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The use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom

Bruk, valg og lese materialets rolle i engelsk-klasserommet

Literature review

30 credits

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## **Abstract**

Gurrettaz, Mathieu, Lee and Berwic (2022) conducted a research about the use of materials in the classroom. The researchers state that while there has been expansive literature on the development and evaluation of language teaching/learning materials, there is considerably less research done on how learners and teachers actually use materials in the classroom. They point out that most research on materials has studied them outside of the classroom, targeted more towards the intended purpose of materials, rather than on their actual impacts in classrooms. The focus has previously been on material development, and not material use. Furthermore, they state that research that has previously been done on material use has typically focused on teachers' action and teachers' pedagogical decisions, while neglecting how students interact with and use materials (Guerrettaz et al., 2022). This thesis aim to gather research done on the use, choice and role of reading material in the EFL-classroom.

## **Sammendrag**

Guerrettaz, Mathieu, Lee og Berwic (2022) gjennomførte en studie om bruken av materiale i klasserommet. Forskerne hevdet at det er omfattende litteratur om utviklingen og vurderingen av språk- og lærematerialer, men at det er vesentlig mindre forskning gjort på hvordan elever og lærere faktisk bruker materiale i klasserommet. De peker på at mesteparten av forskningen gjort på læremateriale er gjort utenfor klasserommet, siktet mer mot materialets hensikt, heller enn på deres faktiske virkning i klasserommet. Fokuset har ligget på materiale-utvikling, ikke materiale-bruk. Tidligere forskning har pekt på lærernes aktiviteter og pedagogiske beslutninger, men utelatt å se på hvordan elever bruker materialet (Guerrettaz et al., 2022). Denne masteren har som mål å samle forskning gjort på bruk, valg og lesematerialets rolle i engelsk-klasserommet

## **Keywords**

Reading, Reading materials, EFL-classroom, Authentic materials, Extensive Reading, Reading Motivation

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Research topic and motivation for choosing this topic

In the fall of 2020, I conducted a research study on how students could be motivated to read in English, or more specifically how teachers could motivate their students to read in English. I did a literature review to find out and gather what previous research had been done about the topic. One of my findings were how the usage and choice of reading materials played a significant role in students' motivation to read. In the FOU-project, the usage and choice of reading materials only served as an under-category. The time-limit and extent of the project made me unable to research this part of motivation as thoroughly as I would have wanted. Therefore, this master thesis will focus on the use of materials in the classroom. Or, more specifically, the use of reading materials in the EFL-classroom. The use of reading material in the classroom is quite interesting, firstly, on how teachers chose what kind of reading material that is being used, but also how these different reading materials benefit different kind of students. What kind of research is done on the usage, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom?

Another aspect of why I have chosen to write about this topic is the limited research done on it. Guerrettaz, Mathieu, Lee and Berwic (2022) conducted a research about the use of materials in the classroom. The researchers state that while there has been expansive literature on the development and evaluation of language teaching/learning materials, there is considerably less research done on how learners and teachers actually use materials in the classroom. They point out that most research on materials has studied them outside of the classroom, targeted more towards the intended purpose of materials, rather than on their actual impacts in classrooms. The focus has previously been on material development, and not material use. Furthermore, they state that research that has previously been done on material use has typically focused on teachers' action and teachers' pedagogical decisions, while neglecting how students interact with and use materials (Guerrettaz et al., 2022).

Therefore, my aim in this research project and master thesis is to gather the research, creating a literature review to see what research has already been done on the topic of the use and choice of reading materials, and gather these findings into this master thesis. Thus, creating an overview of the use, choice and role of reading material in the classroom, as opposed to development and evaluation of reading materials.

## **1.2 Research question**

The research question I have chosen for this master thesis is; *What does research say about the use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom?*

## **1.3 Relevance for English teaching**

The use, choice and role of reading materials are quite relevant for English teaching. In the new curriculum (LK20) one of the core elements are “working with texts in English”. The Ministry of Education and Research (2019) states that “*language learning takes place in the encounter with texts in English*”. Furthermore, they define the concept of texts in quite a broad sense, as they can be “*spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical*” while it can also contain “*writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message*” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). The Ministry of Education and Research’s definition of texts in English shows that the use of textbooks might not be sufficient enough in terms of working with texts in English. Therefore, a study on reading material use might be helpful in knowing what kind of what reading materials other than the textbooks that are available. Furthermore, what kind of reading materials are beneficial to use in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education and Research (2019) states that working with texts in English not only helps students to develop their knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity, but also their insight into ways of living, ways of thinking and traditions of indigenous people. Students shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society through reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English.

These factors will help students develop intercultural competence that will aid them in dealing with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. *“They shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others’ identities in a multilingual and multicultural context”* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). This master thesis will look into the use of authentic materials, which might aid students in developing both their language and their knowledge about culture and society.

Furthermore, reading is considered as one of the basic skills in LK20. The Ministry of Education and Research states that reading in English means *«understanding and reflecting on the content of various types of texts on paper and on screen, and contributing to reading pleasure and language acquisition. It means reading and finding information in multimedia texts with competing messages and using reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information”*. What kind of reading materials will ensure that students succeed with this? The Ministry of Education and Research also writes about the development of reading skills in English, and how it progresses from experimenting with phonemes and speech sounds, spelling patterns and syllables to reading varied and complex texts with fluency and comprehension and being increasingly able to critically reflect on and assess different types of texts. The focus of this thesis, however, is not on the development of reading skills, but might be touched upon as it is may be significant when talking about the role of reading materials in the classroom.

Richard Steel wrote “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body” more than 300 years ago (as cited in Munden, 2019). Munden states that children and adults still need the insights, the encounters with other people’s lives and thoughts, and the exercise that reading can provide, and that there is a saying that the love of reading can only be caught from somebody who has it already. Therefore, teachers have a huge responsibility, not only to teach students to read, but also to find reading materials that ignite the students desire to read.

## 2 Terminology and theory

### 2.1 Reading

As written in chapter 1.3 *Relevance for English teaching*, reading is considered a basic skill in LK20. Linse (2005) states that reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed word. Furthermore, that in order to read one must be able to decode, sound out, the printed words and also comprehend what we read. Linse (2005) separate decoding from reading. She states that while learners may know how to pronounce written words correctly, that would not equal being able to read. A much more complex part of the reading process that involves higher-order thinking skills than merely decoding specific words is reading comprehension. This refers to reading for meaning, understanding and entertainment (Linse, 2005).

Høigård (p.227, 2019) use the formula: reading = decoding x comprehension. The multiplication sign signifies that if one of the factors are missing, either decoding or comprehension, the product, reading, will equal zero. This support Linse's statement that learners may be able to decode, but still not able to read. If the reader is able to decode the letters, and sound out the printed words, but do not grasp the meaning of the text, the reading is not satisfactory. The formula could also be expanded to include motivation; reading = decoding x comprehension x motivation (Høigård, p.227, 2019). Reading amount, as will be mentioned later in this thesis, plays a huge role in students motivation to read. Connected to reading amount is also the term extensive reading, which will also be mentioned later, where reading motivation is a major element of the reading experience.

This thesis focuses on reading in English in the EFL-classroom. As Munden (2019) states, students learn to read in English in different ways and at different ages, and that some students seem to master the skill almost overnight, while others struggle for years. Munden (2019) states that reading is not something we learn once and for all, but a life-long skill that we continue to develop throughout school and afterwards too. Furthermore, she states that reading is not only a skill, but also a social activity. It is something we do alone and



something we do when we chat or text, for example. Three different elements impact reading for second-language learners; the child's background knowledge, the child's linguistic knowledge of the target language, and the strategies or techniques the child uses to tackle the text (Peregoy and Boyle, 2004, as cited in, Linse, 2005). Munden (2019) writes about different ways of reading. She states that most students by year 5 will have made some progress as readers of English. Inexperienced readers and L2 readers typically pay attention to every word in the text. This kind of reading, sometimes called intensive reading, is useful for recipes and other instructions. However, there are other ways of reading as well.

Tishakov (2020) defines reading as a receptive skill, which means that language is taken in and processed, but not actively produced. However, it is not a passive skill. The reading process involves a complex procedure of receiving and interpreting textual information, which requires active cognitive processing.

### **2.1.1 Intensive reading**

Harmer (2015) states that intensive reading often, but not exclusively, is teacher-chosen and teacher-directed. Intensive reading is designed to enable students to develop their ability to read for a number of different purposes, such as getting the general meaning of a text (the gist), sometimes called skimming, finding specific details that the reader is looking for, something called scanning, or understanding what is behind the words (inference) (Harmer, 2015).

Taking a short text, a poem, a short story or article of a few pages, and study and discuss it intensively to squeeze every last drop of meaning out of it, to understand every word, sentence and intention the author had, is called intensive reading (Vicary, 2018). It is about intensively reading a text, and analysing it in depth.

### **2.1.2 Extensive reading**

The intention with extensive reading is, according to Harmer (2015), to get students to read as much as possible, usually away from the classroom. Extensive reading is related to reading amount, and by ensuring that students extensively read, they will improve their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Harmer (2015) states that extensive reading traditionally has been encouraged not for language study so much as for practising reading, while having a pleasurable experience, and gradually acquiring language.

Opposite of intensive reading, one read long passages, often whole books, instead of a few short paragraphs. Focus is on the overall meaning instead of on every single word, texts that are challenging and difficult instead of easy, reading for pleasure instead of work, and reading a lot instead of a little (Vicary, p.78, 2018)

Therefore, one can state that extensive reading is closely connected to reading for pleasure. Macalister defines extensive reading as “the reading of lots of easy, enjoyable books” (2014, as cited in, Harmer, 2015).

