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Social Media and Vocabulary Learning. Teachers and Students in Lower
Secondary School's Beliefs and Experiences

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Abstract

Language exposure to the target language is a necessity for vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary learning. Social medias like TikTok and Instagram are popular among teenagers in Norway, and much of the content on these apps are in English, meaning Norwegian learners of English as a second language are exposed to large amounts of English in their free time. This study aims to investigate students and teachers in lower secondary schools' beliefs on the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning. Through questionnaires filled out by 91 participants in lower secondary school, and interviews with five of their teachers it became evident that they believed that social media plays a significant role in vocabulary learning. Most participants believed that social media improved students vocabulary, pronunciation and confidence when using English. Teachers reported that their students are more proficient in English oral skills now than they were ten years ago, and attribute this to the growing popularity of social media in the last decade.

Key words: Mixed-methods, Vocabulary acquisition, Vocabulary learning, Second language learning, Extramural English, Social media

Abstrakt

For elever med engelsk som andrespråk er det nyttig å eksponeres for så mye engelsk som mulig. Sosiale medier som TikTok og Instagram er populære blant norske tenåringer, og mye av innholdet på disse sosiale mediene er på engelsk. Dette betyr at norske elever som lærer engelsk som andrespråk er eksponert for store mengder engelsk hver uke. Denne studien har som formål å undersøke elever og lærere i ungdomsskolen sine meninger om rollen sosiale medier har i vokabularlæring utenfor skolen. Ved spørreskjemaer fylt ut av 91 deltakere i ungdomsskolen og 5 av lærerne deres viser det seg at begge grupper mener at sosiale medier spiller en vesentlig rolle for vokabularlæring blant ungdommer i ungdomsskolen. De fleste deltakerne i spørreundersøkelsen mener at sosiale medier forbedrer ordforrådet, uttalen og selvtilliten til elevene når de bruker engelsk. Lærerne rapporterte at elevene deres har større muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk i dag, enn for ti år siden, de viser til den økende populariteten av sosiale medier det siste tiåret som en mulig årsak til dette.

Motivation

In December 2021 I got my first teaching position at a lower secondary school in Eastern Norway. I was hired as a substitute English teacher as one of the teachers had fallen ill, as a result the first thing I did was grade mock-exam papers for two classes in year 9. This is where my master's thesis began. When grading these papers, I noticed mistakes in spelling that I wondered where came from. Some students consistently wrote "I" without capitalization, many spelled "through" as "tru", many skipped the "be" in "because" and wrote "cause" instead, or they simply just wrote "cuz". These are just some of the items I noticed while grading these papers. I am a 28-year-old woman who spend hours on social media each week, just like my peers, and just like my students. All this time on social media give me some insight on what kind of language is used there, and the mistakes mentioned above are a part of the language I have encountered on social media like Instagram and TikTok. These specific mistakes in combination with what I see on social media made me wonder if the teachers at the school see the same as I do, and it made me wonder if the students are aware that what they see on social media influence their writing at school.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Teenagers in Norway spend, on average, more than an hour on social media every day (Bakken, 2022). When students in lower secondary school spend time on social media they encounter large amounts of the English language, both in written and spoken form, this is because English is the lingua franca of social media (Alharthi, Bown, & Pullen, 2020), and therefore the language mostly used to communicate online. As vocabulary acquisition and language learning requires continuous exposure to the target language (Al-Zoubi, 2018) this language exposure online could be helpful for the student development of their second language. Exposure to the English language on social media offers students opportunities to hear how native and non-native speakers pronounce words, opportunities to see how words are spelled, and opportunities to witness how the English language is used in authentic situations outside the classroom.

Previous research, and literature, on the topic of social media and language learning and language acquisition has mostly been focused on university students. As these older students study English by their own volition and not because they must, there may be a difference in motivation for learning the target language between these older and younger students.

1.2 Research statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate what students and teachers in lower secondary school believe about social media as a tool for learning vocabulary. To find out to what degree they believe social media is helpful when acquiring a second language, and in what ways. The thesis statement is as follows:

Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning

To answer this statement, I have in this master's thesis interviewed 5 teachers on their beliefs and experience with their student's use of social media, and how their use of social media affects their vocabulary, and language use at school. I have also had 91 students fill out a questionnaire to investigate what their beliefs and experiences are.

1.3 Structure

This thesis is comprised of six chapters, including the introduction. Chapter 2 is the chapter on theory. Theory on vocabulary, vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition are examined, as well as theory on extramural English, motivation in language learning, formal and informal language, and incidental vocabulary learning. A definition of social media and a brief summary of the different social media platforms discussed in this thesis will also be given. Chapter 3 presents the methods used in this study, as well as the ethical reliability and validity of the study. In Chapter 4 the results of the questionnaire with the students and the interviews with the teachers will be given. In chapter 5 the results are discussed alongside the theory from Chapter 2. The study's limitations and the need for further research is also discussed in this chapter. Finally, Chapter 6 briefly summarizes and concludes the thesis.

