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Extramural English: Teacher's perceptions and approaches

Qualitative study

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# Abstract

This thesis aimed to explore Norwegian upper primary teachers (mellomtrinns lærere) beliefs and experiences surrounding their pupils' engagement with Extramural English, and the approaches teachers employ within the classroom considering those beliefs. The study involved interviews with four upper primary school teachers.

The findings indicate that all four of the interviewed teachers believe that their pupils engage with Extramural English in a variety of ways. The participants shared a variety of different extramural English activities which they experience their pupils engaging in, such as watching TV-series, movies, reading both online and offline, listening to music, playing video games, and using social media platforms, as well as talking with English speaking parents or peers. The interviewed teachers generally believe that Extramural English effects their pupils' English language development positively, as well as acting as a motivational force for learning English. On the other hand, the teachers expressed some scepticism of whether this motivation translated into a classroom setting. One worry expressed by the interviewees is that differences in the level of engagement with Extramural English creates large discrepancies within a classroom, which in turn makes it more difficult to create a suitable lesson plan which is suitable for all the pupils within a classroom. The teachers were generally positive to the changes in the new curriculum (LK20) as it provides them with a lot of autonomy, although they generally don't consider it much when planning their lessons, relying more on their own understandings of their pupils needs for English language development.

The study concludes that the beliefs surrounding Extramural English expressed by the interviewed teachers is largely reflective of the literature surrounding the topic. The interviewed teachers have a nuanced understanding of how engagement with Extramural English activities effect their pupils' English development. However, there is some hesitation expressed by the teachers about bringing pupils' extramural interests into the classroom.

Keywords: Extramural English, English as a foreign language, upper primary school, teacher beliefs, Second Language Acquisition

# Sammendrag

Denne avhandlingen hadde som mål å utforske norsk mellomtrinns læreres forståelser og erfaringer rundt deres elevers engasjement med engelsk utenfor klasserommet, og tilnærmingene lærerne bruker i klasserommet med tanke på disse troene. Studien involverte intervjuer med fire mellomtrinns lærere.

Resultatene indikerer at alle de fire intervjuobjektene oppfatter at deres elever engasjerer seg med engelsk utenfor klasserommet på en rekke forskjellige måter. Deltakerne delte ulike aktiviteter som de opplever at elevene engasjerer seg i, som å se på TV-serier, filmer, lese både online og offline, lytte til musikk, spille videospill og bruke sosiale medieplattformer, samt å snakke med engelskspråklige foreldre eller jevnaldrende. De intervjuete lærerne tror generelt at engelsk utenfor klasserommet har en positiv effekt på elevenes engelskspråklige utvikling, samt at det fungerer som en motivasjonskraft for å lære engelsk. På den annen side, uttrykte lærerne noe skepsis om hvorvidt denne motivasjonen oversettes til klasserommet. En bekymring uttrykt av intervjuobjektene er at forskjeller i erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet skaper store forskjeller innenfor et klasserom, noe som gjør det vanskeligere å skape en egnet undervisningsplan som passer for alle elevene i klassen. Lærerne var generelt positive til endringene i den nye læreplanen (LK20) ettersom den gir dem mye autonomi, selv om de generelt ikke tar den i betraktning i noe stor grad når de planlegger undervisningstimene sine, ettersom de stoler mer på sin egen forståelse av elevenes behov for engelskspråklig utvikling.

Studien konkluderer med at forståelsene rundt engelsk utenfor klasserommet som er uttrykt av de intervjuete lærerne i stor grad er reflektert i litteraturen rundt emnet. De intervjuete lærerne har en nyansert forståelse av hvordan engasjement med engelsk utenfor klasserommet påvirker elevenes engelskspråklige utvikling. Imidlertid uttrykker lærerne noe nøling når det gjelder å bringe elevenes interesser fra utenfor klasserommet inn i klasserommet.

# Preface

This master's thesis concludes my five years of studying at OsloMet. I think back to the time when I first considered teaching as a career path. I was completing my second year of high school education, and as part of our education, we had a project where we would regularly help teach basic coding to kids at a local middle school. This project was my first ever experience with teaching, and I still remember the satisfaction of seeing somebody understand a new concept because of what I had thought them. This experience was the impetus that set me on the trajectory to becoming a teacher, and I am grateful for that. Throughout my studies, I have discovered that the role of a teachers is much more complex than I imagined as a 16-year-old, however these complexities are what makes teaching so fulfilling.

I would like to thank all the friends and fellow students, who have helped and supported me throughout my time at OsloMet. Writing a large project such as this thesis would not have been possible without a supportive network of friends, which I am extremely grateful for. There was a time throughout the process of writing where I was unsure if I would be able to finish the project, but thanks to the encouragement of friends and family, I made it. I would also like to thank the participants of the study for taking time out of their day to support me in this project, as well as my place of work for giving me a space were I could focus on something other than my thesis.

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# 1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, the importance of English language proficiency cannot be overstated. English has become the universal language of communication in fields such as business, science, and technology. Many countries, including Norway, have recognized the significance of English as a second language and have incorporated it into their primary and secondary school curriculum. However, classroom instruction alone is not the only way that young learners of English in contemporary Norwegian society are exposed to English.

Extramural English refers to any use of English outside the formal classroom setting, such as reading English books, watching English movies or TV shows, or engaging in online communication with English-speaking peers (2009). These activities provide learners with opportunities to engage with the language in authentic contexts, thereby enhancing their language skills. Research has shown that exposure to the language outside the classroom, through activities known as extramural English, can significantly enhance learners' language development (Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). However, the extent to which teachers understand their pupils' extramural habits, as well as promote and facilitate extramural English among their pupils remains largely unexplored. This thesis will therefore investigate teachers' beliefs related to the topic of Extramural English, as well as the classroom approaches, they have in light of Extramural English. The main research question for this thesis is as follows:

*What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs towards, and approaches to extramural English?*

The main research question is further divided into the following secondary questions:

- 1) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about their pupils' engagement with extramural English?*
- 2) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about the effect extramural English has on their pupils' English language development?*
- 3) *What are upper primary school teachers approaches to teaching considering their beliefs related to Extramural English?*
- 4) *Do upper primary school teachers feel prepared to meet their pupils needs considering their beliefs related to Extramural English?*

This study employs a qualitative method based on in-depth interviews with four upper primary school teachers who teach English as a subject, to gain deep insight into their beliefs surrounding their pupils' engagement with extramural English, as well as understand how these beliefs inform their teaching practices. This study focuses on gaining an in-depth view of teachers' beliefs, as opposed to previous work in the field which mainly concerns itself with quantitative analysis of pupils' engagement with extramural English.

In the interest of promoting transference and clarity in this thesis, the expectations for the study will be explored, in accordance with the proscriptions for qualitative research seen in Nobel & Smith (2015). These expected results are discussed in order to show, and ultimately mitigate researcher bias. The expectations for this study were to find that teachers are generally aware of their pupils' engagement with extramural English, and be familiar with extramural activities such as gaming, reading online and offline, watching TV-series and movies, etc. Insight into their pupils' extramural activities are expected to mostly come from communication with the pupils' parents, as these activities are not observed in school. The expectation is that teachers to believe that extramural English effects their pupils' English development largely positively. However, some teachers might express concerns that mistaken conceptions about English might be reinforced through extramural English. It is expected that some of the teachers will mention the distracting effect that some extramural activities can have when brought into the classroom, particularly gaming. When it comes to how the teachers chose to incorporate extramural English, the researcher expects the beliefs of teachers to be varied, and that some of the teachers might be opposed to including extramural English into the classroom. Regarding the curriculum for English, the interviewed teachers are expected to be largely positive to the framework it provides.



## 2. Theory and prior research

In this chapter, I will introduce and review relevant literature for the topics discussed in this master's thesis. The first subchapter (2.1) will present literature related to the English languages place within the context of a EFL classroom. The second subchapter (2.2) focuses on literature related to second language acquisition. The third and final subchapter (2.3) will present literature related to the topic of extramural English, and review studies related to young learners of English extramural habits, and the effect these habits have on English skills and motivation.

### 2.1 English as a global language

English has a unique place within the global language space compared to any other language. In a 2007 article, Dewey described the role of English as such:

“English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves.”

There have been other languages throughout history which have served as languages for international communication, such as Latin in medieval times. Latin in times of its peak use, however, was less widespread, both in situations of use, and not least geographically. Additionally, the speed at which English has carved out its place as the global language is unprecedented, largely occurring over the span of 50 years, in the latter half of the twentieth century (Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). In order to reflect the uniquely prominent role of English, the term *Global English* is used by many researchers (Dewey, 2007; Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). It should be noted that there are other terms employed by researchers which refer to largely the same phenomena, such as English as a lingua franca, International English, English as an international language and World English.

Much of the media Norwegians engage with, such as films, tv-series, music and videogames are in English. Young Norwegians have experienced massive exposure to English through audio and audiovisual media in the last couple of decades, and many travel frequently, deploying English as a lingua franca in communications with both native and non-native speakers of English (Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). As such, English has developed into a familiar language for Norwegians. This familiarity is not a Norwegian or European phenomena. Most English interactions today involve only non-native speakers of English, meaning English is increasingly used, and in turn influenced by, second or later language speakers, as opposed to native speakers.

In order to describe the spread and functional use of English in different domains, linguist Braj B. Kachru (1985) introduced the following terms: *the inner circle*, *the outer circle*, and *the expanding circle*, all encompassed under the term *three concentric circles*. The circles represent the different domains in which English is acquired and informs on how English is used within the different domains. In terms of language users and geography, the inner circle includes countries where English is the primary language, such as the UK, Australia, the USA, New Zealand and Canada (Kachru, 1985). The people who are raised within the countries contained within the inner circle typically have English as their first language. The countries contained within the outer circle have particular historical ties with English, as they have been through periods of colonization. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the Philippines are examples of countries within the outer circle. Outer circle countries typically endow English with a high status within their language policies, and inhabitants typically speak English alongside another language. The third circle, the expanding circle, contains countries which do not have a history of colonization, and where English is not the primary language. Countries contained within the expanding circle include China, Japan, Egypt and Norway. In expanding circle countries, English is typically seen as the most important language for international communication, and an aspirational foreign language to learn. These attitudes further establish English's unique position as a lingua franca. The position of English as a foreign language in many of the expanding circle is being challenged, with researchers arguing that English is approaching the position of an L2 (Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016). Researchers also argue that the distinction between teaching English as a foreign or second language is obsolete.

### **2.1.1 English in a Norwegian educational context**

English has a unique position in the Norwegian educational context compared to other foreign languages. Educational authorities in Norway have been attentive to English's emerging role as a global language. English was first introduced to the national curriculum as early as 1936 and has continually grown as a subject since. English became a mandatory subject for all students in 1969, starting in 5th grade. After the reform in 1997 (L97), English became a subject for students from the 1st grade in primary school. The Norwegian schooling system has been following in an international downtrend in the age at which English is first taught as a subject in school, with many countries where English has a second language status starting to teach English in primary school (Berns et al., 2007). A country report published by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2004), said that "the importance accorded to English is partly explained by the fact that Norway and its small language community is dependent on foreign language skills to uphold contact and interaction with other people, in a global as well as a European perspective."

In the L97, English was considered primarily as a means of communication and cultural exchange. The goal was to develop students' communicative skills, which was viewed as important for participation in a global community. The curriculum emphasized functional language use, and there was a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary. However, there was limited attention given to students' individual needs and interests in English language learning.