## **2.2 Reading materials**

The definition of reading materials in this master thesis is any materials that can be read, in other words written or printed text. Reading materials touched upon in this master thesis is textbooks, in other words this means coursebooks, and authentic reading materials, complex reading material, adapted reading materials etc.

### **2.2.1 Authentic materials**

Kilickaya (2004, as cited in, Arianie, 2017) defines authentic materials as “exposure to real language and use it in its own community”. Genhard classified authentic materials into three categories. One is authentic listening materials, such as radio news, cartoons, songs, etc. Second is authentic visual materials, such as street signs, magazines and newspapers pictures,

post cards, etc. Third is authentic printed materials, such as sports reports, newspapers, restaurant menus, train tickets, etc. (1996, as cited in, Arianie, 2017). For this master thesis authentic visual materials and authentic printed materials will be in focus. Nunan (1989, as cited in, Charboneau, 2016) defines authentic materials as “any material that has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching”.

## **2.3 Literacy**

Literacy will be barely touched upon in this thesis, however, it is an important part of language learning OECD (2001) define reading literacy as “the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate effectively in society”.

## **2.4 Gamification**

Lynette Tan Yeun Ling defines gamification as an innovative pedagogical strategy where digital games are used in an educational setting and as an aid to learning (2018). Pavey (2021) discusses the difference between gamification and game-based learning. Gamification is about providing incentives to play and incorporating elements from games, whereas game-based learning is learning through playing. When making an achievement in games, one are often rewarded with for example badges, and gamification can be seen as using these kind of incentives in real life (Hanus & Fox, 2018). It mimics the achievement unlocking which is prevalent in many different video games.

## **2.8 Motivation**

What drives individuals, causes activity, keeps this activity going, and decide how much effort that is put into this activity? The answer to this question is, according to Imsen (2017), motivation. It is a theoretical term that is closely connected to activity, to learning and well-

being. Furthermore, it is what gives direction, aims, meaning, drive and passion to the action we do (Imsen, 2017).

### **2.8.1 Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation**

Ryan and Deci make a distinction between two types of motivation. One is intrinsic motivation, driven by an internal process, and extrinsic motivation, driven by an external process. Intrinsic motivation is as stated driven by internal processes, such as interest and enjoyment (Ryan et al. 2000, p.54). Intrinsic motivation can be connected to the terms of natural motivation (Imsen, 2017). It is most commonly defined as “doing something for its own sake” (Reiss, 2012).

Extrinsic motivation refers to the pursuit of an instrumental goal (Reiss, 2012). Ryan and Deci (2000) states that while driven by extrinsic motivation, one expects to receive a reward or to reach a goal that has nothing to do with the task at hand, doing something that leads to a separable outcome. For example reading for tests to get good grades, or getting chocolate from your parents if you finish dinner first (Imsen, 2017).

Reiss (2012) uses the example of baseball to differentiate between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. If driven by intrinsic motivation, one would play for no other reason than doing it because one would want to. If driven by extrinsic motivation, however, one would play in order to either please a parent or win a championship.

### **2.8.2 Reading motivation**

Reading motivation is defined by Guthrie and Wigfield as “the individual’s personal goal, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (2000). As stated previously, intrinsic motivation is about doing something out of pure interest or enjoyment. When it comes to intrinsic reading motivation it means reading purely because of

the enjoyment, interest and excitement (Guthrie et al., 2000). Extrinsic motivation is about reaching a goal or receiving a reward. Extrinsic reading motivation is about reading because one expects to gain something, such as recognition, rewards or incentives (Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010).

### **3 Methodological design**

#### **3.1 Research design**

This master thesis will have a theoretical approach on reading material in the classroom, and focus on previously done research. It will be a literature review based on several theses, articles, books and previous research done about the topic of use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom. A literature review is a search and evaluation of the available literature in a given subject or chosen topic area (Royal Literary Fund, 2020). Bolderston states that a literature review can be an informative, critical, and useful synthesis of a particular topic. Furthermore, that it can identify what is known (and unknown) in the subject area, identify areas of controversy or debate, and help formulate questions that need further research (2008).

Steward (as cited in, Bolderston, 2008) states that a good review should be comprehensive, and that evidence should be gathered from all relevant sources, fully referenced, thus allowing others to follow the path of the author to the paper's conclusion, selective, using appropriate search strategies to find the key evidence, it should be relevant and focus on pertinent data, a synthesis of key themes and ideas, balance between different ideas and opinions, be critical in its appraisal of the literature, and analytical, developing new ideas and understandings from the evidence.

As written in the introduction on my motivation for choosing this topic, the choice to write a literature review is to find out what research has already been done on the topic, and to be able to write a master thesis that brings all these perspectives on use and choice of reading

material in the classroom together. Thus, creating a resource for both myself, but also for others that are interested in research done on the topic.

### **3.2 Planning stage**

The first part in the planning stage of this master thesis was to find a research topic that I would find interesting. In my FOU-project I wrote about how teachers could motivate students to read in English. While researching this topic I found that the choice of reading materials that were given to the students had a lot to say about their motivation to read in English. Therefore, I wanted to research this aspect further. Furthermore, I wanted to make it relevant for myself to use in my profession as a teacher. By looking at reading material, and its use, choice and role, I create an overview for me to be able to look back to when considering what reading materials to use in my own classroom one day. What aspects are important to think about? What kind of reading materials give the greatest benefits? What kind of reading materials should be avoided or used with caution?

Secondly, I needed to decide what kind of methodological design I wanted to utilise. I chose to do a literature review to find out what research had already been done on the topic, and gather this information into one thesis. When the methodological design was in order, the next step was to devise a research question that covered the desired research field. As stated above I wanted to partly look into the aspect of motivation when it came to choosing and using reading material. However, motivation is quite an abstract thing, and can be quite hard to measure. So I wanted a research question that would ensure that I could touch upon the aspect of motivation connected to reading materials, but that also was wide enough to bring other aspects in as well. Therefore, I landed on the research question; *What does research say about the use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom?*

Then came the part of actually finding the existing research, and sorting the different results into categories. Thus, creating the subheadings one will find in this thesis; textbook vs. other reading materials, authentic reading materials, reading programs including adapted reading

materials, complex reading materials and LARS, motivation, reading amount, reading habits and the desire to read, gamification, representation, students perception, teachers choice, and teachers challenges. After finding relevant articles to answer my research question, the theory began to fall into place as well.

### **3.3 Search strategy**

#### **3.3.1 Database**

When searching for theses, articles, books and previous research done on the topic, the use of databases came in handy. Oria has been the main database used when searching for literature. In addition, Google Scholar and JSTOR have also been used. However, my preferred database was Oria, and I found most if not all of my sources here. The articles found on google scholar were also found on Oria, so I stuck to what I was most comfortable with using. Thus, it is fair to note that research might be more limited when sticking to one databases, but I was satisfied with the results that showed up there.

#### **3.3.2 Search words**

The hardest part in doing a literature review is finding previously done research. What key words and search words will show the most relevant resources for this master thesis? As stated previously, to conduct a good literature review, evidence should be gathered from all relevant sources, and fully referenced, allowing others to follow the path of the author. Therefore, I have gathered most of the search words used, and the results of my searches. All searches were done in the database Oria first, as I found it the easiest database to utilise.

*Classroom materials EFL* was my first search and resulted in 2148 results. When adding one of my criteriums of it being peer-reviewed, results dropped to 1043. *Reading material use* resulted in 62 972 results, and 17 722 peer-reviewed results. *Reading materials* was by far the search words that brought up most results, with 182 109, and 76 600 peer-reviewed. *Reading material motivation* came in with 4966 and 2303, *authentic reading material* with 1825, and then 796, *extensive reading material* with 5479 and 1490, *reading motivation* with 24 382 and

12 445, *reading material adapted* with 4414 and 3105, *reading material choice* with 7512 and 2530, and *lesestoff motivasjon* with only 2 results.

Table 1.

<b>Search words</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Peer-reviewed results</b>
Classroom materials EFL	2148	1043
Reading material use	62 972	17 622
Reading materials	182 109	76 660
Reading material motivation	4966	2303
Authentic reading material	1825	796
Extensive reading material	5479	1490
Reading motivation	24 382	12 445
Reading material adapted	4414	3105
Reading material choice	7514	2530
Lesestoff motivasjon	2	0

Shown in table 1 are all the search words I used, including how many results that showed up initially, and then how many results that showed up when I applied “peer-reviewed” as a criteria.

The only search word in Norwegian that I managed to get results from were “lesestoff motivasjon”. Here I got a study from Birketveit, Rimmereide, Bader and Fisher (2018) which proved relevant for my master thesis. It should also be noted that some search words are missing, as the plan of being transparent with my searches came a bit later in the writing stage, so some search words have slipped my mind, but I have tried to be a transparent as possible.



The search words came as a result of what I found when reading about classroom materials and reading materials in general, which gave me clues as to what search words could be wise to use next. However, there might be other and better search words that I have failed to come up with or realise would give me better results. However, I am satisfied with the research that I found and have utilised in this master thesis.

Because of the impossibility of reading through all search results to find relevant research, headlines and abstracts were the most important factors when it came to choosing sources for this thesis. Unfortunately, it is also impossible to skim through all search results, so the studies picked out for this thesis had headlines and abstracts that caught my attention. In addition, some articles were found through other research studies or in books. They were referenced to in the studies or in the books, and some proved relevant for this master thesis.

### **3.3.3 Criteria**

As seen above, the results for each search were extensive, and it would be impossible or inhuman to read through all these results. It would have taken too much time to go through everything that shows up. Therefore, creating some criteria for picking out relevant research was an important part of the planning stage.

One of my main criteria were that the research found would have to be peer-reviewed. Another one of my criteria was that it had to be connected to the EFL-classroom, as that is my main focus as an English teacher in a Norwegian classroom.