2. Theory

According to the Ungdata survey from 2022 71% of teens in Norwegian lower secondary schools spend more than 1 hour every day on social media, while their reported total screentime is more than 3 hours daily (Bakken, 2022). As these results are products of self-reporting from teenagers, the numbers might be higher than what the survey found, however an hour a day on social media is a significant amount of time during which school students use – for varying purposes – social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc. Though, arguably lower secondary school students may not use the social media platforms mentioned earlier with the intent to learn English vocabulary, one can imagine that they get exposed to the English language on these platforms, as English is the predominant global means of communication. This, in turn, can mean that through such exposure (e.g., reading posts in English, writing comments in English, communicating with international friends, watching videos in English, etc.) students subconsciously acquire some English vocabulary.

2.1 The Curriculum for English

The competency aims for English after year 10 state that the students should be able to “use different digital resources and other aids in language learning, text creation and interaction” as well as “express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient and situations” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 8). This means that during the three years of lower secondary school the students must work to

develop their vocabulary in order to speak with fluency. To be able to express oneself with fluency, and to use a varied vocabulary when speaking in varied situations one needs quite a large vocabulary. The core elements of the Curriculum in English states that the students should be able to create meaning and use language in both formal and informal situations (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 2). The chapter on basic skills in the Curriculum for English states that the students should be able to adapt to speaking in formal and informal situations, adapt their language to the suitable purpose, receiver, and situation, and use digital media to strengthen their language learning (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 4). To do this the students must have the vocabulary to be able to differentiate between formal and informal settings, as well as have the language awareness to be able to understand what formal and informal vocabulary is.

2.1 Vocabulary

When teaching English, the end goal is to help students to be able to express themselves effectively, to teach them how to get their message across both when they are speaking and when they are writing (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). In order for our students to communicate like this they need a large storage of words to choose from, this storage of words is a vocabulary. Studies have explored how many words learners of English need in their vocabulary to be able to function in their target language, Schmitt (2008) concludes in his review article that a knowledge of 8000-9000 word families are needed for reading, a receptive vocabulary. A word family consists of a base word for example *love*, its inflected forms, *loves*, *loved*, *loving*, and their transparent derivations, these are words where one can clearly see where the root of the word comes from, *lover*, *lovingly* (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, p. 41). Students are also in need of a productive vocabulary, to be able to communicate orally students need 5000-7000 knowledge of 5000-7000 word families (Schmitt, 2008).

Generally, one can define vocabulary as the knowledge of words and the meaning of words. (Alizadeh, 2016). The English language has two main appearances, orthographical – its written form, and phonological – its pronounced form. The English language consists of stand-alone items which possess meaning (e.g., *cat*), or a combination of these stand-alone items (e.g., *two cats*). These items may consist of other morphological components like prefixes or suffixes (Eastbrook, 2013). The word *cat* is a freestanding item, as it has a meaning on its own, (Eastbrook, 2013) whether you are reading or hearing the word most people will associate it with

a smaller animal with four legs, a longer tail, and whiskers. This freestanding item or freestanding morpheme is in contrast to bound morphemes, bound morphemes have no meaning on their own and cannot stand alone. The ‘work’ in *working* is a freestanding item, while the ‘-ing’ in *working* is a bound morpheme without any specific meaning in the English language (Eastbrook, 2013). Freestanding words with meaning on their own are referred to as root words, while bound morphemes are referred to as prefixes or suffixes. Prefixes are added to the beginning of a word, and suffixes are added to the end of a word. These bound morphemes can change both the meaning and the word class of the word. Adding ‘-ing’ to ‘*working*’ is inflection, the suffix highlights a particular aspect of the verb, in this case it indicates the change of tense in the word. Whereas adding ‘-er’ to *work* is a derivation, this means that a new word is derived from the root word *work*, and the word class and meaning change.

To know a word is to know its form, both its written and its spoken form. One must know the meaning of the word, and its concept and reference – knowing what is included in the concept of a word, and what this concept refers to. And one must know the use of the word, what its grammatical function is, and its collocations – knowing what other words occur with this word (Schmitt, 2008, p. 334).

Native speakers of a language know what a grammatical sentence is and what an ungrammatical sentence is in their language. “I have to make a call.” is a grammatically correct sentence, while “Have I call a make to have.” is not (Alizadeh, 2016). This is because in one’s native language one becomes accustomed and attuned to the use of the particular set of phonemes and graphemes that can be used in combination. This makes the acquisition of a first language efficient, but it can complicate the acquisition of a second language, as most learners of a second language use their processing cues from their first language when learning other languages (Schmitt, 2008).