In the 2006 curriculum (LK06), there was a significant shift towards a more communicative and student-centered approach to English language learning. The goal was to develop students' ability to use English for practical purposes in their daily lives, as well as to participate in a global community. There was a greater emphasis on developing students' intercultural competence and critical thinking skills, and the curriculum encouraged the use of authentic materials and real-life situations. There was also a focus on students' individual needs and interests, and the curriculum acknowledged the importance of motivation and engagement in language learning (Norwegian ministry of Education and training, 2006).

The most recent national curriculum, introduced in 2020 (LK20), builds on the communicative and student-centered approach of the previous curriculum. However, it places even greater emphasis on developing students' multilingual and intercultural competence, and on promoting social justice and global citizenship. There is a focus on developing students' ability to use

English for academic purposes, as well as for communication in daily life and in the workplace. The curriculum emphasizes the use of a variety of digital tools and resources and encourages the integration of language learning across different subject areas learning (Norwegian ministry of Education and training, 2019). The Norwegian schooling system has been following in an international downtrend in the age at which English is first taught as a subject in school, with many countries where English has a second language status starting to teach English in primary school (Berns et al., 2007).

## **2.2 Second language acquisition**

Second language acquisition, abbreviated to SLA, is the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages beyond their first language, during late childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Ortega, 2009). When developing a first language, learners generally learn “naturally”, and have no need to be taught necessary knowledge and skills to start using the language to communicate. This is rarely the case for when acquiring a second language (Meisel, 2011), although the “natural” acquisition of a language is not limited to a single language, as bilingual children might learn more than one language in parallel during early childhood. One could therefore assume that it is not the nature of learning two languages itself that makes learning a second language more troublesome than learning a first language, but rather the age of the language learner that is the determining factor (Meisel, 2011). When learning a second language, the learner is necessarily older than when learning a first language; this makes a difference as young children’s brains have been found to be more receptive to learning a variety of things, such as language (Ortega, 2009). This period of young children’s life, referred to as *the critical period*, is characterized by heightened neurological plasticity, meaning that their brains more easily make neural connections in response to all sorts of information. As a second language is often not taught within this critical period, the strategies for both learning and investigation of the learning process is different from a first to a second language (Ortega, 2009). When attending a second language, most learners who start acquiring the target language before a certain age, generally puberty, are generally more likely to attain native-like competence in that language. Older learners, however, are not likely to attain this level of competence regardless of how long they reside in the L2 environment. Some researchers believe these differences are best explained through purely biological factors, while others favor

non-biological explanations, such as preexisting knowledge of a first language, or motivational factors (Ortega, 2009).

The scope of second language acquisition, includes both learning in formal and informal contexts (Saville-Troike, 2016). To distinguish between these two contexts, Saville-Troike (2016) imagines a Polish born child who moves to Norway as an example. This child will be exposed to Norwegian in a formal context, by being formally tutored in the Norwegian language at school, as well as leaning in an informal context while playing and attending school with Norwegian-speaking children. For Norwegian children learning English however, they are not immersed in an English-speaking context in a comparable way to the Polish child in Saville-Troike's example. Norwegian learners of English are generally authentically exposed to English input from other sources, which will be explored further in this chapter.

### **2.2.1 The role of input and interaction in SLA**

Within the context of SLA, input refers to the language data learners are exposed to. Input plays a crucial role in the process of acquiring a language. In a 2006 paper presenting an overview of inputs role in SLA, Gass and Mackey argue that the importance of input for language acquisition is largely recognized. As such, the field of SLA have spawned a plethora of theories and hypothesis on the role input plays in language acquisition. One of the most influential theories on this topic is Krashen's (1985) *monitor model*. Krashen has been highly influential in regard to highlighting the relevance of input for SLA, as well as introducing new concepts and terms, such as his five hypothesis concerning SLA represented in the *monitor model*.

The first of these hypotheses is the acquisition-learning hypothesis. Although the terms *learning* and *acquisition* often are considered interchangeable, some stress these terms as referring to two distinct concepts. Krashen describes two distinct ways of developing a L2, either through acquisition (picking the language up through exposure, similar to a L1), or through learning (explicitly through formal instruction). Through this distinction Krashen asserts that learning cannot lead to acquisition, called *the non-interface position*. However, this position is contested within the field by other researchers. Later researchers, such as Ellis (1994), contest this notion, claiming that older learners may explicitly seek instruction on grammatical rules for a language and eventually internalize these rules; this is an example of explicit instruction preceding acquisition. This position is called the interface position.

The second hypothesis Krashen's presents is the *monitor hypothesis*, which suggest that the knowledge attained through learning a L2 only functions to supplement what the learner already knows through acquisition. Assuming this hypothesis is true, teaching should focus on creating suitable conditions for acquisition rather than focus solely on learning itself. The third hypothesis is named the *natural order hypothesis* and suggest that acquisition of grammatical structures happen in a predictable order for all learners, although at different paces. This natural order of acquisition is independent of learner's age, linguistic background, and their interaction with the target language.

Krashen's fourth hypothesis is named *the input hypothesis*. This hypothesis states that exposure to high frequency of comprehensible data is a necessity for successful acquisition of a second language. Krashen suggests that the appropriate level of input when users of the language make themselves understood in communication. Researchers are generally in agreement that learners of a language need to challenge themselves with input that is slightly above their current level of comprehension, varying between learners (Brown, 2000). Some researchers further mark distinctions between the quality of different types of input (Munoz, 2006; Gass, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2006). Gass (2003) divides input into positive and negative evidence. They define positive evidence as input quality, of high containing well-formed sentences, on the bases of which learners can form appropriate linguistic hypotheses. On the other hand, negative evidence is refers to input of low quality, which might lead learners to foster misconceptions of the appropriate linguistic understandings. The medium of this quality input is not inherited to the distinction. According to Gass (2003), positive evidence is vital for successful acquisition of a second language.

Micheal Long's (1996) *interaction hypothesis* builds on the earlier work of Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis. Long's hypothesis, however, emphasizes the importance of interaction as a critical component of language learning. It posits that language learning is an active process that takes place through social interaction, where learners use language for real communicative purposes. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that interaction provides learners with important feedback about their language use, which in turn enables them to modify their output. Through conversational interaction, learners can receive implicit feedback on grammatical structures and also obtain more explicit feedback on meaning and appropriate use of language.

Long (1996) argues that interaction creates a learning environment where learners can experiment with the language, receive feedback on their output, and develop their

communicative competence through negotiation of meaning. Krashen (1982, 1998) has consistently argued that although interaction can serve as a good source of comprehensible input, it is not necessary. Long (1996), however, argues that input which facilitates interaction is privileged, as it can supply learners with information relating to linguistic forms that are problematic for them.

The Interaction Hypothesis has been supported by a large body of research. Studies have shown that learners who engage in conversational interactions with speakers of the target language are more likely to acquire the language than those who do not (Gass, 2003) Moreover, research has shown that learners who engage in more interaction tend to make more progress in their language development, particularly in the areas of grammatical accuracy and complexity (Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

### **2.2.2 Incidental learning**

Incidental learning is a type of learning that occurs unintentionally or casually, without any deliberate effort to learn. This type of learning is also known as implicit or unintentional learning, as it is acquired without direct instruction or specific objectives. It is a common phenomenon in everyday life and can happen through various sources, such as social interactions, media exposure, and environmental cues. Incidental learning is often seen in second language acquisition, where learners may acquire language skills through exposure to the language in their everyday interactions, without any formal instruction or study.

Ellis (2014) defines incidental learning as the acquisition of knowledge or skills that are not the primary focus of the learning activity or task. This type of learning is often seen as a byproduct of other activities, such as reading a book, watching a movie, or engaging in a conversation. Incidental learning can be a powerful tool for language acquisition, as it allows learners to acquire language skills through natural exposure to the language, without the pressure of formal instruction. This type of learning is particularly important for young learners, who may not have access to formal language instruction, but are constantly exposed to the language through their environment. Incidental learning can occur through various channels, such as exposure to authentic materials, such as books, movies, or television shows, and through social interactions with native speakers of the language. This type of learning is often seen as a complement to

formal instruction, as it allows learners to acquire language skills through natural exposure to the language, without the constraints of a classroom environment. However, it should be noted that incidental learning is not a substitute for formal instruction, and learners still need to engage in deliberate practice and study to develop their language skills (Ellis, 2014).

Krashen's fifth hypothesis is the "affective filter hypothesis." This hypothesis proposes that learners' emotional states, attitudes, and motivations can affect their ability to acquire a second language. According to Krashen (1985), language acquisition occurs when learners are in a low-anxiety, relaxed, and receptive state, which allows them to acquire language subconsciously, without the need for conscious grammar rules or correction. However, if learners are experiencing high levels of anxiety, stress, or boredom, their affective filter is raised, and they are less likely to acquire language efficiently.

### **2.2.3 Motivation for SLA**

Motivation plays an important role in all learning, not the least when learning second language. In order to develop proficiency in a second language, learners must have the desire, drive, and commitment to learn the language. Research has consistently shown that motivation plays a crucial role in second language learning. Studies have found that learners who are highly motivated to learn a second language are more likely to achieve success in their language learning goals than those who are less motivated. In addition, learners with higher motivation have been found to have more positive attitudes towards the language, more persistence in their learning, and greater willingness to take risks in using the language. Like many words in the English language, motivation is of Latin origin. Motive originates from the Latin *motivus*, which translates to "serving to move". Movement as part of motivation is reflected in Dornyei's (2005) model of motivation in L2 learning, called *the L2 Motivational Self System*, abbreviated to L2MSS. This model consists of three dimensions: *the ideal L2 self*, *the Ought-to L2 self*, and *the L2 learning experience*.



The ideal L2 self is the version of oneself that a learner aspires to be in terms of their language abilities (Dörnyei, 2014). It is shaped by the learner's self-identity, their cultural background, and their past experiences with the L2. The ideal L2 self is often linked to the learner's future goals and aspirations, such as academic or professional success. The desire to achieve the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator for learners, and it drives their engagement and persistence in L2 learning. The ought-to L2 self, on the other hand, is the version of oneself that a learner believes they should be in terms of their language abilities. It is shaped by external factors, such as societal expectations or pressure from family members or peers. The ought-to L2 self can be a motivator for learners, but it can also create anxiety and demotivation if learners feel that they are not meeting external expectations.

The L2 learning experience refers to the learner's past experiences with the L2, including their previous exposure to the language, the quality of instruction they have received, and their interactions with L2 speakers (Dörnyei, 2014). Positive experiences with the L2, such as successful communication with native speakers or receiving praise for language abilities, can increase learners' motivation and engagement in L2 learning. Negative experiences, such as struggling to understand L2 speakers or receiving criticism for language errors, can decrease motivation and lead to demotivation or even abandonment of L2 learning. The fundamental assumption of L2MSS is that when the learner experiences a discrepancy between their current- and ideal L2 self, this discrepancy functions as a motivator for reducing the perceived gap and reaching a more ideal state.

Legault (2016) describes main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Legault, intrinsic motivation is characterized by an individual's innate desire to engage in an activity for its own sake, without the need for external rewards or recognition. Intrinsic motivation is driven by factors such as enjoyment, interest, and personal satisfaction. In the context of language learning, intrinsic motivation might manifest as a desire to learn a language for personal growth or cultural enrichment. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external factors such as rewards, grades, or social recognition. Extrinsic motivation might be present when a learner is motivated to learn a language in order to receive a high grade or to impress others with their language abilities. While extrinsic motivation can be a powerful motivator, it can also lead to a focus on the outcome rather than the process of learning, which may undermine the development

of intrinsic motivation. Legault suggests that the most effective motivation for language learning is a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, where learners are able to find personal enjoyment and satisfaction in the process of learning while also being supported by external factors such as feedback, recognition, and support.