Grade-level of the students were also a criteria. Since I will teach at primary school, 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I wanted to find research that targeted these grades. A criteria were also that most of the research should be focused on reading material use in the EFL-classroom, and that the research should be centred around EFL-classrooms in Scandinavia or Europe preferably.

However, as I will come back to in my chapter about challenges, I had to deter some from these criteria.

### **3.4 Challenges**

As seen above, there were some set criteria when finding research. However, as written in the introduction, Gurrettaz, Mathieu, Lee and Berwic (2022) conducted a research about the use of materials in the classroom. Development and evaluation of materials are more researched, while considerably less research has been done on how learners and teachers actually use materials in the classroom. Therefore, after doing some test-searches with my chosen search words, I figured out that I had to deviate somewhat from the criteria chosen.

The target group for this master thesis were primarily primary school students in an EFL-classroom, preferably in the European or Scandinavian classroom. However, most research found were done with older students, most at university level. Furthermore, most of the research were conducted in Asia. After reading through all articles that I ended up using in this thesis, I still find the results from these research studies relevant for this master thesis. Some points can be generalised of use, choice and role of reading material in the classroom, regardless of it being an EFL-classroom or not. Some points can also be generalised regardless of the age of the students in the studies.

My inability to spread out the work load, also created some challenges. I started with my master thesis quite late in the semester, resulting in a shorter period of time for scoping out and finding relevant research. I also relied heavily on Oria as my preferred database, as it is the only database that I have used through my studies at OsloMet. As mentioned, I was introduced to JHOST and Google Scholar, but found both databases unsatisfactory.

## 4 Results and discussion

When finding research for this thesis, some reoccurring themes showed up. Therefore, the research chosen for this thesis are placed into categories, to create an easier overview of the research. The reoccurring themes that showed up when looking into the use, choice and role of reading materials were *textbooks vs. other reading materials, reading programs (adapted reading materials, complex reading materials, LARS reading program), motivation, reading amount, reading habits and the desire to read, gamification, representation, students perception, teachers' choices and teachers' challenges* in using other reading materials than the textbook. Some results are relevant under several of the sub-heading chosen, and will be referenced to in several chapters. Especially Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) and Charboneau (2012) touch upon several of my chosen categories and will be referenced to quite a lot. This results and discussion part of this thesis aim to provide a balanced look into reading material use, choice and role in the EFL-classroom.

### 4.1 Textbook vs. other reading materials

Berardo (2006) writes about the use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. One important aspect that this article brings up is the use of textbooks vs. authentic materials. While authentic text is defined as materials that have been produced to fulfil some social purpose in the language community (Peacock, 1997; as cited in Berardo, 2006), non-authentic texts are especially designed for language learning purposes. Berardo points to a few negative sides when using non-authentic texts, such as a textbook. Firstly, that the language is artificial and unvaried. Secondly, that it often contains a series of “false-text indicators” such as; perfectly formed sentences all the time, a question using a grammatical structure, which then gets a full answer, repetition of structures, and very often does not “read” well.

These negative sides of non-authentic material make it very unlike anything that the students will encounter in the real world. Furthermore, it very often does not reflect how the language is really used. Hwang (2005, as cited in; Kung, 2017) states that many ESL/EFL textbooks contain a preaching and patronizing tone, which influences students' learning interest and

motivation negatively. When reading texts in textbooks, especially dialogs, one can see that the language is quite stiff. When communicating in real life, one might use abbreviations and incomplete sentences, while textbooks that are specifically made for language learning purposes have more structured sentences.

Xiaodong Zhang wrote about *Connecting OER With Mandatory Textbooks in an EFL Classroom: A Language Theory-Base Material Adoption*. OER are open-educational resources, such as free research articles, Web-based practices and reading materials (Zhang). Tomlinson (as cited in Zhang) states that in many language classrooms, student learning is primarily reliant on the way in which the teacher delivers textbook content. In EFL contexts, such reliance is particularly salient, as there are limited language-learning opportunities found outside of the classroom or where there exists traditional cultural worship of the authority of textbooks (Kwak, 2017; Wang and Farmer, 2008; You, 2004 as cited in; Zang). In Norway, students might meet English outside of the EFL-classroom because it has become such a central part of everyday life for many Norwegians, with social media, movies, songs, games etc. However, for younger students English might not be a central part of life yet, even though younger and younger students are exposed to it through for example media.

Zhang states that textbooks in the classroom should deliver effective information that can help students understand how to create and unpack content, but that a perfect textbook that would achieve this task does not exist; thus, the agency of teachers in balancing and synthesizing materials is crucial. Therefore, Zhang conducted a study to find out how students adjusted to the use of OER materials. Zhang himself was the instructor of the course, thus, researching how the OER materials he himself chose would work for his students. The students in question are students at a university in China, but the study and perspectives of the students might still be relevant for this master thesis. It shows how EFL students adapt from only textbooks use to textbook and other reading material use.

Zhang mostly focuses on students' perspectives of the use of OER materials vs. textbook, and the data collection includes semi-structured interviews. Before introducing OER materials

properly in the course, some students were more reliant on the mandatory textbook, mostly because that is what they were used to, as the textbook had played a predominant role in their learning so far. One student stated that; *“I am used to using one textbook and conducting an in-depth analysis of its content.. Supplementary materials or OER are fine.. but I just need one textbook that covers everything.. It is reliable”*. Which brings up an interesting perspective. Textbooks are predictable for both teachers and students. One can relate to it as a student as well. It is comfortable getting a mandatory textbook where everything one needs to know throughout the semester is gathered. However, for a deeper understanding of the material, other reading materials are golden.

The interviews, as stated above, showed that in the beginning of the semester, the students favoured the policy of having one mandatory textbook. However, they were not opposed to using other materials as well. One student noted in her interview that there is limitation when it comes to using just one textbook, and as English major students, it would be impossible to learn everything from one textbook. However, she expressed a fear of making selections of other materials herself. Another student supported this statement by stating that the amount of resources available makes it difficult. The mass of information is too much, that they do not know what to read or what is the best for them. These findings are from university students, who are technically adults, which shows that regardless of age, students are reliant on teachers presenting other reading materials for them. The mass of available reading materials are so massive that finding it on their own creates a challenge.

Zhang found through these interviews that the students were not satisfied with the use of just the textbook, and that these EFL students had knowledge demands that exceeded the textbook. Most students seemed to think that the textbook should be used as a basis for the course, but that other resources should be used as well to understand why they have learned what they have from the textbook. Their satisfaction with using other reading materials showed in later interviews where one student stated that the OER were not dense in theory, and it lessened the cognitive load. Another student stated that the reading materials were well selected, and well suited to their understanding level. Showing that the teacher, in this case Zhang himself, had picked out relevant and suited reading materials for his students.

The conclusion from Zhang is that the textbook works as a basis for the courses, but that students benefit from using other reading materials as well. However, only if it aligns with the current need of the students, where it can effectively supplement the knowledge base of EFL students and help them gain an in-depth and extended understanding of the content of mandatory textbooks. Furthermore, it can transform the students from passive readers of textbooks to flexible material users, as well as helping them achieve a better understanding of the expectations of international English communities and enable students to become self-regulated in the process of language learning (Zhang,). The choice of other reading materials than the textbook can not be random or thoughtless.

Charboneau conducted a research study to find out “*what materials, activities, and instructional practices do grade 4 and 5 teachers use to teach English reading?*”. One of the focuses of Charboneau’s research was the reading materials used in EFL primary school classrooms in Norway. Spot on in what this master thesis is looking for, with the students in the study in primary school, and focus on reading materials in the EFL-classroom in Norway.

Results from the questionnaire revealed that the textbook was the most commonly used text source, 59% used the textbook more than five times per month. Furthermore, children’s books were used by 20% of the teachers at least once or twice per month, but their use was infrequent, and only used by a minority of teachers. Looking at other reading materials such as newspaper and magazines, less than 3% of teachers used them at least once or twice per month. Comics were used a bit more, with around 17% of teachers reporting to using it at least once or twice a month. Internet texts were used at least occasionally by almost half of the teachers (Charboneau). Showing that textbooks are the dominating reading material of choice for most teachers, at least in this study.

These studies show that when it comes to textbooks vs. other reading materials, there is no definite winner. Textbooks are made specifically for language learning purposes, and provide teachers and students with learning possibilities of correct language use. However, as stated

previously, everyday life communication and everyday reading does not always follow the “set rules” in a language. Therefore, it is important to introduce students to for example authentic reading material, which shows a more authentic use of language.

## **4.2 Authentic reading materials**

Nunan (1989, as cited in Charboneau) defines authentic materials as “any material that has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching”. Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) conducted a study about Teachers’ Beliefs of Authentic Materials for Teaching Reading in Indonesian EFL Classrooms. They bring up the issue of teachers’ struggle to search, select and modify authentic reading materials in their teaching practices. While authentic reading materials are believed to stimulate students’ motivation to learn, it is necessary for teachers to consider that authentic reading materials consist of extensive vocabularies and appropriate sentence structure for their students’ level.

Four English teachers who teach English at senior high schools in Samarind in Indonesia where the subject of this study (Rusmawaty et.al.). Although, the studentgroup are high-schoolers, the findings in this study were relevant for this master thesis. It focuses on EFL-classrooms, and also on the use of reading materials. In this study, they found that the teachers quite often rely on their teaching material from the textbook. The teachers believed that the teaching material from the textbook were well prepared for teaching. However, they admitted to also using authentic materials to support their teaching practices, especially when they wanted to introduce their students to how English is used as a mean of communication.