Acquiring vocabulary is a never-ending task, learners of a language will never know all words of a language, new unfamiliar words will almost certainly appear when reading a text or listening to someone speak. How often someone comes in contact with the new word increases the likelihood of them learning the word. According to Schmitt (2008) vocabulary learning consists of three components: *need*, *search*, and *evaluation*. *Need* is the word required to achieve a task, meaning the learner must learn a word that fills a required linguistic feature that they need to be able to

complete a task, whether that is when reading or writing, listening, or speaking. *Search* is the attempt to find the required information, meaning looking up the definition or the conjugation of a word in a dictionary. *Evaluation* refers to finding out if this particular word is suitable for the task at hand, finding out information about the word and looking at the context one is planning on using it in to see if it is suitable (Schmitt, 2008, p. 338). While these three components are important for vocabulary learning, there is more to it. The learner's motivation and attitudes towards learning a new language is also a key factor in vocabulary learning. The teacher can do their best work, planning lessons and finding great material, but if the students lack motivation and does not engage the learning outcome will be minimal (Schmitt, 2008, p. 338).

2.2 Second language acquisition

Unless a child is bilingual, learning a second language is quite different from first language acquisition, as it requires more work and different strategies than just being immersed in a language from birth (Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 17). Acquiring a first language starts from birth, it happens in the home with our families, and when children are socialized with others. Flognfeldt & Lund (2016, p. 35) describe it as being *showered* in language. Children subconsciously take in their first language as they are constantly surrounded by it, and context provides them with information to help them figure out the meaning of words without having to be explicitly taught it. This is what is called *implicit* or incidental learning, and it stands in contrast to what is happening in school, where language is taught explicitly and deliberately (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016).

Second language acquisition is similar to the process of first language acquisition. Acquisition requires meaningful interaction with the target language, meaning the use of natural communication where the form and pronunciation are not of great concern, but the message being conveyed is (Krashen, 1981). Christina Gitsaki (1998) summarized second language acquisition theories and found that even though these theories pay attention to various aspects of the process of second language acquisition all theories regard the acquisition as a gradual process. No matter what learning strategies the learners use, whether they are cognitive or innate mechanisms, they still have to progress through the natural stages of learning the target language (Gitsaki, 1998).

While acquisition is an unconscious process, learning is generally defined as being connected to thinking or conscious mental processes. Meaning that learning is a mental process where the

learner manipulates the new information, in this case a word, to fit in with already learned information about similar words. Learners of a second language can connect the meaning of a new word with what they know it to mean in their first language, and therefore “only” need to learn the phonology and orthography of the word (Eastbrook, 2013, p. 18). The Norwegian and the English languages are similar in vocabulary and syntax, both languages have the word order of subject-verb-object. These similarities mean that the distance between these two languages is minimal, and therefore that the learning burden on Norwegian students of English is light. For Chinese students of English, the learning burden is heavier because the distance between these two languages is greater (Eastbrook, 2013, p. 20). However, just because the learning burden for Norwegian students of English is light, it does not mean that it does not require work. The similarities between Norwegian and English can also be a cause for confusion for the students. As these languages are so comparable it can cause the students to believe that what works in Norwegian will also work in English. Some of these mistakes Drew & Sørheim (2016, p. 17) call Norwegiansims. These are instances where students use the Norwegian word order, for example: “*I have it fine today*” or use false friends. False friends are words that are spelled similarly or sound the same, but have different meanings in Norwegian and English, *fabrikk* and *fabric* is a good example of false friends, both their spelling and pronunciation are similar in Norwegian and English, but they mean different things, the Norwegian word *fabrikk* means factory in English (Drew & Sørheim, 2016, p. 17). This confusion can result in students writing sentences like “*He worked at a car fabric*”, which makes little sense for English speakers.

The amount of exposure to the target language will have an impact on how fast a learner acquire a new language. Previous research has revealed that it is not how early one starts to learn a new language that determines how well one becomes able to speak or write the target language, but the amount of exposure to the language (Peters, Norellie, Heylen, & Desmet, 2019). Learners may acquire the English language by regular and thorough exposure, as throughout this exposure the learner will come in contact with linguistic features of the target language (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Exposure to language can be defined as any contact the learner has to the target language in or outside of school. Inside the classroom the teacher must provide the learners with a variety of language exposure, from different speakers, in ways to improve their students’ four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Teachers can give examples of language, and

provide input from other sources, such as TV, film, music, books, or magazines (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Language exposure does not only happen inside the classroom, but also at home while watching a movie in English, by spending time online, when reading books in English and when traveling abroad. Al-Zoubi's (2018) study on exposure in second language acquisition concluded that the amount of language a learner of a second language is exposed to directly affects their ability to comprehend and produce language. As there is limited time in the classroom for language teaching, only two hours each week for students in lower secondary schools, second language learners of English should engage with the target language outside of school if they desire to build a large vocabulary.