Contemporary L2 motivational research has increasingly emphasized the role of social and contextual factors in shaping learner motivation and language learning outcomes. Researchers have highlighted the importance of social identity, social support, and cultural background in shaping learner motivation and attitudes towards language learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Dörnyei, 2014). Studies have found that learners who feel a sense of belonging to a language learning community are more likely to be motivated and successful in their language learning (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015). This sense of community can be fostered through opportunities for social interaction, collaborative learning, and positive feedback from peers and instructors). Contextual factors, such as the institutional and societal support for language learning, can also have a significant impact on learner motivation. Researchers have found that learners who perceive language learning to be valued and important in their community or society are more likely to be motivated to learn and to continue learning over time (Dörnyei, 2014; Zareian & Jodaei, 2015). Additionally, the availability of resources and support, such as access to language learning materials and experienced teachers, can play a crucial role in learner motivation (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015). Contemporary L2 motivational research has highlighted the need for teachers and learners to be aware of the potential impact of discrimination, prejudice, and bias on learner motivation and attitudes towards language learning (Liu, 2015). Studies have shown that learners who experience discrimination or negative stereotypes related to their language or cultural background may be less motivated to learn and may have lower levels of self-efficacy (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015).

## 2.3 Extramural English

Foreign language education has traditionally been closely associated with formal educational setting, but over the last decade this association has changed, as informal learning in out-of-school context have become an increasingly large part of learners' experience (Sundqvist, 2009; Sylven & Sundqvist, 2012). Researchers Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) consider the language learning opportunities provided by technology to be a large contributing factor to this change. Extramural English is a term that has emerged within this changing context. Extramural English, henceforth abbreviated to EE, is a relatively new term within the field of Second Language Acquisition, being coined by Sundqvist as recently as 2009. The term *extramural* is of Latin origin, meaning *outside the walls of*. *The walls* referred to here are the walls of the classroom (Sundqvist, 2009). In a later book on the subject of EE, Sundqvist and Sylven (2016) further narrow the definition of EE, with a focus on the initiative of contact with English. The contact of involvement with English is *not* to be initiated by teachers or others working within educational institutions; the initiative for contact lies primarily within the learner themselves, or secondarily, with someone else such as a friend or parent. Generally, the engagement with EE is voluntary on the part of the learner, although it is possible that the learner is pressured into engaging with EE. EE does not necessitate deliberate intention from the learner to acquire English, though is by no means excluded from the concept (Sundqvist, 2009). There are other terms within the field that largely describe the same activities, such as out-of-class learning of English, online informal learning of English, and learning in the digital wilds. While there are other terms that have been used to describe similar phenomena, "extramural English" has several advantages, including its specificity and emphasis on the importance of English as a global language (Sundqvist, 2009).

### **2.3.1 Previous research on Extramural Engagement**

In 2009, Sundqvist stated in her dissertation that there were some empirical studies on the relationship between learners engagement with Extramural English and their learning outcomes, however these studies were rare. Since 2009, there has been an increasing interest in investigating this relationship.

One of the largest and most comprehensive projects examining young people's, specifically European youths', engagement with English outside of a classroom context was conducted by Berns et. al. (2007), involving 2248 participants from four different European countries: Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany. This study had a variety of aims, one being an examination of the frequency, location and with whom participants encountered English. Based on their extensive findings, they conclude that the basic assertion that English is omnipresent in the lives of young Europeans largely holds water. They go on to say that although school is a source of contact with English, it is, at least for some groups, not the most important one. The English used by learners is a combination between English learned in school as well as English encountered in music lyrics, computer games, programs, and films. Furthermore, the researchers outline three important factors contributing to this omnipresence: the media, personal networks and intercultural communications as it is exercised during travels abroad.

De Wilde et al (2018) carried out a study examining the English learning in out-of-school contexts Belgian children aged ten to twelve experiences, and what outcomes such types of inputs have in their informal language acquisition. The researchers found that the participants were exposed to English regularly through gaming, using social media, and watching television with subtitles in their first language. The results showed that a possibility for interaction and authenticity as the most important characteristics for valuable inputs. Use of social media platforms, gaming and speaking English are examples of activities which allow for a large degree of interaction and are experienced as authentic. Notably, the researchers state that the results may not be due to extramural exposure to English, rather being caused by variations in internal factors such as learners aptitude, intelligence and learners motivation.

Several studies have focused on video gaming as a popular extramural activity among young learners (Sundqvist & Wikstrom, 2015; Bogdanova, 2019; Nordfjellmark, 2022). Nordfjellmark (2022) found that video gaming was a frequent activity among Norwegian teenagers students, with many learners engaging in English-language games. Similarly, Bogdanova (2019) found that video gaming was a popular activity among Swedish primary school students, with learners using gaming as a way to practice their English language skills. Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) additionally found that gaming is a popular Extramural activity among Swedish Youth.

In addition to video gaming, extramural English activities such as watching English movies and TV shows have also been investigated. Leona et al. (2021) found that Dutch fourth grade learners of English frequently engaged in extramural reading and watching English movies and TV shows. Similarly, Fajt (2021) found that Hungarian school students engaged in extramural English activities such as watching English movies and TV shows, playing English-language mobile games, and using English-language social media. Furthermore, social media has emerged as a popular platform for young learners to engage in extramural English activities. Chun et al. (2015) investigated the extramural reading activities of young English language learners in China and found that learners frequently used social media platforms such as WeChat and QQ to read English articles and interact with peers from different countries. Similarly, Leona et al. (2021) found that Dutch primary school students used social media as a way to communicate with English-speaking peers.

Research has shown that there are gendered differences in the engagement with extramural English activities among ESL learners. For instance, a study by Halvorsen and Haaland (2022) found that female students were more likely to engage in reading English materials for pleasure, whereas male students were more interested in playing computer games in English. Similarly, a study by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) found that boys were more likely to engage in English-language gaming, while girls were more likely to use social media in English. These findings suggest that the types of extramural English activities that students engage in may be influenced by gendered interests and preferences.

### **2.3.2 Previous research on the effects of Extramural English**

Research has shown that extramural exposure to English can have a positive impact on students' English language proficiency. In a study by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014), Swedish students who engaged in extramural English activities, such as watching English-language television shows or films, listening to English-language music, and using social media in English, performed better on English language tests compared to those who did not engage in such activities. The study suggests that extramural English exposure can provide students with more authentic language input and opportunities for language practice, leading to improved language proficiency.

Another study by Lindgren and Munoz (2012) investigated the relationship between extramural English exposure and English language proficiency among students in several European contexts. The study found that extramural English exposure was positively associated with students' listening and speaking skills, but not with their reading and writing skills. The researchers suggest that the different language skills may require different types of extramural exposure, and that more research is needed to better understand the relationship between extramural English exposure and language proficiency.

In a 2012 paper, Sylven & Sundqvist examined the relationship between engaging with online gaming extramurally, and learners' vocabulary and comprehension. The participants of the study were Swedish, attending fifth grade (11-12 years of age). The study found a positive correlation between engagement with online gaming and comprehension and vocabulary, particularly reading and listening comprehension. Furthermore, the findings show a gendered difference between both the types of games boys and girls engage with, and their performances on vocabulary and comprehension tests. The positive correlation shown in this study is reflected in a study conducted by Sundqvist and Wikstrom (2015). Both studies divide their participants into three groups based on hours spent playing games extramurally, with both finding that the group with the highest engagement received the highest test results. A similar study by Jensen (2016) examining the relationship between Danish children's engagement with videogames and vocabulary test scores further corroborate these findings.

However, the relationship between extramural English exposure and language proficiency is not always straightforward. Leona et al. (2021) found that although students who engaged in extramural English activities had higher levels of English proficiency than those who did not, the relationship was moderated by their level of classroom English instruction. The study suggests that the impact of extramural English exposure on language proficiency may depend on the amount and quality of formal classroom instruction. A study by Phan (2021) found that while extramural English activities were positively associated with English oral and comprehension proficiency, there was no significant correlation between such activities and English writing proficiency, except in the case of reading English extramurally.

### **2.3.3 Extramural English and motivation**

There is a strong connection between extramural English and motivation in second language acquisition. Extramural English activities can enhance learners' motivation by creating a desire to engage with the language outside of the classroom. In a study by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014), they found that young learners who engage in extramural English activities are more motivated to learn English than those who do not. This motivation, in turn, can lead to improved language skills. Furthermore, extramural English activities can also contribute to the development of learners' ideal L2 self, which is a critical component of the L2 motivational self-system. The ideal L2 self is a vision of oneself as a competent L2 user, and extramural activities can help learners to form this image of themselves by providing opportunities to practice and use the language in a more authentic context.

Leona et al. (2021) found that ideal L2 selves were significantly associated with learners' engagement in extramural English activities. They found that young learners who did not engage in any extramural English activities had lower levels of motivation and proficiency compared to those who did. The researchers argue that this lack of motivation and proficiency is due to the learners' inability to connect with the language outside of the classroom, which limits their exposure and opportunities to use the language in authentic contexts. An interesting finding in this study is that some children with higher cognitive motivations for engaging with English extramurally, did not display the same cognitive motives for engaging with English. These findings point to the fact that lack of extramural English activities can have negative effects on learners' motivation and language learning outcomes. Jensen (2016) found that his positive findings of the effect of EE could be explained by the fact that children engaging in extramural activities are largely motivated by social and higher cognitive motives. Through their motivation, some children actively engaged with English through writing (chats, comments on social media), reading (wikis, chats, social media), and listening (songs, games, Youtube video, social media) out of their own volition.



## 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the method used to collect data will be presented and described. The chapter is divided into X sections. The first section (3.1) regards the participants of the study. The second section (3.2) presents the design of the research. The third section (3.3) describes how the data was anonymized and analyzed. The fourth section (3.4) covers considerations made to ensure credibility of the research. The fifth section (3.5) highlights the ethical considerations that were made during the course of the study. The sixth and final section (3.6) concerns itself with limitations of this study, as well as challenges faced while conducting the research.

### 3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were selected on the criteria of being a teacher working at an upper primary school level, meaning they teach grades five through seven, and teaching English as a subject. The targeted was through my personal network of contacts and through appropriate groups on social media.

### 3.2 Research design

This thesis is about learning through Extramural English and investigates what understanding teachers have of young learners of English extramural engagement with English, and how their beliefs inform teachers teaching practices. To illuminate this topic, I have conducted interviews with English teachers to obtain their perspectives. The goal of the study is to understand teachers' beliefs surrounding, and approaches to EE. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about their pupils engagement with extramural English?*
- 2) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about the effect extramural English has on their pupils English language development?*
- 3) *What are upper primary school teachers approaches to teaching English in light of Extramural English?*
- 4) *Do upper primary school teachers feel prepared to meet their pupils needs in light of Extramural English?*

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method of research, as they afford the interviewees with the opportunity to describe their beliefs in-depth. Quantitative methods, such as an online questionnaire, was considered, although ultimately not chosen as the opportunity to gain in-depth interviewee responses is lessened compared to a qualitative approach. The interviews were face to face, one-by-one interviews, as opposed to group interviews. Such interviews provide the interviewer with the opportunity to create trust and confidence to the interviewee, through creating a closed space where the interviewee can speak freely without being disrupted.