The authentic material they mentioned were newspapers, flyers, magazines, song lyrics, maps, brochures and invitations, and their belief in how these materials would assist students in familiarizing with the real use of English. The findings also showed that the use of authentic materials increased the students’ vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the use of authentic materials allowed the students to expand their knowledge of how to use the words in appropriate contexts. Furthermore, the teachers in the study noted that authentic texts

motivate students to expand their vocabulary. One of the teachers stated that; “... *authentic materials covers a lot of vocabularies compared to textbooks, students may experience themselves with a wide range of words which they can learn when and what to use the words in which context*”. Which shows that authentic material is useful both in expanding vocabulary, and also in showing the students in what kind of contexts the vocabulary is used. For example, formal language vs. informal language, and when and where it is appropriate to use.

As mentioned previously, The Ministry of Education and Research writes about working with texts in English. They state that “students shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society through reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English. These factors will help students develop intercultural competence that will aid them in dealing with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns”. A finding from the study conducted by Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) showed that working with authentic materials might increase the students critical thinking skills. They state that the complexity in vocabulary and structures of authentic reading material train students to understand the text, which consequently leads students to think critically about the text. Furthermore, that students when they progress their language understanding skill, enter more complicated tasks which contains elements such as personalization, investigation and problem solving, that requires critical thinking skills. They conclude with the remark that authentic materials provide authentic communication which brings forward students’ creativity to analyse and respond. Which shows that the role of authentic reading material in the classroom is vital in developing both vocabulary knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Masita Arianie states that some teachers of English are having problem engaging students’ attention. Dornyei (as cited in Arianie) stated that motivating students in the EFL-classroom is often a complex and difficult task that involves a multiplicity of psycho-sociological and linguistic factors. Thus, teachers need to provide authentic reading material and interactive activity to engage learners’ attention and create a communicative classroom atmosphere. Using authentic reading materials with purpose of students’ learning, students will have a



sense that the real language for communication is being learnt, as opposed to classroom language itself. Using inappropriate teaching materials make learners face difficulties in learning a foreign language. Teaching materials must be motivating and raise learners' interest (Arianie).

Richards (2001, as cited in; Arianie) mentions five reasons for using authentic reading material in the classroom; they prepare learners for real life, they meet learners needs, they effect learners motivation positively, they encourage teachers to adopt effective teaching methods, and the present authentic information about culture. By using authentic reading materials in the classroom, it aids students in learning about the relationship between the language presented in the classroom and the language used in real world situations (Arianie).

Charboneau writes about authentic versus simplified reading materials. She states that the type of text used in the language classroom can play a significant role in the students' motivation, reading process, and learning outcomes of the reading experience. Day and Bamford (1998, as cited in Charboneau) write about the "cult of authenticity", which originated in the late 19070s as a part of the communicative language teaching movement. This "cult of authenticity" asserted that authentic texts were superior to texts specifically written or simplified for language learners. These authentic texts were considered more interesting, engaging, and displayed genuine discourse (Day & Bamford, 1998, as cited in: Charboneau). Which is in line with what Rusmawaty et al., and Arianie also state, that authentic reading materials are more engaging and more relevant for learning about real life use of the language.

Kung (2017) researched what the effects classroom materials and reading strategy use had on teaching second language reading comprehension. The study attempts to investigate the effects of using reading strategy instruction based on authentic reading materials for advanced EFL learner with the focus on their reading improvement and learning experience. As one will see, the target group of this study is not within the intended target group of this thesis.

However, the study brings forward useful insight in the use of authentic reading material. Insights that may be used in lower grades as well.

In the study conducted by Kung (2017) thirty-six freshmen majoring in English language and literature, recruited from a top-rated university in Taipei, Taiwan participated. Some notable background information about the participants were that 35 out of 36 had received at least 8 years of English instruction before they entered university. Furthermore, every student had been assessed by the university before enrolment, and were placed in the advanced level. Instead of using the regular EFL textbooks that many instructors use, the instructor in this study used authentic reading materials. The authentic reading materials chosen were *Reader's Digest* and *The New York Times*. The justification of choosing these reading materials were that they were easily accessible and that they were relevant to students' lives, in regards to latest fashions, trends and news.

The results from the study conducted by Kung (2017) showed that the students' reading proficiency levels had increased after learning through authentic reading materials. Their reading performance had improved from a score of 61.23 on the pre-test to 66.45 on the post-test of reading. Furthermore, the results showed that 81% of the students in the study thought they were more interested in learning English through authentic reading materials. Close to 86% believed that they were more confident to read in English, indicating that the use of authentic reading materials in class might strengthen students' confidence in reading in English. Another interesting aspect of this study is that 70% of the participants agreed that they became more independent and interested in reading longer texts, because of the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom, which made them used to doing so as well as being more relevant to their everyday lives. When it comes to reading English outside of the EFL-classroom, few pick up the textbook provided for the class. Most students, at least at university level, and probably as low as secondary school, find authentic reading material most of the time when reading outside of the classroom. By bringing authentic reading material in to the classroom, and familiarising the students with it, they can, as shown in Kung's study, become more independent and interested in reading authentic reading material outside of the classroom as well.

One of the participants stated that: *“It was a really good experience for me to read something that I am truly interested in, not something that I don’t think is going to be helpful for me in the future”*. Which in turn shows that the use of textbooks might not always cater to the students’ interests. It is often generalized, and might not hit the student-group in terms of interests and enjoyment. Another student supported this statement by stating that: *“I am more confident to read English because reading has become part of my routine. Learning how to reading English newspaper also gives me more confidence because it's written for native speakers, and I can also be part of it”*. Again supporting the fact that authentic reading materials are more engaging and bring more reading enjoyment than the textbook.

Kung refers to studies conducted by Ko (2002), Shang (2007) and Yang (2004) whose findings showed that being an autonomous L2 reader implies more freedom and capacity to read in an engaging and relaxing context, whereas the traditional EFL reading classroom cannot offer the same because the teaching is often based on test-oriented preparation materials or outdated textbooks that have little to do with students’ daily lives. Kung conclude that authentic reading materials are effective for EFL reading comprehension because they are more closely related to students’ daily life. Furthermore, that students might make reading a habit they enjoy on a regular basis by giving them the autonomy to choose the authentic materials the prefer.

Buzarna (2018) conducted a study on the advantages of authentic materials in the ESP/EFL Classroom, and chose to look into the use of newspapers in particular. She divided the students into two groups, both groups consisted of students with presumably the same knowledge, background and age. One group were taught the new lesson with the aid of authentic materials, in this case newspaper articles. The other group were taught the new lesson in a traditional matter, with textbook as the main source of reading material. In order to figure out how the use of authentic materials could benefit the students, both groups of students were given the same test paper.

The test showed that the experimental group, which used newspaper articles, obtained a higher score than the control group, which used traditional methods. Although, they do not differ significantly, the experimental group's results are slightly better than those of the control group. Buzarna states that the use of newspapers during English classes offers the students the possibility to get in contact with "the real world" through the means of "real language", eliminating the idea of artificial language or artificial articles created for specific language or grammar purposes. The results also showed that the experimental group found the use of newspaper articles exciting and it helped them understand the new lesson as well or even better than the ones in the control group. Buzarna concludes the research with the statement; "The use of newspaper articles during English classes is a useful, interesting and effective method which grabs students' attention and provides the teacher with countless possibilities of designing interesting activities".

As seen in several of the research articles, the use of authentic reading material might help to boost the students' motivation to learn. It is more relevant for their everyday life, and it is easier to cater to students' interests as textbooks often are generalised. When choosing to use authentic reading materials, both teachers and the students themselves can focus on finding texts that fit both their reading level, preferred genre, and texts that fits their own interests.

## **4.3 Reading programs**

### **4.3.1 Adapted reading materials**

Roe and Jensen (2017) conducted a study that showed that Norwegian students at the lowest level at the PISA reading test read newspaper and different web-based texts relatively often. These kinds of reading materials can both be stimulating both as spare-time reading and for further work in relation to school. If teachers manage to stimulate their students to read these kinds of reading materials, the students reading competence will increase, and the difficulty-level of the text they are introduced to can increase as well. One important aspect that Roe and Jensen bring up are the aspect of adapted education. They state that the big variation in web-based reading materials, gives the opportunity to differentiate in the classroom, which will ensure that reading may lead to less frustration and defeats.

Charboneau studied differentiation in reading materials. The textbook *Stairs* were used in some of the schools in the study. The *Stairs* series includes multiple levels of texts within the same textbook, but the same text is not adapted for different levels, the *Stairs* series rather provides texts with different levels related to a similar theme. Charboneau found that the teachers depended on the differentiation provided in the textbook to meet the needs of the students. However, the teachers in the study did not use the textbook material as intended. The authors of the *Stairs* series state that all students should read or listen to all texts, followed by focusing on one text at their level, while teachers in the study had the students only focus on the text on their level. While the *Scoop* series create two different levels of the same text; one original and one basic (Charboneau, 2012). If using textbook as the chosen reading material in the classroom, Charboneau states that the *Scoop* series would seem to be the best possible solution based on principles of differentiated reading materials. Reading the same text with modifications in structure and language to adapt to the readers level seems to be most beneficial when it comes to differentiation. It makes it possible for whole-class discussions, as the text that all students have read consist of mostly the same content, just with some moderations.

Allowing students to choose their own reading material could also be a method of differentiation (Charboneau, 2012). However, 63% of the teachers in the study by Charboneau never allowed students to choose their own reading material. Charboneau found that teachers using a combination of textbook vs. other materials such as EYLP/graded readers allowed students to choose English books to read during independent reading, whereas the teachers following a textbook-based approach did not have independent reading as a part of their teaching practices. Allowing students to choose their own reading material might aid in achieving differentiated reading material in the classroom, given that they choose text that are suited to their own needs. As stated, Charboneau found that few of the teachers used level-differentiated texts on a regular basis. Out of the teachers in the study, only roughly a third stated that they had sufficient material available to cater to students at different reading levels.