2.3 Extramural English

Successful second language learning is dependent on two dimensions, learning inside the classroom and learning outside the classroom. Language teaching have always been perceived as preparation for language use outside of the classroom. The focus has been on classroom-based language learning, where the teachers instruct, and the students participate in activities. Research, theory, and practices has mostly focused on how the teacher and learners, inside the classroom, along with resources such as syllabuses, methods and materials can provide the necessary conditions for learning a second language (Richards, 2015). The classroom is no longer the only place where Norwegian learners of English come in contact with English, as students now spend much time on social media, gaming, watching TV of film, and listening to music. *Extramural English* refers to English learners come in contact with outside the classroom (Sundqvist, 2009, p. 24). *Extra* means 'outside' and *mural* means 'the wall', becoming outside the walls. The term *extramural English* was coined by Pia Sundqvist in 2009 and has since been a widely used term for English learning outside of schools. This contact with English is not initiated by teachers or other educational professionals, but is initiated and influenced by the learners themselves, or sometimes by a friend or family members. This means that *extramural English* is mostly a part of a voluntary activity for the learner, and it is an activity that gives learners the opportunity to take control of their own language learning, whether they are aware of this aspect or not (Sundquist & Sylvén, 2016). There are previously used terms attempting to encompass the same meaning as extramural English like Benson's (2011) *out-of-class learning* of English, and *out-of-school learning* of English. The key difference between these terms and extramural English is that in the

latter deliberate intention to acquire English is not a necessity, while it is a requirement in the two other terms. What is important for the term *extramural English* is that students come in contact with or is using English outside of school, intentionally or unintentionally (Sundqvist, 2009, p. 25). Teens using social media with English content in their free time can therefore be classified as *Extramural English*.

2.4 Motivation

Research on second language acquisition has found that the students' motivations for learning a second language has great impact on their learning outcomes. Some students find learning a second language useful for expanding their abilities for what they can do, others see it as a threat (Cook, 2013, p. 8). A person's motivations explain why they choose to partake in a specific activity, for how long they are willing to persist in that activity, and what effort they invest in it. In the socio- educational model motivation refers to the driving force behind an activity. In this model second language motivation consists of three elements. First, the effort the learner expends to learn the language, meaning homework, extra work, seeking out opportunities to learn more language. Second, a motivated learner wants to achieve goals. The student will express a desire to learn the target language and will work hard to achieve their language learning goals. Third, a motivated learner will find joy in learning the target language, they will express enthusiasm, although not at all times, and find language learning activities enjoyable. These three elements, effort, desire, and positive affect are seen as necessary aspects to determine whether a learner is motivated or not. However, a student may put effort into an activity without finding it enjoyable, or even if they lack ambition in succeeding in a task, therefore each element on their own is insufficient to reflect motivation (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). A number of different language-learning goals in second language acquisition research have been proposed. These include the utilitarian values of speaking another language, the integrative goal of becoming integrated in the target languages' culture and international communication (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011, p. 496). The last aspect is perhaps the most relevant for Norwegian students of English as English has become a lingua franca. This means that most Norwegian students use English for travel, friendships, or for study of work (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011, p. 496). However, goals are only effective as motivators if they become internalized, at least to some extent. Internal motivation can be separated into two categories, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is where students engage in learning activities because they enjoy it and find it interesting, while extrinsically motivated students engage with the learning activity to avoid punishment or to gain a reward (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011, p. 496).

One recent theory on second language motivations is Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System. The central concept of this theory is perception of the L2 (second language) self. This theory distinguishes between the *ideal* L2 self, and the *ought-to* L2 self. The ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the second language, as it is containing traits which one wishes to possess. Therefore, if a Norwegian student of English wishes to be a speaker of English in the future, they are more likely to accomplish it. The ought-to L2 self contains the traits one believes one *should* possess, either to meet the expectations of others, or to avoid negative consequences like punishment. This theory of the L2 selves encompass dimensions for the future, as hopes and desires for the future guides affects how one works towards these goals today (Campell & Storch, 2011, p. 167). The theory parallels well with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the ideal L2 self relies on intrinsic motivation, and the ought-to L2 self is extrinsically motivated.

2.5 Formal and informal language

As the curriculum states that students should be able to communicate in both formal and informal settings it is important to distinguish between these two forms of the same language. One often uses informal language when speaking to friends and family. In these settings one may use shorter and simpler sentences, incomplete sentences, repetitions or colloquial words and phrases. Sometimes one may use incorrect grammar or slang and words only the members of our own discourse understand (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, p. 298). Informal language is mostly used when speaking, or when communicating with people using social media, or over text messages. Formal language however is primarily associated with writing, for instance when writing essays at school, or when writing job applications or texts at work. Formal use of language is also necessary in oral settings, such as when one is giving a presentation, speaking at a public meeting, or when communicates in a professional setting. Communicating in a formal setting requires the use of correct grammar, precise vocabulary, and adherence to commonly accepted forms of pronunciation. In settings when one is speaking in more formal settings one has the opportunity to use longer and more complex sentences as spoken formal language is often prepared (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, pp. 298-299).