The researcher used a interview guide while conducted the interviews (Appendix 1; Translated to English in Appendix 2) and had the ability to make changes in order to extract more of the interviewees beliefs. Such changes can be to adjust the order of the questions, rephrase questions if the participants seem to have misunderstood or ask follow-up questions if the answer is vague or in order to gain a more in-depth response from the interviewee (Cohen,2018). As the aim of this study is to understand what teacher beliefs and experiences exist within the Norwegian school, as opposed to comparing and contrasting beliefs, there isn't a harm caused by not asking the exact same questions, interview to interview. The interviewees were asked open ended and non-leading questions in order to combat the influence of researcher bias.

### 3.3 Data processing, transcription, and analysis

In the interest of transparency and clarity, the method of transcription will be described through an example. The interviews were first directly transcribed from the audio recording in the language it was conducted in, being Norwegian. In this step of the transcription process the transcription is largely directly taken from the audio recording, although some interjections are omitted, as they do not carry any meaning which is material to this study's goal.

*“Intervjuer: Hva erfaringer med engelsk møter dine elever utenfor skolen?”*

*Intervjuobjekt: Elevene møter jo engelsk på mange flere arenaer enn det de gjorde før. I min relativt korte tid som lærer har jeg allerede lagt merke til at jeg merker mer til at de gjør mer på engelsk. Mange møter Engelsk spesielt i gaming setting, om det er iPad, telefonen eller playstation da. De møter engelsk der ettersom det gir større mulighet for spill, og for å samarbeide for spill. I tillegg til i spillsammenheng, møter også elevene engelsk i stor grad på nett, både gjennom sosiale medier som de nå så vidt har begynt i 5.trinn noen å se på, men også gjennom youtube og personer de følger der.”*

The second step of the transcription is translation, as the language of this study is English, while the interviews were all conducted in Norwegian.

*“Interviewer: What experiences with English do you believe your pupils encounter outside of the classroom?”*

*Interviewee: Pupils encounter English in many more areas than they did before. In my relatively short time as a teacher, I have noticed that my pupils increasingly do things in English. Many encounter English particularly in gaming settings, like for example when using iPads, phones, or PlayStation. They encounter English as the language allows them greater opportunities in their games and enables cooperation. In addition to gaming settings, the pupils also encounter English online, through social media, which some pupils have just started using in the fifth grade, and through YouTube and the influencers they follow there.”*

The third and final step of the transcription is to change voice, and in the interest of making the findings simpler to read and navigate.

*“In the interviewee’s opinion, pupils nowadays have much more exposure to the English language outside of the classroom. Even in her relatively short time as a teacher, she has noticed that her pupil’s engagement with English outside of the classroom has become more noticeable. She notes that many encounter English while playing video games on iPads, phones, or PlayStations, where the language allows them to cooperate, and opens up greater opportunities for them within the games. Additionally, she observes that pupils also encounter English online, increasingly through social media platforms like YouTube and its influencers...”*

Finally, the data has analysed using thematic analysis, abbreviated to TA. TA is a method of systematically identifying, organizing and gaining insight into patterns of meaning, or themes, within a data set. This enables the researcher to make sense of shared beliefs and experiences. TA is considered a flexible method that allows the researcher to interpret the data in different ways. The method allows both for examining beliefs across a data set, as well as examine a particular phenomenon in-depth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the context of this study, TA is used in order to uncover collective beliefs and disagreements between the interviewed teachers.

### **3.4 Research credibility**

Qualitative data is as important as quantitative data, as it helps in examining topics of research which are unable to be quantified. When discussing validity and reliability within the context of quantitative studies, the process of verifying these points of credibility is largely standardized throughout modern academia. Researchers can apply statistical methods to establish validity and reliability, and this application can be scrutinized by other researchers in their given field. This, however, is not the case for qualitative studies, which is one of the most common criticisms levied at such research. Detractors of qualitative research claim that the findings of such research is of low value, as the research is not replicable and generalizable to a larger population. It is therefore imperative for researchers handling qualitative data to examine questions surrounding research credibility.

In a 2015 article, researchers Noble & Smith tackle the issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. They examine the criteria commonly used in the context of ensuring research credibility, such as validity, generalizability, and reliability, and are skeptical if such considerations are useful in assessing the rigor of qualitative research. In place of these of these criteria, they instead apply a framework which uses alternative criteria to establish appropriate rigor in the research, based on the work of Lincoln and Gaba (1985). Within this framework they use the terminology such as truth value, consistency, neutrality, and applicability. This framework will be used in discussing research credibility of this thesis.

### 3.4.1 Truth value

Within the framework presented by researchers Noble & Smith (2015), the term truth value is used in as an analog for validity within quantitative research. The term truth value refers to the evaluation of truthfulness of the research. It determines how confident the investigator is with the truth of the findings, given the research design, informants, and context. In order to promote transparency and clarity within this research, the researcher has continually described their intentions during the research process. Additionally, the researcher has outlined his personal experiences with extramural English, as well as described how the interviewee responses were transcribed. Such an approach, where the researcher addresses their own preconception of the topic within the description of the research, is not commonly found within quantitative research, but is however necessary in order to promote transparency in qualitative research (Hammarberg et al., 2016). It should be noted that there are other methods employed by qualitative researchers which are used to promote truth value, such as triangulation and continual observation, although these checks are unrealistic to achieve given the lack time and resources at the disposal of a master's thesis project.

On the topic of research credibility, Jacobsen (2015) raises four questions to consider ensuring that the research is trustworthy. The first question is as “Are the informants the correct ones?”, which in the context of this study asks if the interviewees are, in fact, upper primary school teachers teaching English. As all the interviewed teachers were interviewed at their place of work, it is highly unlikely that any of them were not tied to those institutions. The second question raised is “if the information provided by the sources is correct”. This question is more complicated to account for, as this study concerns itself with beliefs. Teachers own beliefs cannot be externally verified by a researcher, however as long as the teachers do not have an incentive to be deceptive when expressing their beliefs, the data collected from the teachers can be relied on. As extramural English is not a particularly sensitive or controversial topic, there is not any reason to believe that the interviewed teachers are untruthful when expressing their beliefs. The third question is “at which time throughout the project the data was collected”. All the interviews were conducted before the discussion section of the paper was written and were conducted in a span of three weeks. As the interviews were semi-structured, meaning questions where somewhat formulated while conducting the interview, these steps where important to ensure that the questions raised in the interview were not informed by bias.

### **3.4.2 Consistency**

Consistency within the context of qualitative research pertains to whether the conclusions of the research would be consistent if the inquiry were repeated in a similar context, and is the term used in place of reliability (Nobel & Smith, 2015). In order to promote consistency, the researcher has documented all the steps taken in the research process, including the sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data transcription techniques. The researcher has continuously reflected on their biases and assumptions and seek to minimize their impact on the research.

### **3.4.3 Applicability**

Applicability refers to the evaluation is given to whether the finding can be applied to different contexts, settings, or groups, and is used in place of generalizability (Nobel & Smith, 2015). It is important to recognize that the perceptions represented in the interviews might not correlate to the larger population of Norwegian upper primary school English teachers.

## **3.5 Ethical considerations**

There were several ethical considerations made to ensure participants informed consent throughout the study. First, the study was submitted to, and cleared by, the Norwegian center for research data, or NSD. Secondly, the participants were informed about their rights when participating in the study, both in written form though the consent form they signed, as well as orally before the interviews were conducted. The participants were informed about the study's purpose, as well as how their participation in the study contributed to realizing that purpose. Additionally, they were informed that all the interview data collected would be handled confidentially, and that the data collected would be anonymized in the final thesis, leaving no way to identify individuals partaking in the study. The consent form can be seen at the end of the paper (Appendix 3).

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction to the findings**

This chapter presents the interview data collected as part of this study. The interviews are presented in each subsection, to present the information collected from each interview in a clear and transparent manner. The guide used when conducting these interviews can be found at the end of the paper (Appendix 1; Translated to English in Appendix 2).

#### **4.2.1 Interview 1**

The first interview conducted was of a male teacher, currently teaching a seventh-grade class. He has completed four years of teaching education at a university level, gaining the title of adjunct. He is formally educated in the subjects English, social studies, and French as part of his four-year degree, and has taken some additional online courses covering the subjects Norwegian, and arts and crafts during his time working as a teacher. He has been teaching in upper primary school for close to six years, teaching English as a subject throughout his career.

The interviewee believes that his pupils have numerous experiences with English outside of the classroom. He notes that their online activities, such as using apps like YouTube, Twitch, and TikTok on their phones and iPads, provide them with a lot of exposure to English. Additionally, the interviewee mentions that many of his pupils are gamers and engage with English through playing videogames. He also notes that his pupils use social media platforms like SnapChat, where they communicate in English, using many English words even if the communication is not explicitly in English.

The interviewee noted that there are gendered differences in the ways that male and female pupils engage with English outside of the classroom. He observes that the boys tend to play videogames more frequently than the girls and watch more Twitch streams, which are primarily geared towards gamers. In contrast, he believes that the female pupils are more interested in social media and music, although he is less certain about this. He mentions that some of the girls are enthusiastic about K-pop, a genre of Korean pop music, and watch interviews with K-pop stars in English or with English subtitles. However, he notes that this is only a particular interest for a few of his female students, while video games are something that almost all his male students are engaged with.



The interviewee explained that he gains insight into his students' engagement with English outside of school primarily through conversations with them. By showing interest in what they do outside of school, his pupils are usually willing to share and discuss their hobbies and activities. He also pays attention to the language his students use, as he can often pick up on certain interests based on the vocabulary they use. For example, he may notice that some students use gaming-related language when speaking or writing in English. The teacher also mentions that he has utilized lesson plans that require students to write about their interests, providing him with further insight into their hobbies and passions. He finds that this activity helps him understand his students better. In addition to these methods, the teacher also gains insight into his students' interests by speaking with their parents during teacher-parent conferences and other school events. By collaborating with parents, he is able to better understand his students' home life and how it may impact their engagement with English both in and out of the classroom.

The interviewee believes that there is a connection between the English that pupils encounter outside of the classroom and their English language skills. He notes that he particularly observes this in the stark difference in his pupils' oral English skills. Some of his pupils appear to speak English fluently, while others struggle to hold a simple conversation or introduce themselves. Since all his pupils have been in the same class for the past six or seven years, he doesn't think that schooling is responsible for these differences. Rather, he thinks that the differences in English exposure outside of school best explain these disparities.

The interviewee believes that the type of experience pupils have with English outside of school can influence the effect it has on their English skills. He suggests that pupils who engage in active communication with other English speakers, such as through online gaming or social media, may be more likely to develop their language skills than those who only passively consume English-language content. This is because active communication provides more opportunities for pupils to practice their language skills and receive feedback from native or fluent speakers. On the other hand, the interviewee notes that some pupils who spend a lot of time scrolling through platforms like TikTok may not be gaining as much from their exposure to English. Despite being exposed to the language, some pupils lack the confidence to speak English in the classroom. This could be due to a lack of practice in active communication or a

lack of exposure to English speakers who can provide feedback on their language use. The interviewee adds that rather than simply consuming English-language content, pupils may benefit more from seeking out opportunities to practice their language skills, such as by engaging in online communication with other English speakers. By actively using the language, pupils can develop greater confidence and fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English.