Namaziandost, Esfahani and Ahmadi (2019) studied 54 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners, aged 16 to 21, for 15 sessions. While the participants in the study are not within the wanted target group of this study, the findings of the study gave some insightful results that

may be useful with younger students as well. The participants in the study were asked to read and study books from a structured series of L2 reading materials. Half of the students studied with relatively easy reading materials, in other words, reading materials rated as being below their reading competency level. The other half of the students studied with reading materials that were rated at slightly above their reading competency level.

The participants in the study were asked to complete reading comprehension assessments both before and after the sessions. In addition, the students were also asked to complete questionnaires, allowing the students to self-report on how motivated they felt as readers (Namaziandost et al., 2019). The aim of this research was to find out if one group would display a relatively higher level of reading comprehension on L2 reading materials by the end of the project. In other words, would using reading material below reading competency level aid, or would using reading material above reading competence level aid? The L2 reading materials in use was the Oxford Bookworm Series of graded readers, which consist of seven structured levels with increasing difficulty. The increasing difficulty as defined in terms of word count, complexity of grammar, and vocabulary (Namaziandost et al., 2019).

Previous studies (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017; Chiang, 2015, as cited in Namaziandost et al., 2019) that in similar cases as this study, there were not found any significant differences between the two groups L2 reading comprehension. However, in the present study, the finding indicated that reading comprehension levels increased in both groups over a period of almost 3 months. Furthermore, it was also found that the students who studied the more advanced books, had a higher level of change in their score from pre-test to post-test than those students exposed to easier L2 learning materials (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Which shows that presenting students with reading materials that are slightly over their current reading comprehension level will aid them in their progress.

#### **4.3.2 Complex reading material**

Viriot-Goeldel and Crinon (2016) conducted a research study on teaching practices using complex reading material, and whether or not these practices tend to create or reinforce difficulties in understanding a text. Participants of this study were 25 1<sup>st</sup> graders. This study is relevant for this thesis because it not only talks about using other reading material than the textbook in the classroom, but also the effect of using it. The student-group is also right in the target-group for this thesis.

The study was conducted at what the researchers call a disadvantaged suburban French school. The school is defined as disadvantaged because it met government criteria for inclusion in a state compensatory education program, with criteria such as the socioeconomic status of the students families, local unemployment rate, and percentage of non-French speakers. The school also obtained below average scores on national tests.

Viriot-Goeldel and Crinon (2016) do not only focus on the reading material, but also how teachers introduce the reading material, such as describing illustrations, discussing a text's meaning, and how the teacher conducts interactions in the classroom and how oral scaffolding is provided. In the study, two complex children's books were used to teach literacy. The findings of this study are based on observations on how these books are used in the classroom throughout the school year, and also the tasks students are asked to perform, as well as teacher-student oral interactions.

The two complex children's books in use were *The Elf's Hat* and *The Recipe of Me*. To measure the students' reading comprehension of the books, the researchers based it on students' writings during the sessions, individual oral free-recall of the texts, and the students answers to questions on specific difficulties in the texts. *The Elf's Hat* was used in fourteen classroom sessions, while *The Recipe of Me* was used in six. The students were not only given the books to read. The use of these reading materials were a part of a larger lesson plan, which included numerous prior-knowledge activation techniques, such as making the students skim through and predict what the texts are about followed by classroom discussions, and drawing and writing predictions.

These pre-reading activities showed that, especially when working with *The Recipe of Me*, a picture book, browsing through the text and pictures did not aid the children in understanding what the text is about. *The Recipe of Me* is about making a family, however, a lot of the children understood recipe as baking something. Or that when the family was made, a birthday cake was baked. The texts and illustrations did not always correspond, thus, a lot of misunderstandings occurred. Viriot-Goeldel and Crinon found that asking students to predict was unsatisfactory when it came to picture books like this, because the pictures in the books did not always correspond exactly to the text, and provided the students with few clues that they could use to draw up hypotheses. Furthermore, the teacher's approach was to leave the discussion about the predictions open. Bautier and Goigoux (2004, as cited in Viriot-Goeldel and Crinon) talks about socio-cognitive misunderstandings, where the students, especially 1<sup>st</sup> graders, are unfamiliar with the subtleties of the school world, and might assume that the teachers approach to not confirm or deny, means that the predictions they provided are correct. Which might lead up to them not correcting their presumptions of the text. Thus, even though they have read the text after these predictions, they still assumed that their predictions were right, and did not comprehend the text in any other way.

This study showed that while the use of other reading materials than the textbook might be beneficial, it also has negative sides. Here, both the teachers approach to using other reading materials, as well as the difficulty of the chosen reading material, caused the students to not benefit at all from these classroom sessions. This shows the responsibility teachers have when both choosing reading materials, and also how to use it in the classroom. The teacher needs to have a critical perspective on both choice and use, and be aware of both the benefits, but also the disadvantages it may create. The reading material chosen must be adapted to the students reading level and comprehension level.

### **4.3.3 LARS**

Seifert, Schwab and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2015) studied the effects of a whole-class reading program designed for different reading levels and the learning need of L1 and L2 children. The program of choice were Language and Reading Skills (LARS), and how it effects decoding, reading comprehension and language abilities of L1 and L2 German 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. This program consisted of teacher training and differentiated reading materials adapted to the



needs of both L1 and L2 learners. The materials targeted four different reading levels. To find out if the LARS program had any effect, 159 students received reading instruction twice a week with the LARS program, while 218 students received conventional reading instruction without special materials, in this case no differentiated materials.

The study also looked into reading comprehension, decoding, language skills, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar skills. However, the most interesting part of this study for this thesis is how the LARS reading program worked in general. As stated, the LARS program offered reading materials in four different ability levels. Thus, the students worked on different reading texts and tasks based on their reading ability level. Seifert, Schwab and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2015) concludes that the systematically and differentiating reading program fosters the development of reading competence not only in students with difficult starting conditions but also in students with average or above-average abilities. However, the researchers also state that the effect of the reading program are limited. The results showed that the students taught with the LARS reading program increased their skill more considerably than students receiving conventional reading instruction, although the effects were limited.

Another interesting aspect of Seifert et al.'s study on the LARS reading program is the effect on all ability levels. The LARS reading program, as stated previously, offer reading materials in four different ability level. The students worked on different reading texts and tasks based on their reading ability level. One of the aims of this study was to see whether the students of different ability levels profited equally from the program. The conclusion to this is that the systematically and differentiating reading program fosters the development of reading competence not only in students with difficult starting conditions but also in students with average or above-average abilities (Seifert et al., 2015).

The results of the studies done by Roe and Jensen, Charboneau, Viriot-Goeldel and Crinon, and Seifert, Schwab and Gasteiger-Klicpera shows that when using other reading materials than the textbook in the classroom, teachers have to be aware of the aspect of adaption and differentiated reading materials. By being aware of this aspect and making conscious choices

when bringing other reading materials into the classroom, students of all reading abilities may benefit from it.

#### **4.4 Motivation**

In a study conducted by Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) they looked into what motivated students to read. They found that choice was one of the factors that effected the students' reading motivation. One of the aspects of this master thesis is the relevance of choice when it comes to reading materials. Most talk about what choices the teachers makes when picking out reading material. However, students possibility to choose also matters. 84% of students discussed books that they had chosen themselves, while only 16% discussed the books that the teacher had picked out for them (Edmunds et al., 2006). Thus, allowing the students to take part in the selection process of other reading materials in the classroom, or allowing them to find their own reading materials, may create engaged and motivated readers. Furthermore, it shows that the access to other reading materials than the textbook must be available to them. Not only a handful selected by the teacher.

Wigfield, Gladstone and Turci (2016) reviewed research done on children's motivation to read and its relation to their reading comprehension. They bring up the point of enhancing students perceived autonomy in reading, and that students should be given many choices regarding what they read. Furthermore, that to enhance their self-efficacy, students should experience success with the materials they read, no matter what reading level they are on. Previous research has focused on the cognitive processes and strategies involved in learning how to read. Although this research is vital in the development of reading comprehension, it does not focus enough on students motivation to read. Wigfield et. al. states that while teachers may have the extensive knowledge of the most effective reading strategies, these strategies will only succeed if their students are motivated to learn and use those strategies.

Stutz, Schaffner and Schiefele (2016) looked into the relations among reading motivation, reading amount, and reading comprehension in the early elementary grades. Here they talk

about Wigfield and Guthrie, and their measurements of students' reading motivation. They separate intrinsic motivation for extrinsic motivation. The core dimensions of intrinsic motivation are *curiosity*, to learn more about interests, *involvement*, to get lost in a story, and *challenge*, preference for difficult or complex reading material. The core dimensions of extrinsic motivation include *grades*, *competition* and *recognition*. The aspects most interesting for this thesis to look at is the dimension of curiosity, which talks about interest. In this aspect is also the need to cater to students' interest by having reading material about said interests available. Furthermore, the dimensions of challenge, choosing preferred reading material for the students that cater to their reading level.

Pfost et al. (as cited in Stutz et al., 2016) found results that suggest that the type and the content of reading materials may function as a moderator in the relationship between reading amount and reading competence. In other words, students who reads a book that is below their proficiency level will gain less reading ability growth than a student who read a book that is slightly above their proficiency level (Carver & Leibert, 1995, as cited in; Stutz et al., 2016). Carver and Leibert (1995, as cited in Stutz et al., 2016) and Kraaykamp and Dijkstra (1999, as cited in Stutz et al., 2016) found that reading amount is more closely associated with reading comprehension in readers who read challenging text material. Thus, reading material is an important factor of both reading amount and reading comprehension.