The language used on social media is often informal, and creators on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram often use abbreviations and acronymic phrases such as FOMO (Fear of missing out), IDC (I don't care), and IMHO (In my humble/honest opinion). This use of informal language is something students often pick up on and use themselves when they chat with each other or leave comments on posts or videos on social media (Zainuddin & Yunus, 2022).

2.6 EFL or ESL?

EFL refers to English as a Foreign Language, while ESL refers to English as a Second Language. The difference between the two is the importance of the definitions of foreign and second. A foreign language is a language spoken and used outside the country, and learning a foreign language is for tourism and travel, communicating with native speakers, and reading books and articles in a foreign language. A second language is a language that is of equal importance to the learner as their first language (Peng, 2019, s. 33). English is a compulsory subject in Norway from the first grade and onward. As a consequence of this, by the age of 16 Norwegian students of English have usually reached an upper-intermediate level (B1/B2 level, Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe)) (Bøhn, 2015).

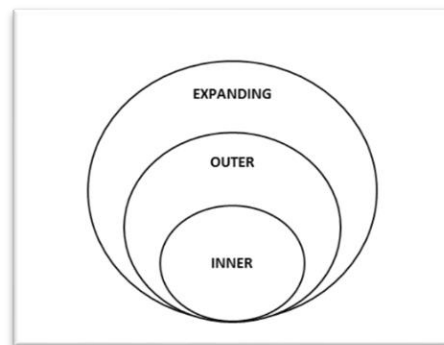


Figure 1 Kachru's Circles of English

When we look at Kachru's circles of English (see *Figure 1 Kachru's Circles of English*) the inner circle represents speakers with English as their first language, and that throughout history have spread the English language through colonialization. In the outer- circle countries English is an official second language, and in the expanding circle we find all the countries that teach English as a foreign language. Norway has traditionally been placed in the expanding circle of this model, however, Norway has seen an increase of English language use in business, higher education, and through audio and audiovisual media (Rindal, 2014, s. 7). Because of the fact that Norwegian

learners of English reach the level ‘upper intermediate’ in English and because English is used more in Norwegian daily lives, one can argue that Norwegians now fall into the category of learning English as a second language (Rindal, 2014). In this study I will use the term ESL when referring to how Norwegians learn English.

2.8 Incidental learning and vocabulary learning

Incidental vocabulary learning is learning as a by-product of doing other activities that are not explicitly geared towards vocabulary learning, as opposed to intentional vocabulary learning where there is a specific learning outcome expected from the activity (Hulsrijn, 2001, s. 267). Previous research on the topic has tended to focus on vocabulary learning through written input, rather than oral input. The few studies on vocabulary learning through oral input reveal that the levels and rate of vocabulary acquisition differ between written and oral input, oral input led to retention of a smaller number of words, but the retention was more durable than with written input (Zhang & Graham, 2020).

Sundqvist (2019) did a study to see whether extramural English had an impact on Swedish ninth graders’ vocabulary and oral proficiency. In the study she found that Swedish boys in year 9 spend an average of 21 hours a week doing extramural English activities while girls spend an average of 16.4 hours, she used this information to compare time spent on extramural activities with their oral proficiency in English and found that there is a correlation between these two variables that are significant enough to be of importance. Another find in this study is that active use of extramural English such as gaming, reading books or news is more important for learners’ acquisition of vocabulary, than passive use of extramural English such as listening to music or watching TV or films (Sundqvist, 2009, ss. 200-203). Hannibal Jensen (2019) found a gap in the research about young learners’ use of “English in the wild”, as previous studies were quantitative studies and therefore could not reveal specific details of the students’ engagement with English outside of school. She conducted her own study on 15 Danish 7–11-year-olds, with the goal to find out what motives the children had that drove them to use English in extramural activities, and how they engaged with English based on their motives. Hannibal Jensen (2019) concludes in her study *Language learning in the wild: A young user perspective* that young learners of English in Denmark were, for the most part, motivated by social and higher cognitive motives, they seemed to appreciate the authenticity, fluency, and accent variations. Some of these children had

lower cognitive motives for English in school because they found it to be less authentic. Not every child had high cognitive motives for using extramural English however, and these users of English merely used it “to get by”, for example when playing FIFA players had to use English because Danish was not an option (Hannibal Jensen, 2019).

