrent 80 sider og skal omhandle temaet ubevist eksponering til engelsk.

Forskningsspørsmålene som er utformet og skal besvares gjennomgående er følgende:

“How does unconscious exposure to the English language affect the second language acquisition of middle school ESL learners in Norway?”

“What is the effect of exposure to the English language outside of the classroom according to ESL learners as opposed to their teachers, and do their perception of the effect differ?”

Svarene innsamlet fra spørreundersøkelsene med elevene og fokusgruppeintervjuene med lærerne skal benyttes til å kunne besvare nevnte forskningsspørsmål.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskolen i Østfold er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet som følge av din kompetanse som lærer i engelskfaget i den norske skole, samt at du, per nå, er ansatt som lærer i den norske skole og underviser i engelsk på 7. trinn.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Du vil være én av 4-6 informanter som skal delta i et fokusgruppeintervju, med et hovedformål om å besvare spørsmål relatert til denne masteroppgavens forskningsspørsmål. I tillegg, vil vi be deg om å gjennomføre en anonymisert, nettbasert spørreundersøkelse med elevene dine i forkant av intervjuet.

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du deltar i et fokusgruppeintervju som vil ta omtrent 30-45 minutter å gjennomføre.

Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om effekten av ubevisst eksponering til det engelske språk på elevers engelsk ferdigheter, samt dine tanker om temaet og elevenes svar på spørreundersøkelsen. Det vil tas videoopptak av intervjuet, slik at vi kan gå nøye gjennom dine svar i etterkant av intervjuet og bruke informasjonen til å besvare våre forskningsspørsmål.

Deltagelse innebærer også at du stiller dine elever disponible til å besvare en nettbasert spørreundersøkelse. Besvarelsen vil være anonym, slik at ingen av svarene kan knyttes til enkeltelever.

Elevenes foreldre kan få se spørreskjema på forhånd ved å ta kontakt, dersom dette er ønskelig.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Behandling og analyse av data vil i hovedsak gjennomføres av Christian Bustgaard Angeland (HiØ) og Emil André Pettersen (HiØ). I analyseprosessen vil data være anonymisert. Nettskjema benyttes til gjennomføring av survey. Prosjektet avsluttes 27.06.2022, hvor alle dataene vil være anonymisert.

Deltagerne i dette forskningsprosjektet vil fremkomme som anonyme i det endelige produktet, og ingen personlige opplysninger vil oppgis.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes (*når oppgaven blir godkjent*) 27.juni 2022. Videoopptak av deg og dokumenter med dine personopplysninger vil slettes ved prosjektslutt. Dine personopplysninger vil ikke fremkomme i det endelige produktet.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra HiØ har NSD-Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer, ta kontakt med:

Christian Bustgaard Angeland: chrisban@hiof.no, 97 40 62 76

Emil André Pettersen: emilap@hiof.no, 95 07 29 59

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

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

Med vennlig hilsen

*Christian Bustgaard Angeland
Emil André Pettersen*

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet The effect of unconscious exposure to English on second language learners in middle school, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i *fokusgruppeintervju*
- å delta i *gjennomføring av spørreundersøkelse med elever*

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)