It also looks into the role of other reading materials than the textbook in the classroom. When looking at reading material, this thesis is not only looking at the choice and use, but also the role. In other words, what effect the reading material has. The choice and use would not have any point if it did not have any effect. As one can see in the studies mentioned, using and choosing reading materials that are slightly above the students reading level might aid them in increasing their reading comprehension skills. While also having other reading materials available in the classroom, it makes room for an increase in reading amount, which then again increases reading comprehension.

Munden (2019) refers to a study conducted by Larssen and Høie (2012). Unfortunately, the original research paper is part of a book only available at libraries, and because my finding of

this study came to late, I was unable to locate the original study. However, the conclusions that Munden draws from the study are interesting, and something I find relevant for this master thesis. In the study, Year 6 pupils were encouraged to choose from among seventy English book titles and to read as many as possible over a five-week period. The results from the study showed that students' motivation and also their writing skills improved. The researchers concluded that "if tight budgets force schools to make a choice between buying authentic books in English and new course books, they should seriously consider the former. The gains from extensive reading are substantial (Larssen et al., 2012, as cited in; Munden, 2019). Hence, by giving the students choices, they become more engaged and motivated as readers.

Charboneau (2012) found in her study that the teachers criteria for selecting reading materials focused on the students' reading level, the fact that the texts came from the textbook, and that the texts related to the curriculum were most common. The teachers took less consideration of students' interest when it came to choosing and using reading materials. An interesting find by Charboneau was that the teachers somewhat agreed that it was important to let students choose which texts they would like to read, but few of the teachers actually gave their students this opportunity. Showing that teachers might be aware of the benefits of letting students choose their own reading materials, but neglecting them from doing so, and therefore missing out on the benefits of engaged and motivated readers.

As a teacher, the job is to find reading materials that both interests and engage the students, as well as benefiting them when it comes to improvement of their reading skills. As the research above has stated, the reading material that is available to the students makes a huge impact in their reading motivation. So, what kind of materials motivate students? Munden and Myhre (2018) state that experience shows that young children learn best when their focus in on a motivating activity, when they are not thinking about what they are supposed to learn. With this perspective in mind, the textbook might not be the best place to focus all learning to. Other reading materials such as children's literature might be a better facilitator for learning, because the children might actually forget that they are learning something from it.

Rimmereide (2018) writes about motivation in her chapter about graphic novel in EFL learning in the textbook *Literature for the English classroom: Theory into Practice*. Rimmereide refers to Krashen (2004) who talks about the importance of reading based on free choice, which he believes is essential for motivation, will also underscoring the significance of being exposed to reading which is motivating. Krashen found that readers exposed to comics and graphic novels not only became motivated to read, but their reading competence and reading comprehension were about the same as that of people who read other texts.

#### **4.5 Reading amount, reading habits and the desire to read**

Donalyn Miller (2012) states that heavy reading is the best predictor of school success, and that students who read the most perform the best on standardized tests, not only in reading and writing, but in content classes such as science and social studies as well. Krashen (2014, as cited in; Miller, 2012) point to numerous research studies that prove that wide reading improves children's comprehension, background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and writing.

As mentioned previously, Stutz, Schaffner and Schiefele (2016) looked into the relations among reading motivation, reading amount, and reading comprehension in the early elementary grades. An interesting finding were the correlation between reading amount and reading competence, and reading competence growth. A study by Pfost, Dörfler and Artelt (2010, as cited in; Stutz et al., 2016) showed that reading amount in third grade significantly predicted reading competence in fifth grade. They drew the conclusion that reading amount facilitates reading comprehension. Here one can argue that the use of textbooks in EFL-classrooms are not enough to ensure a significant reading amount. The need for other reading materials is therefore prominent.

Roe and Jensen (2017) conducted a study on Norwegian students, and more specifically on what the characteristics of the weakest students reading competence, reading habits and strategy-knowledge when they finish primary school. The participants of this study were

Norwegian students at primary school who had scored the lowest on PISA's reading test in 2009. The most interesting part of this study for this thesis is the results on reading habits and attitudes to reading.

When asking students about their reading habits, and how much time they usually use to read for their own pleasure, 40 % of Norwegian students answer that they do not read for pleasure, while of the students at the lowest level on the PISA reading test, 66% of the students stated that they do not read for pleasure. Furthermore, students on the lowest level differ quite significantly from other levels by having the biggest share of students that state that they never read, no matter reading material. Even magazines and cartoons, which are considered easily read, 18% of the students on the lowest level state that they do not read these reading materials either.

Fiction and non-fiction books are reading materials that students at the lowest level state that they very rarely read. That the majority of the students at the lowest level immediately state that they do not read voluntarily, suggest that they first and foremost connect voluntarily reading with reading books, thus, not identifying as readers. 3 of 4 state that they agree completely or partly with the statement that they only read if they have to or if they have to find information that they need. When looking at the use of a computer for internet/entertainment at home, Norwegian students report of a clearly higher use than other students in the OECD. However, Norwegian students at the lowest level report of less use of the computer for entertainment and spare-time activities than the OECD-average. Reading is seen as a chore or schoolwork.

Also Roe and Jensen (2017) brings up the aspect of reading amount. Those who read a lot, become better readers, while those who read less, slows down in their progress (Stanovich, 1986, as cited in; Roe et al. 2017). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000, as cited in; Roe et al. 2017) argue that motivation is a mediator for reading desire. Roe and Jensen states that making the students see the benefits of reading, experiencing that what they read and are supposed to learn, has relevance. Furthermore, when it comes to voluntarily reading, reading books gives

the most effective reading amount, however, Roe and Jensen states that it is more important to get students to read texts that they want to read, rather than forcing them to read fiction.

## 4.6 Gamification

Lynette Tan Yuen Ling writes about a new and intriguing pedagogical approach is gamification, where digital games are used in an educational setting as an aid to learning. It differs from game-based learning, as gamification adds game elements to a nongame situation, while game-based learning uses existing games to enhance the learning process. Ling mentions Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory where competency, autonomy and relatedness are prioritized, connected to the concept of meaningful gamification. Ling states that the concept of meaningful gamification works as a catalyst in motivating students to read background material and grasp key concepts, which in turn aids students to come to class with a level of competency with the material that enables them to participate in discussions.

In the study conducted by Ling, the participants were undergraduates in their first year of university. Thus, the participants in this study were not in the intended target group for this thesis. However, the concept of gamification is quite interesting, and an interesting perspective to take into consideration when talking about reading material in the classroom. Although, the study focuses on university students, it might still be applicable for younger students as well, such as primary and secondary school, with some modification.

The students in the research study play a game called *The Protégé*. Ling describes the game as quest that the protagonist (player) need to complete, where the quests involve letters that will lead to three questions that the protagonist (player) need to answer correctly before proceeding to the next part of the story and stage of the game. Ling states that the most important part of this game is the high-quality instant feedback. An incorrect answer results in a thorough explanation of why the answer is incorrect, and the student is given the opportunity of redoing the same question.

To properly test how this game could be used as an effective reading material, a pre-test was completed. The pre-test gave the same questions as presented in the game, but without the aid of feedback. The results of the pre-test showed that the students were unable to accurately understand key concept of the reading. Comparing the results with the results after the game, suggested that their comprehension of the material had improved. However, the most important part of the study were the students reflections. Key words that popped up in the students reflection were “interesting”, “enjoyable”, “helpful”, and “motivating”. The concept of the game with instant feedback also aided the students in understanding the reading, and clear up misconceptions that the students had.

The game used in this study was designed specifically for students to read the background information, to aid them in answering the questions correctly. However, the feedback made it possible for the students to correct their answer, while also then correcting their comprehension. Gamification and game-based learning may be connected to the aspect of extrinsic motivation where the goals is to achieve something, thus being rewarded.

Gamification of the reading process can also be described as giving students badges or rewards for finishing books for example. However, Hanus and Fox (2018) found that students who in a gamified classroom tended to decrease in both satisfaction and motivation compared to students in a non-gamified classroom. The fact that it heavily relies on extrinsic motivation compared to intrinsic motivation might have a say in these results. The reading process in not driven by the desire to read, but rather the desire to gain something. Which might grow tiring after a while.

It is more of a teaching approach rather than a specific reading material, but it still shows how reading material can be utilised in the classroom, and how one can reward students for reading amount for example.

## **4.7 Representation**



Another aspect that is important when it comes to the usage of materials in the classroom is how well the material is suited to the student-group. One part of this is the aspect of representation. This could be related to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion etc. Being unable to relate to materials used in the classroom might affect the willingness and motivation to actively be involved in the learning activities.

Bena R. Hefflin and Mary Alice Barksdale-Ladd wrote about African American children's literature, and how it helps students find themselves. Furthermore, they write that literature is a powerful medium, and that through it, children construct message about their cultures and roles in society. Moreover, when children read books that are interesting and meaningful to them, they can find support for the process of defining themselves as individuals and understanding their developing roles within their families and communities (2001). *"To read for years and not encounter stories that connect closely with one's own cultural understandings and life experiences is problematic. One primary motivation for reading fiction involves the pleasure that can be taken in relating to characters, their lives, their problems, and their experiences"* (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001, p. 810).

This shows that the choice of reading materials in the classroom is extremely important. Representation in literature is essential for students to feel seen and appreciated. Hefflin and Barksdale-Ladd interviewed African American adults about their reading experience in school. The answers they got were: "For the first 15 years of my life, I didn't find myself in books, and I didn't relate to them. Once I discovered book and characters I could relate to, I gained the love of reading", "The joy of reading is stepping into the experience of the characters. When the characters look like, talk like, think like, and act like us, it's easy to share in the experience" (2001, p. 811). This shows that students are in need of reading materials and books that they feel a connection with. They need to feel represented in literature.