2.9 Defining Social Media

Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Web 2.0 is defined by Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary as the “second stage of development of the internet that allows users to create, change and share information, through for example blogs and social media.” Both social media and more traditional content convey information, the difference between the two is that social media allow users to create and engage in the development of content, and to gather online to share knowledge, information, and opinions (Grover & Stewart, 2010, pp. 8-9). Social media platforms are spaces online that need users to create content, without users these spaces would be empty.

2.9.1 Instagram

Instagram is a free social media app for iPhone and Android. Anyone over the age of 13 can create an account on the app. This app allows users to share photos and videos with friends or strangers, and to view, like, comment on, and share posts to their page. On Instagram one comes in contact with both written and spoken English. Videos are often captioned which means one can listen to and read English at the same time. There is a ‘discover’ page on the app that allows you to see content based on what the algorithm believes that you would like to see. Here one often finds content from users from other countries, and many will see photos and videos posted by Hollywood celebrities, the captions and comment sections under these posts will often be in English.

2.9.2 Snapchat

Snapchat is a free social media app anyone over 13 years old can create an account for. It was originally developed for iPhone and Android, but a recent update allows for use on computers. The app is used for sending videos and pictures, called Snaps, and messaging friends, either individually or to groups of friends. The app allows for users to place a time-limit on the Snaps

they send, and they can only be viewed once before they disappear. Snapchat is mostly an app one uses to communicate with friends and is therefore an app where peoples' first language is the preferred language.

2.9.3 TikTok

TikTok is a free social media app for mobile devices. The app allows user to post short-form mobile videos, ranging in length from 15 seconds to 3 minutes. Users can like and comment on videos, send videos they see to their friends, and make a response to other people's videos with videos of their own. On this app there are two 'pages' with content, one where the creators you follow appear, the 'follow-page,' and one where you see what the algorithm thinks you want to see, the 'for you page' or *FYP* for short. As the algorithm decides what appears on the *FYP* everyone's experience on the app is different. Some will see mostly dance videos, some will have their *FYP*'s filled with sports, some will have more political or social issues presented to them, and others might have comedy videos, it all depends on ones' interest. The algorithm on TikTok shows its users videos based on a recommendation system. It bases its recommendations on previously liked videos, what creators the user follows, what creators the user has chosen to hide, and on what videos the user watches in its entirety without scrolling past it (Hern, 2022).

2.9.5 Facebook

Facebook is a free social network, and one of the first that became popular and spread world-wide (Hall, 2023). On Facebook users can create personal profiles and become Facebook-friends with acquaintances and real-life friends. Users can join groups that share interests, they can organize events, and users can follow pages that are content pages for businesses on Facebook. The social media platform also offers an instant messaging app called Messenger (Kerner, n.d.).

2.10 Previous research on social media and vocabulary learning

Richards (2015) states that previous studies have presented evidence that social media have become a favored learning environment for learning language, especially for EFL and ESL learners of English. These studies found that how language learners learn may be affected by how they use social media, and that vocabulary knowledge has increased more when using social media than it has when using other forms of technology, like CD-programs or web-based learning programs (Ma, 2017). On Social media, and on the internet in general, English has become the lingua franca, and is no longer the native speakers' exclusive domain. This leads to cross-

linguistic communication on social media, which provides its users with a casual learning environment with more conversational forms of English (Alharthi, Bown, & Pullen, 2020, p. 319).

However, most of the research on the topic of social media and vocabulary learning has been done on university students. University students and lower secondary students may have different motivations for learning English, as it is something the younger students must do in order to complete their education, while the university students choose to participate when deciding which classes to take. Alharthi, Brown, and Pullen (2020) wrote a literary review article on the use of social media in vocabulary learning. They used key words such as: Vocabulary learning, Vocabulary acquisition, Social media, Social networking, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. The articles were limited to those published between 2014 and 2018, and only 15 articles met the criteria they were looking for, 13 were focused on university students, one studied Turkish 10–14-year-olds, and one studied Indonesian 14–16-year-olds. The researchers found that limitations in these studies include that the students participating may only have done so in order to pass the class, or to please the teacher/researcher. They also found that the use of social media for vocabulary learning is under researched and should be explored further (Alharthi, Bown, & Pullen, 2020).

Aloraini and Cardoso (2020) investigated university students in Saudi Arabia's perceptions of using social media in language learning. They found that there were differences between beginner and advanced students' perceptions of the usefulness of using social media as a language learning tool. The advanced students found it to be useful as it means it was independent work they could do without teacher intervention, while the beginner students found it to be an added load of work, that they had to do without the aid of the teacher. The researchers connected this to the socio-constructivist approach to learning where beginner students need more support and 'scaffolding' in the beginning stages of learning before they are able to learn more independently. Both beginner and advanced groups reported that using social media for language learning purposes was helpful in the sense that they were exposed to more English, and that this input motivated them to practice output (Aloraini & Cardoso, 2020). This seems to be the general conclusion to most studies on social media and language learning in a second language learning environment, but they are not specific to vocabulary learning. As these results are based

on research on university students, they may not be applicable to lower secondary students, there is also no research on Norwegian lower secondary students, their use of social media and how it affects their vocabulary learning.