The interviewee explains that the effect of English exposure outside of the classroom is significant enough to impact the English lessons in various ways. The discrepancies in English skills among pupils make it difficult for him to create lessons that cater to all of their needs. Additionally, pupils who are already struggling with their English speaking abilities tend to become even more self-conscious and insecure about their skills. This insecurity further inhibits their ability to practice speaking English in class. Therefore, the teacher believes that fostering a sense of security and confidence in his students is crucial to help them speak English confidently. The interviewee also notes that although some pupils may appear to speak English fluently, they often face challenges with basic grammar and spelling, which creates a significant gap between their spoken and written English skills.

When inquired about any negative aspects of English outside the classroom, and the interviewee responded that some of his pupils bring activities like gaming into the classroom, which hinders their learning. As all the pupils have their own iPads, some of his male students use them to play games instead of participating in class, leading to disruptions. Furthermore, the interviewee observed that some students have difficulty distinguishing between formal and casual writing. He recounted a particular incident where one student used informal language, including abbreviations like "AFAIK" and "IDK," in an essay. The teacher was surprised when the student genuinely did not understand why such language was inappropriate in an academic essay. The interviewee believes that this confusion may be due to the abundance of English language exposure that students encounter outside of the classroom, where informal language is more common.

The interviewee explains that when planning his English lessons, he takes into account his pupils' experiences with English outside of the classroom. He focuses on what his pupils lack or what they do not get from the English they encounter outside of school. The interviewee recognizes that his pupils tend to listen to more English than they read or write, so he considers

this aspect while planning his lessons. He notes that his pupils are exposed to a lot of English from online sources, and therefore he emphasizes the importance of having his pupils produce something of their own, either through speaking or writing English.

The interviewee relayed that he doesn't consider the curriculum much when planning his lessons. He finds that the learning goals set in the curriculum don't account for the vast differences in his students' abilities. Some students easily surpass the goals set in the curriculum, while others are unlikely to achieve them during their time in his class. The teacher focuses on understanding his students' individual needs to progress on their English learning journeys. He notes that the current curriculum allows for flexibility in how to approach these goals, which he believes is crucial to providing his pupils with the best possible help.

#### **4.2.2 Interview 2**

The second interview was of a male teacher. He has completed four years of university, gaining the title adjunct. He has been working as a teacher in upper primary school for close to eight years. He is formally educated in the subjects English, music and social studies. He is currently teaching three sixth grade classes as a subject teacher(faglærer), teaching exclusively English.

The interviewee believes that his pupils encounter English all the time outside of the classroom, to a much greater extent than he encountered English growing up. As English becomes more and more omnipresent in Norwegian society, his pupils in turn encounter it more and more. His pupils engage with English when watching TV-series, movies, playing games and when reading posts online. He also believes they meet a lot of English words and expressions when talking to others in their day to day lives, as English words and expressions are used more and more even when speaking Norwegian. The interviewee relayed that many of his male students were frequent gamers, and to his understanding, most of them play games in English. He also mentioned that his students often used the streaming platforms twitch and YouTube where they have the ability to communicate with other international viewers of the streams, where all communication occurs in English. A particular example of this is a group of his male pupils who have told him that they regularly play games with kids their age from France, and that they met through a videogame. He could not recall what the game was called, nor what type of game it was. It is his belief that this particular group of pupils benefit greatly from this relationship, as it

puts them in a situation where English is the best way to successfully communicate. He further mentioned that such a setting where it is necessary to employ English to communicate properly is hard to replicate in a classroom setting, as everyone in their classroom also speak Norwegian. His students often fall back on speaking Norwegian in their English lesson, which is not possible when communicating with people online. He believes that such authentic English learning settings, where English is in actuality the most effective way to communicate, is one of the big draws English outside of the classroom can have for pupils' English development. However, this is a particular situation which some of his pupils are able to take part in, and he believes that most of his pupils are not presented with opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom often, apart from when traveling abroad.

The interviewee stated that he believed that his male pupils actively engage with English outside of the classroom, in large part due to gaming, as they actively use English to communicate, rather than just passively being exposed to the language. His female student, on the other hand, were more often engaging with English in a passive way, through watching TV-shows or listening to music. When asked about how he attains insight into his pupils' extramural habits, the teacher said that it is difficult to attain good insights into their Extramural habits. He stated that most of his insight is gained when the students bring their extracurricular activities into the classroom, both in positive and negative ways. A negative example of this is when students play video games on their iPad or phone during lessons, which the teacher finds irritating. A positive example of this is when students use their interest outside of the classroom as inspiration for their work, such as when writing a paper about a musician they like. The teacher believes that in cases such as that, students' extramural activities can be a great asset to English lessons. He also mentions that he gains some insight into their extramural activities through talking with his pupils, however since he teaches three different classes, he has limited time to talk to each of his pupils about their extracurricular activities.

The interviewee believes that frequent exposure to English outside of the classroom is a great asset for the student's comprehension of spoken English, but it is not his experience that it contributes positively to their writing skills. He is also sceptical to the assertion that English outside the classroom is beneficial to all of his students spoken English skills. He holds this belief to the fact that his students seem to understand an incredible amount of English, a lot more

English than he understood at their age, yet many are very reluctant to speak English in the classroom. This reflects the fact that his pupils get a lot of English inputs through the English they encounter outside of school, yet they are rarely called upon to create something of their own. The ones who do engage in activities which requires them to speak English, such as the gamers who speak English with people they play with, benefit greatly from the practice such interactions enable, according to the interviewee.

The interviewee further elaborates, stating that as his pupils get a lot of English input through their engagement with English outside of school, he tries to focus on enabling the students to produce English in his classroom, either through writing their own texts, or through speaking English. When it comes to getting his pupils to speak English in the classroom, the interviewee struggles with the fact that many of his pupils are very reluctant to speak English. Many of his pupils regularly answer him in Norwegian, despite him asking questions in English. He believes that some of this behaviour can be explained by the large differences in English speaking skills between his pupils. When the more reluctant speakers witness some of the more proficient students speak English, they might make unfavourable comparisons to their abilities, and lose confidence in their own. He believes that these large differences in speaking proficiency is largely caused by the opportunities to speak English outside of school, as opposed to being created through schooling. He fears that his students who are reluctant to speak English are stuck in a sort of bad spiral. Their lack of English-speaking opportunities has detrimental effects on their English-speaking proficiency, which in turn causes them to avoid English speaking opportunities and so on. He wishes he was able to motivate his pupils to speak to speak English more but relents that it is hard when they are trapped in such a negative feedback loop. He tries to tell his pupils that they should compare themselves to where they are at currently, as opposed to other classmates, but he does not believe his pupils take this to heart.

The interviewee that the biggest negative aspects of English outside of the classroom is that it creates such large differences between his pupils. He finds it hard to plan lessons which are in accordance with all of his pupils' proximal zones of development. He finds that some of his pupils find his lessons way too simplistic, while others have no chance to keep pace with his lessons. Additionally, he believes that there is a large gap between his many of his pupils' English comprehension and speaking skills, and their writing skills. This is problematic, as many

of his pupils struggle with finding lessons where he expects them to practice their writing skills to be interesting or relevant, as the proficient students find it simplistic despite the lessons being appropriate for their writing skills. He admits that he used to overestimate his pupils English writing capacity, as he believed it would somewhat mirror their speaking abilities, however this is not the case. The interviewee does not think that the school as an institution is ready for the emerging language landscape pupils encounter outside of the classroom, as he believes it produces such large differences between the pupils' abilities that they do not benefit from being taught in the same classroom. He thinks that the pupils' might benefit more from being organized in classes based on their abilities, although he relents that such organisation runs counter to the Norwegian schools' larger vision of equality in schooling.

The interviewee believes that the curriculum in large part provides the teacher with opportunities for meeting his pupils needs when faced with English outside the classroom but relents that the curriculum does not account for the large differences between the pupils, and the differences between their spoken and written English. According to him, the curriculum assumes that the pupils oral and written English skills are on par with each other, which in his experience is not the case.

### **4.2.3 Interview 3**

The third interview was of a male teacher, who when asked about his background stated that he had completed four years of general teacher education but had not obtained a bachelor's degree or anything of the sort. Over the years, he had completed many smaller courses related to various school subjects, mainly online, including Norwegian, religious & ethical studies, maths, and science. He clarified that he had no formal training in English, which was important to emphasize. He had been working as a teacher for nearly a decade, primarily in lower secondary school. At present, he is the contact teacher for a fifth-grade class, and this is his first year teaching primary school. He further explained that he had no prior experience teaching English as a subject until the previous school year, so it is a completely new subject for him.

When asked about the experiences his pupils might have with English outside of the classroom, the interviewee explained that the pupils encounter English in various settings, as they live in a society that has a significant presence of the English language, even though they are in Norway.

The interviewee's class has students from different backgrounds, and many of them have a heritage from English-speaking nations. According to the interviewee, four of his pupils speak English as their first language at home and use it frequently. The pupils also get exposed to English while playing video games; about ninety percent of the current class play video games daily, which involves a lot of English. While the interviewee doesn't think the pupils use social media platforms frequently, some of them use English-only platforms. The pupils encounter English online and when watching TV, movies, and series. The interviewee notes that English permeates throughout society. The pupils encounter a lot of English online, but they also use it at home. Many of his pupils have parents with different linguistic backgrounds, and in households where parents don't share a first language, English often becomes the language spoken at home. Some parents intentionally speak English at home to improve their language skills. In summary, the pupils encounter English outside of school through various sources, including online platforms, their parents, and society at large.

The interviewee notes that he previously held a preconception that mostly boys played video games, but now he has observed that many girls also play. While he believes that there is still a difference, with boys playing more video games, he thinks that the gender gap is starting to narrow. He has also noticed a difference between the reading materials chosen by boys and girls during their reading quarter. He states that virtually all the boys read manga, which are only available in English, and they do so willingly, while the girls choose different reading materials. As a result, the boys get some exposure to English from the manga they read, and the interviewee believes that this reflects their choice of reading materials outside of school as well.

The interviewee explains that as a teacher, one must be curious and interested in what the pupils do at home. The pupils often share their spare time activities, such as playing video games, with him. He gives an example of a pupil who plays games with a friend from a different country, communicating entirely in English. He attributes this insight to his genuine interest and curiosity towards his pupils. The interviewee mainly gains insights through speaking with his pupils, although he also gains some insights through parent-teacher conferences. He notes that he has more contact with the pupils than their parents. He acknowledges that some of his students speak English just as well as he does in everyday conversations, although they may not have the same

level of grammatical knowledge. The interviewee states that he is unsure if this fact is caused by his students exceeding English speaking capabilities, or his lack of formal education.

The interviewee states that it certainly affects the pupils, although it may not expand their vocabulary much. He believes that it makes them more comfortable with speaking simple English and that pupils who play games get a lot of practice speaking short phrases. However, he is skeptical about whether this practice translates well to more complex conversations on topics other than gaming. Nonetheless, he believes that English outside the classroom is overall positive, not a negative thing, as it at least gets the pupils to speak English, even if the language used is rather rudimentary. He acknowledges that pupils are highly motivated to use English when playing games, but he doesn't believe that this motivation translates to English lessons to a large degree. The interviewee notes that speaking English at home probably contributes to making pupils more comfortable with speaking English in the classroom. He observes a large difference between pupils who use English regularly and those who are not as exposed to English, citing a student who struggles with English and has issues with engagement. He believes that her lack of engagement with English outside of school contributes to her difficulties in a meaningful way, as she is not exposed to much English naturally and does not seek it out for herself.

The interviewee explained that he does not plan the English lessons himself, as there is someone on his team who plans the English subject for the whole grade. However, he still plans how to conduct the lesson in his particular class. He tries to find an appropriate level to teach English at, taking into account the large gap in English abilities that exists among his students. He believes that this gap is mostly due to the English they encounter outside of the classroom. To engage his students, he focuses on teaching English through games such as Alias and other game-based teaching activities. Although it isn't exactly comparable to the video games they play at home, it still is very motivating for the pupils in a similar way.