Textbooks may not have that same representation for all students. The content is often generalised. However, choosing reading materials that each individual student can find themselves in may create a classroom where the desire to read flourish. And as stated before, reading volume matters.

## **4.8 Students perception**

Birketveit, Rimmereide, Bader and Fisher (2018) researched which types of reading materials that appealed to students, what the role of gender in the students evaluation of the reading materials is, if there are differences between students evaluation of the reading material offered depending on their previous academic achievement, and what the students attitudes were towards reading, and more specifically extensive reading.

The participants in the study were 83 Norwegian students learning English, aged 11-12, based at three different schools in a larger town in Norway. In the selection of these schools, student performance in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade national test in English came into order. The results of the national tests are grouped into three levels of performances. One school scored at level 1, one at level 2, and the last one at level 3. Three schools representing all three levels were chosen to investigate whether the students' perception were equal at all schools, no matter their performance level in the national tests (Birketveit et al., 2018)

The main focus of this study was the effect of extensive reading in primary school EFL classes. The study examined the results of three reading cycles per class which involved a 4-week period of in-class extensive reading during English lesson, totalling in eight lessons of 45 minutes each, or 90 minutes per week for four weeks. Another notable part of this study is the reading material choices. The students were able to choose books from a selection of at least three times as many books as there were students in the class. The three schools circulated three different crates of books, ensuring that each new reading circle had a new crate of books.

After the project were completed, the results showed that the 83 students had finished 788 books, meaning an average of 9.5 finished books per student. 160 books, 17% of the books, were not finished. The interesting part of this project is to see what kind of reading material most students finished, and also why they liked or disliked it. The most read reading material in the study which were popular with both genders were humorous picture books. The most popular book in the study was *Princess Smartypants*, and were mostly read by girls, while the book *George and the Dragon* were mostly read by boys. Looking into how the different genders chose their reading material, both *Princess Smartypants* and *George and the Dragon*, both indicate the main character's gender. The girls and boys chose accordingly. When it came to more gender neutral titles such as *Aaaarrgghh*, *Spider!* and *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* it seemed to appeal to both genders. Birketveit, Rimmereide, Bader and Fisher (2018) note that male choices seem to fall into the categories of superhero, adventure, science fiction and ghost stories, while female choices seem to fall into the categories of traditional fairy tales, stories about friendship, animal stories, real events and traditional girls' stories.

It is also interesting to look into the students attitude towards reading, to better understand their perspective and attitude towards different reading materials. The researchers gave the students the statement "*I like to read books in Norwegian*", where 87% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The same statement was given about reading in English, where 70% agreed or strongly agreed that they liked reading in English. When giving the statement "*I would like to continue reading English books*" almost 70% responded that they agree or strongly agree, while 23% disagree, and 7% disagree strongly. When it came to continue reading English books at home, 50% agreed or strongly agreed. The statement that "*I find it easier to read in English now*", 85% of the students agreed or strongly agreed. Furthermore, 78% of the students thought reading in English had been a positive experience, while 97% enjoyed being able to choose which books to read themselves. Showing that an extensive reading period had an effect on the students attitude towards reading in English.

It is especially the results that 97% of the students had enjoyed being able to choose which books to read themselves that stood out. It shows that letting students choose their own

reading material in the classroom had an effect on their reading experience. However, even though the students enjoyed the possibility of choosing, they did not find it easy to find books to read. The researchers point out that it might have to do with the number of books available at the students' level or suited to the students interests. In each cycle, there were around 70 books to choose from, and even though this might seem like a great variety, it shows that students might need an even greater variety of books within each reading level and genre in order to actually have a real choice of reading material. As stated previously, gender also played a role in choice. The gender of the main character mattered more to boys than it did to girls, showing that boys and girls have different tastes in reading material. This suggests that teachers need to provide enough books of all categories to give the students a proper choice of material.

The study measured how the use and choice of reading materials effected students attitude towards reading. It clearly showed that giving the students a larger amount of reading materials to chose from gave the students a more positive attitude towards reading. It also showed that the students perception were reliant on self-selection and type of reading material available.

#### **4.9 Teachers choice**

Hastie and Sharplin (2012) conducted a study on the influences on English teachers' choices of reading materials for students. The study's aim was to examine English teachers' perspectives on their choices of print texts within specific school contexts. Three Christian schools, Conrad School, Brontë School and Rowling School, located in Perth, Australia was chosen. The teachers taught in Year 8, 9 and 10.

The study showed that student engagement, school context and teachers beliefs are all influences on English teachers' choices of print texts for study by Year 8, 9 and 10 Christian school students. When it came to student engagement, the teachers main concern was finding accessible texts for students of varying abilities. Furthermore, students engagement was

identified as an influence in teachers' selection of contemporary texts containing issues of student interest, and choosing contemporary texts to expose students to issues currently faced by teenagers in Western society. The reading material chosen by the teachers at Conrad School were perceived by the teachers as having "fun" and "exciting" plots with "interesting issues in them". Teachers at Brontë School chose contemporary texts, especially for students of lower abilities, which are referred to as "more English-focused". Teachers at Rowling School chose contemporary texts, mostly Australian, to "keep students engaged" and "interested" with a text "that's relevant to them".

Hastie and Sharplin (2012) note that in this study, the recommendations in previous research that students should be given more opportunities to select their own books for class reading, was not evident in this study. Across all three schools in the study, the only opportunity the students had to self-select books was during library sessions as part of a wider reading program. Teachers at all three schools choose class sets of prose fiction texts. However, it is not possible to draw any conclusions from the self-chosen books, since they are not part of this research study, and not part of the teachers choice.

An interesting find in the research conducted by Hastie and Sharplin were how the teachers at all three schools had preconceived assumptions about the interest of boys and girls interest in reading topic. Hence, they categorise students reading preferences along gender lines, considering the generalised needs of the class rather than the specific needs of individual students. Manuel and Robinson (2002; 2003, as cited in; Hastie et al., 2017) warn that children's reading preferences are so diverse that they cannot be categorized along gender lines. Another interesting finding is that when choosing texts for the whole class, the teachers choose texts that are considered to be more engaging for boys. The teachers considered the girls to be more flexible as readers, while boys had more limited preferences. Which Birketveit et al. can partly confirm, girls are more flexible when it comes to choosing and using reading material. Lastly, the teachers in the study chose texts that they liked because they believed that their passion and enthusiasm for a text is transmitted to the students, thus increasing students motivation, learning and achievement.

Charboneau notes in her study on what materials 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers use to teach English reading that she did not get to ask the teachers to evaluate their chosen materials or explain how the lack of materials influenced their choices, including what other materials they would have like to use or how they would have used them differently. However, she notes that textbook-based teaching has been the tradition in Norwegian classroom for decades, and that it is also likely that this teaching approach is what most teachers experienced themselves as young learners. Borg (2006, as cited in Charboneau) states that research has found that the way teachers were taught themselves has a strong influence on their teaching. Not surprising when textbooks have been the dominant reading material used. Going through those teaching practices as a student in primary, secondary, upper secondary and at university, might give a sense of familiarity when utilising those reading materials as a teacher yourself one day.

Charboneau found in her case study that, although there are some English books available, the teachers still chose to focus on the textbook rather than using other books. While other reading materials might be available does not necessarily mean that teachers are aware of them, will use them, or have knowledge of how to incorporate them into their teaching (Charboneau, 2012). In addition, Charboneau concludes that for teachers who have too few appropriate-leveled books available, it may be the easiest option to base teaching on the textbook. Especially in cases where the teacher believes that the textbook materials are of good quality.

In her study, Charboneau also researched whether students took English books home to read. She found that only a third of the teachers reported that their students did so. To find out why some did, and some did not, Charboneau used a Chi-square analysis test to find out if there were an association between teachers who sent books home with students to read, and the teachers chosen reading approach. Charboneau found that teachers using a combination of textbook vs. other materials such as EYLP/graded readers approaches sent books home with students more often than teachers using a textbook-based approach. Around 50% of teachers with a combination-approach vs. around 25% of teacher using a textbook-based approach. Showing that basing reading material use in the classroom on the textbook, might actually also effect the students reading outside of the classroom as well.

Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) conclude their study with how teachers beliefs are the main determinator in their decisions in their teaching practices. Their study revealed that teachers performed self-adjustment towards their own beliefs about the use of authentic materials for teaching reading. This study shows that teachers might presume more than they actually have the competence to do. Thus, showing a negative side of teachers choice of reading material. Instead of actually attending to students interest, they believe that students have the same interests as themselves, or make a guess on what is relevant for their students.

#### **4.10 Teachers' challenges**

Charboneau found that a large number of schools and classrooms did not have English texts other than the textbook available. Almost half had no English books, other than the textbook, in the classroom and one-fifth had none in the school library. As commented previously, internet texts were used as least occasionally by half of the teachers in the study. Here, one can see one of the challenges of using other reading materials than the textbook in the classroom. Availability of reading materials play a role in teachers' choice and use of reading material. The study by Charboneau were conducted in 2012. By experience as a teacher in the Norwegian school and classroom today, one could state that the availability might have improved. 10 years has passed, and internet resources have improved significantly since the author of this master thesis finished primary school in 2012 herself. Conducting this study in 2023 might have given other results.

Furthermore, Charboneau found that almost half of the teachers reported that lack of materials influenced their teaching choices. Charboneau draws two conclusions from this; teachers primarily use the textbook, and therefore do not purchase other reading materials, or that teachers do not use other materials because they are not readily available. While other reading materials are made more readily available because of our access to most digital resources, there might be a vicious circle in place. As a soon to be teacher, digital resources are a goldmine, and benefits the teaching practice significantly. However, in this world of

digitalisation, the printed word still has a place in the classroom. Sitting in front of a screen for many hours a day might not be beneficial for students or teachers. As a fan of printed reading material, it might be harder and even more time consuming to find and utilise it.