3. Methodology

The following section will describe the methods used to investigate the research statement. As previously mentioned, I am in this study looking to find out if and to which extent students in lower secondary school in Norway acquire vocabulary in English when using social media applications in their free time. My research statement is:

Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning

I will in this chapter describe the methods used in this study, and how I analyzed my data. I will also explain what ethical considerations had to be made when doing research in a school, and the reliability and validity of this study.

3.1 Philosophy of science

Philosophy of science concerns many questions in many disciplines, it is a branch of philosophy devoted to understanding science and its development. Furthermore, it is concerned with matters of methods of science, the nature of scientific knowledge, and scientific explanation (American Psychological Association, n.d.). In social studies the field of study are humans. Humans have opinions about themselves and the people around them, and their opinions are always evolving and changing, the researcher in this field is also a part of this human community, and is therefore unable to just be observing the participants in their study, but they must be careful with how much space they take up (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016).

3.2 Data collection

The following section offers a description of the students and teachers participating in this study, as well as the methods that were used to investigate the research statement. Chapter 3.2.1 will describe the participants, while Chapter 3.2.3 will describe the interviews and transcription methods, and the questionnaire and coding methods. Chapter 3.3 will give an explanation of the

ethical assessments that had to be made when doing research on a vulnerable group, which children are, and Chapter 3.4 will outline the reliability and validity of this study.

3.2.1 Participants

The participants in this study are students and teachers from a lower secondary school in Eastern Norway. This school has around 400 students and 70 teachers and is representative for schools in Eastern Norway as the socio-economic backgrounds of the students are average when comparing to national levels using statistics from SSB. This study surveyed in total 91 students and interviewed 5 teachers. There were 18 students in year 8 participating, 12 girls and 6 boys, 35 students from year 9, 18 girls and 17 boys, and 38 from year 10, 17 girls and 21 boys. I asked their teachers about these students' first languages, all the students speak Norwegian, but 7 of the students participating were bilingual, these bilingual students spoke English, Arabic, Urdu, or Polish. The students participating were given the questionnaire by their English teachers, some of these teachers also participated in my study and offered to help with the questionnaires. There were 5 teachers from the school who participated in interviews, they have varying levels of experience. Some have been teaching for almost 20 years and are able to see how the pupils' use of English has changed since social media became a big part of their students' lives, and some of them are quite new to teaching English, with 3 to 4 years of experience, and used social media while going to school themselves.

3.2.2 Research methods

One differentiates between two different approaches to collecting data, qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods attempt to go into the depths of a phenomenon, to find processes and meanings that cannot be measured in numbers or frequency, instead it has to be analyzed in the context it exists in. Methods that are suitable for this are observations and interviews (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 28). Quantitative methods, on the other hand are suitable to find statistic generalizations, questionnaires are an often-used quantitative method (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 28).

Because the aim of this study is to find out what both students in upper secondary school and their teachers believe and experience with the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning, I found the best way to go about this was to use a mixed-methods approach. This is a mixed-methods study, using questionnaires, group interviews, and individual interviews.

3.2.3 Interviews and transcription

The qualitative interview is the most used method to collect data in the social sciences. It is a flexible method that one can use almost everywhere and makes it possible to collect detailed descriptions of what is being studied, as long as the topic is not sensitive or too difficult. The qualitative interview is a conversation with a structure and a purpose, and is suitable when one wants to study opinions, attitudes, and experiences, and when one wants to give the informant more freedom to express themselves than what a structured questionnaire can provide (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 145).

Usually, one uses one-on-one interviews when the topic of discussion is sensitive or when there are many topics to cover. Group interviews are more suitable for discussions where one wishes to explore differences of opinion, and where the participants can share and compare their ideas and experiences (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 146). This is why I originally wanted to do one group-interview with all the teachers who agreed to participate. The hope was that they would be able to discuss the questions based on their own experience and exchange opinions and observations in the classroom, but as teachers have an extremely busy workday, with teaching, meetings, planning, and more it was difficult to find a time where all of them were available, therefore I completed a pair-interview with two teachers, and three one-on-one interviews. All the interviews were structured, meaning I had made an interview guide with questions I wanted to ask (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 148), and the questions were asked in the same order every time. This structure and standardization were beneficial when it came to analyzing the answers, as it made the process of categorizing much easier. In the pair-interview the participants were the two teachers I talked to with the least experience, they were comfortable with each other and were able to discuss, agree, and disagree when answering the questions. All the teachers were given the interview guide before the interview to allow them the opportunity to give the questions some thought beforehand. The questions were not very difficult, but they did require some reflection from the teachers in order for them to answer them properly.