The interviewee states that the impact of English outside the classroom on pupils can have both positive and negative effects. He believes that exposure to English outside of school can help some pupils improve their English language skills. However, it can also create a significant gap between those who are exposed to English outside the classroom and those who are not. He observes that pupils who come from cultures where English content is typically dubbed rather



than subtitled may find it harder to become comfortable with the language. As a result, these pupils may struggle to keep up with their peers who have more exposure to English outside of school. This gap can be particularly noticeable in their ability to understand and speak the language. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that this negative impact can be mitigated by offering additional support to those who need it, such as extra tutoring or resources to help them catch up with their peers.

When asked if he feels equipped to handle the changing landscape of English that pupils encounter outside of the classroom, the interviewee acknowledges that he has observed a widening gap between his interests and those of his students over the ten years of his teaching career. He remembers a time when he was familiar with the celebrities and personalities that his pupils were interested in, but now he finds it challenging to keep up with their evolving interests. The teacher recognizes that this presents an obstacle for him when it comes to understanding how his students engage with English outside of the classroom. He is aware that to be an effective teacher, he must be able to relate his lessons to what is relevant and interesting for his pupils. However, with the constant evolution of popular culture, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep pace with their interests and find ways to incorporate them into his teaching. To mitigate this issue, he regularly engages with his students, asking them about their interests and what they are reading, watching, and listening to outside of the classroom. He uses this information to adjust his lessons and incorporate references and examples that are relevant to his students' lives.

Furthermore, he states the importance of creating a classroom environment that encourages open communication and feedback. By encouraging his students to share their opinions and interests, he is better able to understand their perspectives and tailor his lessons accordingly. He also seeks to foster a sense of curiosity and excitement about English language and literature among his students, so that they are motivated to learn and engage with the subject matter both inside and outside of the classroom.

The interviewee expresses that he does not give much thought to the English curriculum, as he focuses on meeting his class's needs to improve their English language skills. He notes that the new curriculum is very broad in scope, allowing him to exercise greater autonomy in his teaching, which he considers essential. The teacher emphasizes that his primary concern is

understanding his students' unique strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, as well as maintaining a positive classroom environment through effective management. While he recognizes the importance of the curriculum in providing a framework for his teaching, he does not prioritize it over his students' needs.

The interviewee believes that effective teaching involves tailoring his methods to the needs of his students, rather than relying solely on a prescriptive curriculum. As his class is so diverse in their English abilities, the goals for learning set by the curriculum aren't particularly helpful for his teaching practice. He believes that understanding his pupils' interests and backgrounds, along with effective classroom management, creates an environment in which students can engage with English language learning more effectively.

#### **4.2.4 Interview 4**

The fourth interviewee was a female teacher. She has completed four years of teaching education at a university level, with education in maths, religious and ethical studies, and Spanish. She lived in Spain, where she completed some courses for English teaching, although these courses are not accepted at a university level in Norway. She taught English to children, teens, and adults during night courses in Spain for about one and a half years. Later, she got a master's degree tied to PPT. Currently, she has been teaching upper primary school-aged children for four years and is currently teaching a fifth-grade class.

In the interviewee's opinion, pupils nowadays have much more exposure to the English language outside of the classroom. Even in her relatively short time as a teacher, she has noticed that her pupils' engagement with English outside of the classroom has become more noticeable. She notes that many encounter English while playing video games on iPads, phones, or PlayStations, where the language allows them to cooperate, and opens up greater opportunities for them within the games. Additionally, she observes that pupils also encounter English online, increasingly through social media platforms like YouTube and its influencers, as well as through their everyday vocabulary, where they tend to use many English expressions without translation. Particularly when discussing gaming-related topics, pupils use a lot of English terminology, and many of them even speak English to each other on a daily basis, especially those who play video games.

When asked about gendered differences, the interviewee stated that in her class, it is mostly the boys who play games, while the girls do so to a much lesser extent. Although some girls might play games such as Roblox, they prefer to meet physically after school. During these meetings, they might be scrolling on their phones or making videos, but it seems that they make fewer plans to play games after school than the boys.

The interviewee gains insight into her pupils' experiences with English through multiple sources. Her pupils often share their experiences with her, telling her about their achievements in games like Roblox. The interviewee also observes the types of words her pupils are familiar with, noting that they tend to know more words related to gaming than everyday objects. These gaming-related words are often used by her pupils in their everyday language, even when speaking their first language. In addition to this, the interviewee also gains insight into her pupils' extracurricular activities through their parents.

The interviewee mentioned that the pupils' exposure to English outside of the classroom has a significant impact on their English abilities. According to her, the difference in English abilities among pupils becomes greater due to the exposure to the language outside the classroom. Some pupils feel that their English skills are terrible despite being capable of what is expected of a fifth grader. This is due to the fact that many pupils seemingly know a lot of English, speak it fluently, and even read it as well as their own first language. Those who speak English at home or travel frequently might contribute to this. As a result, those who know English at the expected level may feel like they are bad at it and lose confidence. Additionally, it becomes more difficult to adapt the teaching to a level that suits every pupil due to the large gap. It is hard to create lessons that are fitting for all pupils since the class is so heterogeneous. Another problem related to this is that many pupils can speak and understand English well, but they cannot write it properly. They struggle with grammar and writing words, which can demotivate them. The grammar that pupils need to practice seems childish to them, particularly for those who excel in English. While they know it when speaking, they struggle to write it. The interviewee suggests that teachers should lower the complexity of their lessons while keeping the pupils motivated. English outside the classroom is useful for learning oral skills, but teachers must focus on improving writing and grammar.

The interviewee asserts that there is indeed a correlation between the English language encounters of pupils outside the classroom and their oral language skills. She notes that students gain English skills from a perceived need. For instance, students who play online games and need to complete a task or defeat a boss may watch English-language YouTube videos to understand how to accomplish their goal. This, in turn, motivates them to understand what is being said and they soak up the information quickly, becoming extremely good at understanding spoken English. The interviewee notes that English outside of the classroom contributes to an inner drive and motivation to learn.

The interviewee was uncertain whether there is a difference in the level of motivation to understand English among different types of engagement outside of the classroom. However, she noted that gaming could be more effective than watching content on apps like TikTok because gamers are required to use the information they have learned to progress in the game. This means they need to process and apply what they have seen, which leads to a deeper level of understanding. On the other hand, watching videos on TikTok is a more passive process and may not require as much reflection or understanding. Gamers need to understand what is being said in order to succeed, while TikTok viewers may just be entertained by facial expressions or dances without necessarily needing to comprehend the language.

The interviewee believes that teachers can help pupils use passively consumed content as a starting point to produce something themselves. However, caution is necessary when considering how to proceed. For instance, if teachers choose to use TikTok in the classroom, they must consider the maturity of their pupils and be able to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the platform. The interviewee thinks that this discussion would be better suited for lower secondary school students rather than the younger pupils in her class. She also believes that teachers need to be more careful when bringing media like TikTok into the classroom compared to using a textbook.

When asked about potential negative sides of engagement with English outside the classroom, the interviewee stated that when pupils communicate in English outside of the classroom, they often use emojis and abbreviations which may not translate well to other settings they may encounter in the future, such as a professional environment. It is important for teachers to differentiate between appropriate messaging and essay writing, as this can be a challenge for

pupils who struggle with writing in English. While this is not a unique problem caused solely by English outside of the classroom, it is a challenge for some students. The interviewee also expressed concern that emojis may replace words, leading to a limited active vocabulary among students. Students may understand many different words but have difficulty expressing themselves with variation and colour in their language.

The interviewee mentioned that she considers the fact that pupils have exposure to English input outside of the classroom, and as such encourages them to produce more English during lessons. While acknowledging that many pupils play games, she doesn't incorporate them into her teaching practice very often because she believes pupils already spend enough time in front of screens. Instead, she prefers to focus on everyday topics to expand their vocabulary in other areas. However, she is open to allowing pupils to choose topics of interest to them, such as gaming, when they are writing a story or factual essay.

The interviewee believes that schools are prepared to handle the subject of English itself, but there are concerns about the social implications of gaming and social media use outside of the classroom. The increasing use of AI, such as ChatGPT, is also a recent change that schools need to address in terms of exams and other related matters, the teacher relays.

The interviewee believes that the English curriculum falls short in addressing the needs of pupils who have already encountered and engaged with English outside of the classroom, which may be more complex than what is expected for their grade level. She notes that while the curriculum is designed for simpler English, some pupils may feel that they have poor English skills despite meeting the curriculum's expectations. She argues that the curriculum does not account for the incredible English skills a lot of pupils have because of the English they meet outside of school, but she is unsure if it would be fair if it did.

## 5. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews will be reviewed and discussed in light of relevant literature and research, as a means to answer the following main- and sub- research question(s):

*What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs toward, and approaches to, extramural English?*

- 1) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about their pupils engagement with extramural English?*
- 2) *What are upper primary school teachers' beliefs about the effect extramural English has on their pupils English language development?*
- 3) *What are upper primary school teachers approaches to teaching English considering their beliefs related to Extramural English?*
- 4) *Do upper primary school teachers feel prepared to meet their pupils needs considering their beliefs related to Extramural English?*

The discussion is divided into five subsections: The first subsection (5.1) will regard the interviewed teachers' perceptions of their pupils' engagement with extramural English and pertains to the first sub-question. The second subsection (5.2) will examine teachers beliefs related to extramural English's effects on their pupils' English skills and pertains to the second sub-question. The third subsection (5.3) will focus on teachers' beliefs related to extramural English's effect on motivation for SLA and pertains to the second research question. The fourth subsection (5.4) will examine teachers approaches to classroom practice in light of their pupils' engagement with extramural English and is related to the third sub-question. The fifth and final subsection (5.5) will examine teachers beliefs related to the LK20 in light of their pupils' engagement with extramural English and relates to the fifth sub question.

## **5.1 Teachers perceptions of their pupils' engagement with EE activities**

The interviewed teachers were asked about what types of engagement with English outside of the classroom they believed their pupils encountered. The majority of the interviewed teachers reported experiencing that their pupils have more engagement with English outside of the classroom when compared to pupils of previous generations. All of the participants in the study have been working as teachers for less than ten years, which makes this change even more notable as it seems to have developed rapidly. Due to this immense and increasing exposure, pupils today have more access to English through their extracurricular interest. The language acquisition that occurs outside of school is then brought into the classroom, which is a phenomenon observed by all the teachers interviewed in this study. The beliefs expressed by the interviewed teachers here largely correspond with the literature surrounding EE. The continual increase in exposure to EE in second language youth's daily lives has been shown and discussed in the literature, and researchers agree that there is a clear upwards trend in pupils' engagement with EE, which is reflected in the interviewed teachers' beliefs (Berns et al., 2007; De Wilde et al., 2018; Sundqvist & Sylven, 2012). Researchers largely explain this fact through the increase of to both access and use of the internet, and through globalization of the world. The internet's role in explaining the increase of EE in young learners of English is additionally reflected in the interviewed teachers' beliefs.