In the study mentioned previously in the chapter about authentic materials, Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) found some challenges that teachers face when using authentic materials in the classroom. In their study three different challenges stood out from the four teachers they had studied; the students' unfamiliarity with the topics, the cultural awareness introduction to students, and lastly, lack of time in searching, selecting and modifying the materials.

The students' unfamiliarity with the topics showed that the students needed their previous knowledge to help them understand the texts they were reading. The research found that the authentic materials chosen by the teachers often provided less familiar topics for students. Therefore, Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) state that it is the teacher's responsibility to modify the topic of authentic materials to be suited to the students' background knowledge.

The cultural awareness introduction to students showed that some authentic materials used in the classroom exposed culture of English that the students were unfamiliar with. Without the cultural awareness, or the cultural background information, the students' did not understand the context of the authentic material chosen. In the study one of the teachers brings up Halloween as an example. The students had never heard of the celebration, or never celebrated themselves, so asking them to read a text about it did not benefit them at all. Culture is a part of language learning, as noted in the curriculum for English. Ministry of Education and Research states that "students shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society through reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English". Therefore, the cultural awareness is an aspect that is important to take into consideration. However, students need to be introduced to these cultural aspects in appropriate ways.



The third and last challenge that Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) writes about is the lack of time in searching, selecting, and modifying the authentic material. Finding these authentic materials are the teachers responsibility. It takes effort in finding good authentic material. The teachers in the study stated that they were able to find authentic materials in their spare time during teaching hours. However, they struggled to select and find materials that were suited to their student group. Most of the time they used the material as it was, stating that time-management played a role in their ability to modify, as well as lacking technological pedagogical knowledge to be able to modify. Over half of the teachers in Charboneaus study believed that the biggest challenge in English teaching was mixed-ability level among the students. Showing that one of the negative sides of using other reading materials in the classroom, is finding reading material that fits the entire student group, or reading material that can be adapted.

The teachers in the study agreed that authentic materials bring sufficient exposure of the “real world” to students, but that it should be used as a supplement to the textbook. Furthermore, that the use of authentic materials needed to consider the students level of English, and take into account their vocabulary level, topic familiarity, and cultural awareness. Also, teachers should be able to make authentic material adjustable to their students’ level by simplifying or modifying the text to be accessible for students. Here is where teachers faces one of the major challenges of using authentic material in the classroom, having the time and energy to do so. Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra and Noni (2018) concluding remark is that instead of simplifying and modifying the text, teachers may end up simplifying the reading process.

Seifert, Schwab and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2015) state that one of the challenges teachers face in reading classes is to meet the need of all learners, because individual reading levels vary. They point out that some students might still struggle with certain letter-sound correspondences while others already manage to read short texts or even books fluently and independently. This shows that the need for diverse material is crucial. Is a textbook sufficient enough to cover this need?

Allington (2013) states that too often we do not have expert teachers working with struggling readers. Furthermore, he states that struggling readers are often asked to read text that is far more difficult for them to read than the texts their better reading peers are assigned. This supports the studies referred to above which reports that finding reading materials that are suited for all students are a challenge. Especially when using other reading materials than the textbook. Allington refers to several research studies that show that struggling readers do not benefit from reading grade-level materials, but rather reading level-matched texts (O'Connor, 2002, Jorgensen, Klein & Kumar, 1977, Gambrell, Wilson, & Gant, 1981, as cited in Allington, 2013). Furthermore, Allington states that it is the better reader in the classrooms who daily engage in much high-success reading activity who develop into good readers, while in to many classrooms, their struggling peer engage in daily hard reading activities and continue to flounder as readers.

## **5 Conclusion**

The research question for this master thesis was “*What does research say about the use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom?*”. Is it possible to answer this question based on the research referenced to in this thesis? I would say yes.

Previous research first and foremost focused on textbooks used in the classroom. It would seem that there were mandatory textbooks in place in all studies. Research state that most teachers use the textbook as a basis for their teaching practices. Studies from Zhang (2018), Charboneau (2016), and Rusmawaty et al. (2018) all conclude with this. Most teachers base their teaching practices on the mandatory textbook, possibly because it is either nationally, regionally or locally decided. Furthermore, teachers often chose what they are used to themselves. If as a student one experienced teachers and teacher practices where textbooks were the dominant reading material, chances are students who turn into teachers will take that experience into their own teaching practices.

Another perspective on the use of textbooks, that have not necessarily been touched upon in the studies presented in this master thesis, is that the textbook often set up a clear path in teaching. As a student during practice periods in the course of this study, using the textbook was the “safe” choice. The reading material was set and ready to go, often followed by prepared questions or tasks. Teachers can of course vary in how they work with the reading material in the textbooks, but most textbooks have a clear guide on how they advice the teachers to use the reading material. Many teachers might therefore rely on the textbooks as the preferred choice of reading material because it is comfortable to do so.

When searching for reading materials other than the textbook, a lot of research look at the use of authentic reading material. Studies by Rusmawaty et al. (2018), Arianie (2017), Charboneau (2016), Kung (2017), and Buzarna (2018) showed that the use of authentic reading material in the classroom benefits the students, and that there are clear positive sides for implementing authentic reading material in the classroom. All studies on authentic materials presented in this master thesis points to how authentic material give the students’ a more realistic meeting with the English language. It also gives the students a more realistic meeting with for example culture. Ministry of Education and Research (2019) states that working with texts in English helps students to develop their knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity. Authentic materials are an even greater attributor to the development of these skills, than what a textbook might be.

Ghosn (2002) mentions four good reasons to use literature in primary school. First of all, authentic literature can provide a motivating and meaningful context for language learning, since children are naturally drawn to stories. Secondly, authentic literature can contribute to language learning because it presents natural language. Third of all, the literature can promote academic literacy and thinking skills. Lastly, literature can function as a change agent: good literature deals with some aspects of the human condition, and can thus contribute to the emotional development of the child, fostering positive interpersonal and intercultural attitudes (Ghosn, 2002). This statements are all confirmed by the research presented in this thesis, touching upon themes such as motivation, natural or authentic language contexts, critical thinking skills, and cultural development.

Several of the studies showed that use of other reading materials than the textbook are beneficial for the students, but only when modified to the students level. A challenge for teachers when bringing other reading materials than the textbook into the classroom, is the consideration of adapting material to benefit all students no matter reading level. When teachers choose and use reading materials in the classroom it needs to be a conscious choice. One important aspect that Roe and Jensen (2017) bring up are the aspect of adapted education. They state that the big variation in web-based reading materials, gives the opportunity to differentiate in the classroom, which will ensure that reading may lead to less frustration and defeats. Furthermore, Charboneau (2016) mentions that allowing students to choose their own reading material might aid in achieving differentiated reading material in the classroom, given that they choose text that are suited to their own needs.

A crucial part of every teachers daily practices is making sure that every student in the classroom succeeds. If there are students who constantly feel like they never achieve something, their progress will stagnate. Creating engaged and motivated readers take time, and as the studies in the literature review shows, the aspect of choice plays a huge role in students motivation to read. An interesting point which came up in one of the studies were how one the students stated that they struggle with choosing materials for themselves, because they feel that the mass of information is to much, and that they do not know what to read or what is best for them. These findings are from university students, who are technically adults, which shows that regardless of age, students are reliant on teachers presenting other reading materials for them. The mass of available reading materials are so massive that finding it on their own creates a challenge.

I expected to find positive views on the use of reading materials other than the textbook in the EFL-classroom. As stated, most of the research found were mainly positive to the use of other reading materials than the textbook in the classroom. Most of research found looked at textbook vs. authentic materials, and the positive effects of mixing these reading materials, and choosing and using both. Which plays a role in developing students vocabulary,

grammatical knowledge etc, while also exposing the students to real life use of English and authentic and realistic meeting with for example culture.

In conclusion, there were some balance in the studies I found. As mentioned, one of the main challenges when using other reading materials than the textbook is having the time, resources and pedagogical knowledge to chose good reading materials for the students. Students benefit from other reading materials such as authentic material, and children's literature for example, but only when it is on their level. Furthermore, how the reading material is introduced, the students pre-knowledge of theme and language, and knowledge of for example culture is important. Teachers need to make a conscious choice on what reading material is brought into the classroom.

For future research within this topic it would be interesting to do a case study to see how teachers actually choose the reading material they bring into the classroom, how the students use the reading materials, and as Birketveit, Rimmereide, Bader and Fisher (2018) did in their case study, look at the students perception of the reading materials they have used. As well as looking at what role the different reading materials have in the classroom? What are the effects of different kind of reading materials. In addition, as stated throughout this thesis, research on reading material use, choice and role in the EFL-classroom in Norway and Scandinavia, and even in Europe, are limited.

So in conclusion, the use, choice and role of reading materials in the EFL-classroom plays a huge in students motivation and engagement when it comes to reading. Furthermore, it is both the teacher and the students responsibility to select and choose relevant reading materials in the classroom. Teachers must be aware that their presumptions about students interests might not always be correct. As a teacher student in the middle of my 20s, I still feel quite young, and think that I can be relatable for my students. However, one realises pretty quickly that time changes fast, and that every new generation, and almost every new group of students are individuals with their own needs and interests.

I believe that textbooks are a great resource for all students and teachers, but that it can never replicate real-life situations. The need for authentic materials is dire, and should be strived for. However, with a critical view on the implications it has in the classroom. Letting students chose their own reading materials at times is also beneficial and might also help the students in developing their critical thinking skills, as well as becoming autonomous readers. By letting students take part in choosing what reading materials that are used in the classroom, one might create a reading environment where readers can flourish.

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