The interviewed teachers have mentioned a plethora of different extramural activities which they find their pupils engaging in. They mentioned activities such as watching TV-series, movies, reading both online and offline, listening to music, playing video games, and using social media platforms, as well as talking with English speaking parents or peers. These are all activities which are encompassed under the term EE, and which have been studied in relation to EE (Berns et al., 2007; De Wilde et al., 2018; Leona et al., 2021; Sundqvist & Wikstrom, 2015; Sundqvist & Sylven, 2012) All the interviewed teachers mention gaming as a particularly large component of the EE their pupil's encounter. The impact of gaming as an EE activity has been for considerable interest for researchers and has spawned several studies looking at this activity (Nordfjellmark, 2022; Bogdanova, 2019; Sundqvist & Wikstrom, 2015). Some of the teachers mentioned that although most of their pupils engage with English extramurally, there are some outliers who don't encounter much English outside of the classroom.

The participants mentioned were asked about how they gain insight into their pupils' extramural habits, as such habits can tautologically not be observed in the classroom. A strategy for gaining insight mentioned by all the interviewed teachers was talking with their pupils about their extracurricular interests, mentioning teacher-student relations as an important factor. The interviewees also mentioned observations of their pupils when they communicate and interact with each other, such as during lunch breaks and recess. The parents of the pupils were also mentioned as a source of insight, in settings such as teacher-parent conferences.

The interviewed teachers seem to agree that there is a gendered gap in the engagement with gaming as an EE activity, however, that gap is diminishing according to some of the interviewees. The existence of a gendered gap in the engagement with EE is corroborated in the finding of the studies by Halvorsen and Haaland (2021), as well as Sundqvist and Sylvé (2014). The question of whether the gap is diminishing is less supported in the literature, as there has not been long term studies comparing the Extramural habits of similar populations of students with a focus on gender.

The interviewees believe that their pupils receive English from multiple sources, not solely their teachers. Krashen's (1987) input hypothesis claims that input occurs in a variety of settings where the learner is exposed to English. When engaging with extramural activities, pupils may use their experiences provide learners with authentic language input and help them develop their language skills beyond the classroom. According to Krashen, input that is slightly above the learner's current level of proficiency, or "comprehensible input," is the most effective way to acquire a second language. By exposing themselves to English outside of the classroom, learners are more likely to encounter a lot of English input, which can lead to more rapid language acquisition. However, the types of input are not curated, such as within a classroom setting.



## **5.2 Teachers beliefs of extramural engagements effect on pupils' English skills**

The interviewed teachers were asked about what effect they believe EE has on their pupils' English skills. It is generally their belief that engagement with EE activities affects their pupils' English skills positively. Furthermore, the interviewed teachers believe that activities that promote interaction with English during the activity, such as playing video games where the pupils can chat with, or talk to, others in English. Videogames where the instructions were in English, or where video content surrounding the game was primarily in English, promoted the interviewed teachers' pupils to read and listen to English, and seemed to be most effective in their English development.

On the other hand, there was expressed some skepticism from the interviewed teachers whether the positive effects of EE help with all aspects of their pupils' English language development, or if EE is limited to improving their oral and comprehension skill. It is generally not the interviewed teachers' belief that EE has the same beneficial effects as it pertains to writing skills as to other aspects of their pupils' English development. The general opinion was that written skills had to be a focus for the English taught in school, as opposed to extramurally. The claim that EE does not affect all aspects of English language development is corroborated by Phan's (2021) findings, showing that although EE had a positive correlation with oral and comprehension performance, the correlation between EE and written performance was not clear. Leona et al. (2021) findings suggest that although students who engaged in extramural English activities had higher levels of English proficiency than those who did not, the relationship was moderated by their level of classroom English instruction.

Some of the interviewed teachers express a worry that exposure to English might affect their pupils negatively, as exposes them to conceptions about the language which negatively effects their understanding of English. Some of the interviewed teachers express a worry that their pupils are replacing written English word with emojis when communication extramurally. This reflects what some researchers (Munoz, 2006; Gass, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2006) call negative evidence. Apart from this worry, the interviewed teachers largely seem to believe that EE contributes to their pupils' English development in a positive way, reflecting the research on the topic.

### **5.3 Teachers beliefs of extramural engagements effect on pupils' motivation for SLA**

One belief commonly reflected throughout the interviewees was the motivational aspect that extramural activities bring to learning English. The interviewees indicate that the participants believe that engagement with EE does not hinder motivation for learning English. Rather, the interviewed teachers largely agree that EE activities contribute to motivation. Many of the interviewees believed that EE benefits pupils' motivation as extramural activities creates a perceived need for employing English in a variety of settings. The fourth interviewee exemplifies this with a pupil playing a video game and requiring English to understand a video tutorial telling him how to proceed in the video game. The motivation for engaging with English, in this case, stems from the pupil wanting to complete the videogame, as opposed stemming from a wish to develop their English skills. Such motivation that is driven by an internal desire is described by Legault (2016) as *instinct motivation* and is considered the more desired form of motivation.

Sundqvist and Sylven (2016) state that motivation for developing competence in a second language might increase if the learner experiences a necessity to understand and communicate in the second language. Sundqvist and Sylven (2012) demonstrated that pupils who played video games were more motivated to learn English in comparison to their peers who were not frequent gamers. Although the participants largely agree that EE contributes to motivation for learning English, some of the interviewed teachers expressed skepticism that this motivation translated to learning English within the formal context of school. This skepticism mirrors the gap between extramural English and school English described by Sundqvist & Olin-Scheller (2013). Their conclusion is that the gap can be diminished with proactive measures, such as training programs for teachers in EFL classrooms. Teachers who find constructive approaches to present problematic EFL classroom settings, are more likely to teach in line with learners' zone of proximal development (Gass & Mackey, 2006; Dronyei, 2005). By doing so, teachers are likely to diminish the discrepancy between their pupils' actual selves and their ideal L2 selves, which is a powerful motivational factor for second language learning. The third interviewee, who expressed skepticism about the applicability of EE in a classroom setting, is not formally educated English didactics, and as such, will likely not have the necessary training to diminish this discrepancy efficiently in accordance with Sundqvist & Olin-Scheller (2013) prescription.

Furthermore, the interviewed teachers mention the importance of interactivity as an important component for making EE effective, particularly in the context of motivation. The fourth interviewee mentions that gaming might be a more valuable extramural activity as opposed to watching videos on a platform such as TikTok, as the former requires the information to be interacted with. The interviewees mention mechanism of interactions such as chatting with other players, reading or listening to text within the game, or watching tutorials in order to better proceed in their games. In the study by De Wilde et. al. (2019), they state that activities which are based on interaction gives L2 learners valuable inputs, reflecting the interviewees assertion that gaming is a valuable extramural activity. The value of appropriate input while engaging in extramural activity can be a highly influential factor in the successful acquisition of a second language.

#### **5.4 Teachers considerations for classroom practice in light of Extramural English**

There are several studies which have shown an improvement in pupils' oral abilities, as well as a developed vocabulary, in connection with EE (De Wilde et al, 2020; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sundqvist & Sylven, 2012). These findings are, as stated before, largely reflected in the beliefs of the interviewees. Despite the ample evidence, as well as the teachers own beliefs, there seems to be some hesitations within the interviewed teachers to incorporate extramural activities into their lessons. The interviewed teachers mentioned multiple reasons for this hesitation. Some of the interviewed teachers mention that EE can negatively impact their classroom practice in so far as their pupils bring their EE activities into the classroom in a counterproductive way. Multiple of the interviewed teacher mention the example of their pupils playing video games during their lessons, which disrupts their planned lesson. One of the interviewed teachers mentioned that she believes that her pupils are not mature enough yet to be able to discuss platforms such as TikTok in a nuanced way, and she therefor tends to avoid brining content from such platforms into her classroom.

A contention with EE mentioned by all the teachers is the fact that EE leads to large discrepancies within their group of pupils. While some of their pupils benefit greatly from EE, and as such greatly exceed the expected English language competencies of an upper primary school pupil, others who do not engage with English in the same way lag behind. As such, the interviewed teachers find it hard to create lessons which are suited to all their pupils' needs to further their English development.

A similar issue was described by some of the interviewed teachers, which is the issue that arises as a consequence of a discrepancy between their pupils' oral English skills, and their written English skills. When the teacher asks their pupils to practice their written skills, the pupils experience the written English they were thought as being at a rudimentary and childish level, despite the teacher seeing a need for them to practice their English skills at that level.

## **5.5 Extramural English in the LK20, and schools' preparedness**

The interviewed teachers were asked about the LK20 in relation to EE, and their opinion on whether Norwegian schools are prepared to meet the continual development in pupils EE engagements. Many of the interviewed teachers expressed that they in large part plan their lessons without thinking of the curriculum. The teachers argued that their familiarity with their pupils, as well as the teachers understanding of their pupils' needs, were more important factors to consider when planning their lessons. The interviewed teachers were generally positive to the new curriculum, due to them experiencing it as less restrictive than the previous curriculum.

The curriculum gives provides goals for achievement in the English subject (læringsmål). When the goals set by the curriculum are not aligned with the pupils' actual development, it is not particularly helpful. Some of the interviewed teachers expressed the belief that the curriculum does not properly recognize the large diversity in their pupils' English development caused by their engagement with extramural English, and as such not providing appropriate goals for their pupils' English development. They see as an issue effecting both over- and underachieving pupils, with the goals set for the curriculum being easily achieved for some pupils, and unachievable for others. One of the teachers mentioned that she believed that the goals described in the curriculum was geared towards simpler English, and that her pupils who meet the requirements of the curriculum still feel like they are underachieving. In her opinion, the curriculum doesn't account for the English skills pupils have because of EE.

On the topic of preparedness, some teachers felt that schools are prepared as far as English as a subject is concerned, however, the social implications of increasing engagement with gaming and social media are worrisome. One of the interviewed teachers expresses the worry that continual development in his pupils' engagements with EE will make it harder for him to relate to them. He continually finds it harder to relate to their interests, which makes it harder for him to make his lessons feel relevant for his pupils. Bridging the gap between in-classroom and extramural English has been highlighted as beneficial to pupils' motivation for engaging with English lessons in the literature (Sundqvist & Olin-Scheller, 2013). Creating such a connection is more difficult if the teacher is not able to understand the EE their pupils' encounter.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1 Teacher's perceptions and approaches**

This thesis has been a study of Norwegian upper primary school teachers' beliefs concerning Extramural English, as well as their approaches to teaching English in light of those beliefs. A qualitative research approach was selected in order to investigate this topic, with four semi-structured interviews being conducted with Norwegian upper primary school teachers who teach English. The investigation has been divided into four secondary research questions, (1) teachers' beliefs about their pupils' engagement with extramural English, (2) teachers' beliefs about the effect extramural English has on their pupils' English language development, (3) teachers' approaches to teaching English in light of Extramural English, and (4) teachers' preparedness to meet their pupils needs in light of Extramural English.

As for the first research questions, the interviewed teachers all believe that their pupils encounter English in a variety of activities outside of the classroom. Some of the mentioned activities were watching TV-series, movies, reading both online and offline, listening to music, playing video games, and using social media platforms, as well as talking with English speaking parents or peers. The interviewed teachers gained insight into their pupils EE habits through a variety of means, such as speaking with their pupils, observing them speaking to each other, as well as through their pupils' parents. These activities are reflected in the literature surrounding EE. Most of the interviewed teachers expressed the belief that engagement with EE is a growing trend among their pupils. The interviewed teachers held a nuanced belief regarding different types of extramural activities. The teachers generally believe that activities which allow their students to produce English themselves, such as chatting in a videogame, was of higher value than activities which only require a more passive engagement with the language. The teachers generally believe that there is a gendered gap in their pupils' engagement with EE, particularly when it comes to gaming. In their experience, it is mostly their male pupils who play video games. However, some of the interviewed teachers have experienced that this gap is diminishing, with more of their female pupils also starting to play games.

As for the second research questions, the interviewed teachers generally expressed positively to the effect EE had on their pupils' English development. The interviewed teachers believe that extramural activities can be a source of valuable English input for their pupils, as well as provide their pupils with opportunities to practice their English skills. They expressed some skepticism of whether EE contributes to written skills as much as it contributes to oral skills, which is reflective of the current literature on effects of EE (Leona et al., 2021). The interviewed teachers generally believe that EE can be greatly motivating for some of their pupils, however some skepticism was expressed toward whether this motivation translated into English learning in a classroom setting.

As for the third research question, the interviewed teachers had varied approaches to EE. The interviewed teachers expressed some hesitation with bringing EE into the classroom, based on experiencing distractions due to gaming in the classroom, as well as pupils' lack of maturity when discussing social media. As EE provides their pupils with opportunities to gain large amounts of English input, the interviewed teachers consider it important to provide them with opportunity to produce English themselves, through writing and speaking English. The interviewed teachers expressed the issue of large discrepancies between their pupils caused by extramural English, which affects their approach to teaching English.

As for the fourth and final research question, the interviewed teachers expressed worry about schools' preparedness in the face of the evolving extramural landscape. The interviewed teachers generally do not consider the curriculum when planning their lessons, as they find their own understandings of their pupils need to be consideration of higher value. They expressed that the goals provided by the curriculum are largely not aligned with their pupils' development. The problem of large discrepancies within classrooms, which in some of the interviewed teacher's opinion is caused by EE, was a point repeated by all of the interviewed teachers and was the largest worry they had in relation to EE. This large gap between the students makes it hard for teachers to teach within their pupils' zone of proximal development.

## **6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research**

The main limitation of this study is the limited sample of teachers interviewed, as well as the non-probability sampling of participants. Further research should employ probability sampling and a larger group of participants, both in the interest of applicability, and in order to strengthen (or contradict) the conclusions reached within this study. The teachers' beliefs about their students' extramural engagements have, through the discussion, been compared to the previous research about young learners of English's extramural habits, rather than their particular group of pupils. Although this study has found that there is a high correlation between the beliefs of the interviewed teachers, and the understanding of EE and its effect within the literature, this correlation might not be as apparent if their beliefs were compared to their particular group of pupils' engagement with EE. Further research would benefit from a mixed approach, looking at both teacher beliefs as well as pupils' habits, as this is a limitation of this study.

The largest worry expressed by the interviewed teachers in relation to extramural research was the discrepancy between their pupils caused by EE. Further research should investigate whether there is a discrepancy caused by EE, as well as investigate strategies to mitigate the difficulties such a discrepancy might cause. During one of the interviews, a teacher raised the point that the English curriculum does not account for pupils' EE engagements, and she raised the question of whether it should. The point of whether EE should be accounted for in the expectations of pupils' English development would be an interesting point to see discussed in the literature going forward.



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## **8. List of appendixes**

### **8.1 Appendix 1: Interview guide**

#### **Intervju-guide: Teachers' perceptions and approaches to Extramural English**

Intervjutyype: Semistrukturert. Formålet er ikke at intervjuet skal oppleves som en spørsmålsrekke, men heller at spørsmålet er et utgangspunkt for samtalen. Spørsmålene vil justeres fortløpende basert på informantens responser. Intervjuet er forventet å vare i 20-30 minutter.

Formålsbeskrivelse: Formålet med prosjektet er å utforske læreres forståelser av elevers forhold til Extramural Engelsk, og videre se på hvordan denne forståelsen påvirker deres undervisningspraksis.

#### **Spørsmål 1, Bakgrunnsinformasjon:**

Hva utdanningsbakgrunn har du, og hva erfaring har du med å undervise i engelsk?

#### **Spørsmål 2, Elevers erfaringer utenfor klasserommet:**

Hvilke erfaringer med engelsk opplever du at elever møter utenfor klasserommet?

-Er det noen forskjell mellom engelsken jenter og gutter møter på?

#### **Spørsmål 3, Innsikt i elevers erfaringer:**

Hvordan kan vi som lærere få innsikt i elevers erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet?

#### **Spørsmål 4, Påvirkning av Ekstramural Engelsk:**

Hvordan opplever du at dette møtet med engelsk utenfor klasserommet påvirker elevens opplevelse av engelskfaget?

-Opplever du noe sammenheng mellom elevers erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet og elevenes motivasjon for engelsk?

-Varierer det mellom forskjellige typer erfaring?

I hvilken grad tror du at erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet påvirker engelskferdighetene til elevene?

#### **Spørsmål 5, Planlegging av undervisning:**

Når du planlegger undervisning i engelskfaget, tar du høyde for erfaringene elevene har med engelsk utenfor klasserommet?

#### **Spørsmål 7, Negative påvirkning:**

Har du opplevd at elevers erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet har påvirket undervisningen negativt?

#### **Spørsmål 8, Endring i landskapet:**

Føler du at du som lærer, samt skolen som helhet, er forberedt for å møte elevers endrede behov i lys av Engelsken de møter utenfor klasserommet?

-Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

#### **Spørsmål 9, Læreplan:**

Opplever du at læreplanverket for engelskfaget tilstrekkelig tilrettelegger for å møte elevers erfaringer med engelsk utenfor klasserommet?

## **8.2 Appendix 2: Interview guide (translated)**

### **Interview guide: Teachers' perceptions and approaches to Extramural English**

Interview type: Semi-structured. The purpose is not for the interview to feel like a set of questions, but rather for the question to serve as a starting point for the conversation. The questions will be adjusted continuously based on the informant's responses. The interview is expected to last for 20-30 minutes.

Purpose description: The purpose of the project is to explore teachers' understandings of students' relationship to Extramural English, and further examine how this understanding affects their teaching practices.

#### **Question 1, Background information:**

What is your educational background, and what experience do you have with teaching English?

#### **Question 2, Students' experiences outside the classroom:**

What experiences with English do you see students encountering outside the classroom?

-Is there any difference between the English girls and boys encounter?

#### **Question 3, Insight into students' experiences:**

How can we as teachers gain insight into students' experiences with English outside the classroom?



**Question 4, Impact of Extramural English:**

How do you perceive this encounter with English outside the classroom affecting students' experience of the English subject?

-Do you perceive any connection between students' experiences with English outside the classroom and their motivation for English?

-Does it vary between different types of experiences?

To what extent do you believe that experiences with English outside the classroom affect students' English skills?

**Question 5, Planning of teaching:**

When you plan teaching in the English subject, do you take into account the experiences students have with English outside the classroom?

**Question 7, Negative impact:**

Have you experienced students' experiences with English outside the classroom negatively affecting teaching?

**Question 8, Change in the landscape:**

Do you feel that you as a teacher, as well as the school as a whole, are prepared to meet students' changing needs in light of the English they encounter outside the classroom?

-Why/why not?

**Question 9, Curriculum:**

Do you feel that the curriculum for the English subject adequately accommodates students' experiences with English outside the classroom?

## 8.3 Appendix 3: Consent form

### Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

#### *Extramural English: Teacher's perceptions and approaches?*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å utforske engelsklæreres forståelse av, og tilnærming til Extramural Engelsk. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

#### **Formål**

Formålet med forskningsprosjektet er å studere engelsklæreres oppfattelse av elevers møte med engelsk utenfor klasserommet, og hvordan denne oppfattningen videre påvirker deres undervisningspraksis. Forskningsprosjektet er utført som del av min masteroppgave.

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) er ansvarlig for prosjektet

#### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Du blir spurt om å delta i denne undersøkelsen ettersom du er nylig utdannet for å undervise i engelskfaget på grunnskolen, samt...

...underviser i engelsk på barneskolen

...du har erfaring med engelskundervisning på barneskolen

...du har en annen bakgrunn som er relevant for forskningsprosjektet

#### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det å delta i et intervju. Intervjuet vil omfavne spørsmål som innebærer dine tanker om elevers møte med engelsk utenfor klasserommet, og hvordan engelsk utenfor klasserommet tas i betraktning i din undervisningspraksis. Det er viktig å påpeke at dine svar kun vil bli brukt til dette masterprosjektet, og alt av informasjon som kan knyttes til deg vil bli anonymisert.

Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp med lydopptaker, før det transkriberes av studenten. Lydfilene skal oppbevares på OsloMets server. Ved ønske kan du få tilgang til det transkriberte resultatet før anonymisering.

### **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.

- Det er kun masterstudenten og veilederen som vil ha tilgang til disse opplysningene. For å unngå at andre skal få tilgang, vil de bli oppbevart som nevnt ovenfor.
- Deltakerne i dette prosjektet vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen. Alle navn vil bli byttet ut med pseudonymer, dette gjelder også navn på skole/arbeidsplass. Opplysninger som kan være relevant å ha med i publikasjonen er kjønn, alder, utdanning relevant til engelskundervisning, erfaring som lærer, språklig bakgrunn eller annen informasjon som kan være relevant for oppgavens formål og problemstilling, og som ikke kan brukes til å gjenkjenne de aktuelle personene.

### **Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet? Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent. Opplysningene vil senest oppbevares ved årets slutt 2023(desember). Etter dette vil alle personopplysninger og lydopptak bli slettet.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Oslo Metropolitan Univeristy har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandørs personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

## Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Kaja Granum Skarpaas ved Oslo Metropolitan University(veileder/prosjektleder)  
*e-post: [kagrask@oslomet.no](mailto:kagrask@oslomet.no), telefon: +47 67 23 53 20*
- Thomas Moore Haustveit(student)  
*e-post: [s334599@oslomet.no](mailto:s334599@oslomet.no), telefon: +47 93 26 52 59*
- Vårt personvernombud: Ingrid S. Jacobsen, e-post: [personvernombud@oslomet.no](mailto:personvernombud@oslomet.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen av prosjektet som er gjort av Sikts personverntjenester ta kontakt på:

- Epost: [personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no), eller telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Thomas Moore Haustveit  
Masterstudent i Grunnskolelærerutdanningen 5-10.  
Ved Oslo Metropolitan University

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## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Extramural English: Teacher's perceptions and approaches?»,og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

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

---

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## 8.4 Appendix 4: SIKT-evaluasjon

13.05.2023, 22:19

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger



[Meldeskjema](#) / [Extramural English: Teachers perceptions and approaches](#) / Vurdering

### Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

<b>Referansenummer</b> 883428	<b>Vurderingstype</b> Standard	<b>Dato</b> 24.02.2023
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**Prosjekttittel**  
Extramural English: Teachers perceptions and approaches

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**  
OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning

**Prosjektansvarlig**  
Kaja Granum Skarpaas

**Student**  
Thomas Moore Haustveit

**Prosjektperiode**  
10.02.2023 - 30.12.2023

**Kategorier personopplysninger**  
Alminnelige

**Lovlig grunnlag**  
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.12.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

**Kommentar**  
OM VURDERINGEN  
Sikt har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

**FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER**  
Vi har vurdert at du har lovlig grunnlag til å behandle personopplysningene, men husk at det er institusjonen du er ansatt/student ved som avgjør hvilke databehandlere du kan bruke og hvordan du må lagre og sikre data i ditt prosjekt. Husk å bruke leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med (f.eks. ved skylagring, nettspørreskjema, videosamtale el.)

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

**MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER**  
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Se våre nettsider om hvilke endringer du må melde: <https://sikt.no/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

**OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET**  
Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!