All the interviews were conducted in the teacher's native language, Norwegian. This was done to make sure there was no confusion about what any of the questions mean, and because communication in one's native language is often more comfortable for both the participants and the researcher. When conducting the interviews, I recorded the participants and myself, a

person's voice is considered personal information, even if no names are mentioned, by *Datatilsynet* (Datatilsynet, 2019), therefore extra precautions were necessary. I used the *Diktafon* app, connected to UiO's *Nettskjema* to record the interviews. This is a secure solution to collect data containing personal information. The application encrypts and sends the recording from my phone to a website I have to log in to by using my *Feide*-account (UiO, 2021). Because a person's voice is considered personal information, I needed to send in an application to sikt/NSD, and get it approved before I could collect any data.

All the interviews were conducted in the same week, and so all the transcription was done over one weekend. The interviews were 'intelligent verbatim' transcribed (McMullin, 2023), meaning I left out pauses and hesitation sounds like, hmm or eh, and instead I marked these pauses, or sentences said sarcastically or humorously. This was done to attempt to record what the participants intended to say, and to get the transcription closer to how the participants may have expressed themselves in written form.

3.2.4 Questionnaires and coding

The questionnaire is a common method to collect quantitative data. Some benefits to using the questionnaire are the possibility to collect data from many individuals in a short period of time, the standardization of the questions and answers gives the opportunity to generalize their answers to include the opinion of students in other parts of Norway, the standardization of the questions also gives the opportunity to find similarities and differences in the way the respondents answer.

The questionnaire is semi-structured (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 262), and consists of 14 questions, containing a mix of multiple choice, a five-point Likert scale (a scale that goes from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*), and written answers. The questionnaire was first piloted on a smaller class of year 10 students consisting of 8 girls and 9 boys. This was done to confirm that the questionnaire was made in such a way that the students would be able to answer it without assistance, and so that the questions were formulated in such a way that they gave the answers this study needed. It was also piloted to make sure every participant understood the questions in the same way, to be certain that the data would be reliable.

When the pilot revealed that the questions were formulated to give the desired answers, the questionnaire was given to one class in year 8 and two classes in year 9 and 10. In total 91

totalt a	brøk alle	prosen	spørsmål
91	jenter	gutter	
	47	44	Hvor tenker du at du kan lære engelsk? (Kryss av for alle som gjelder for deg)
69	69/91	75,8 %	på skolen
87	87/91	95,6 %	tv og film
44	44/91	48,4 %	lese engelske bøker
83	83/91	91,2 %	sosiale medier
42	6/13	46,2 %	gaming
3	9/91	9,9 %	annet
			Hvor tenker du at du lærer engelsk best? (kryss av for alle som gjelder for deg)
51	51/91	56,0 %	på skolen
65	5/7	71,4 %	tv og film
25	25/91	27,5 %	lese engelske bøker
62	62/91	68,1 %	sosiale medier
21	3/13	23,1 %	gaming
3	3/91	3,3 %	annet
			Hvilke sosiale medier bruker du? (kryss av for alle du bruker)
90	90/91	98,9 %	Snapchat
77	11/13	84,6 %	Instagram
81	81/91	89,0 %	TikTok
22	22/91	24,2 %	Facebook
15	15/91	16,5 %	WhatsApp
16	16/91	17,6 %	Twitter
1	1/91	1,1 %	annet
			Hvilke to sosiale medier plattformer bruker du mest? (maks 2 kryss)
87	87/91	95,6 %	Snapchat
8	8/91	8,8 %	Instagram
75	75/91	82,4 %	TikTok
2	2/91	2,2 %	Facebook
			WhatsApp
1	1/91	1,1 %	Twitter
1	1/91	1,1 %	annet

Figure 3 Data collection 2

The last two questions of the questionnaire were open ended questions, to code these I wrote them in to a separate Excel sheet, still separated by gender and grade. When I had written all the answered I read them again, and color coded them based on what category their answers fell into. There were three main categories that became apparent, vocabulary, formal and informal language, and learning from native speakers.

The questionnaire was written in Norwegian to make sure the participants understood the questions and could answer them to the best of their ability. As the questions were in Norwegian the participants answered the written questions in their first language, and therefore I had to translate their answers into English. When translating I tried to keep as close to their 'voice' as possible to make sure I did not change their opinion to what I might have believe they meant, and to take away from what the participants tried to say.

This is what a girl in year 9 wrote as an answer to the question “*What do you think about using social media at school? (in lessons, as homework or as assessment)*”:

“Jeg mener at man kan bruke det noen ganger, men hvis man først velger å gjøre sånt, så tipper jeg at en god del kommer til å bruke det som på fritiden, i stedet for å bruke det for det man har fått beskjed om” (Girl, year 9).

And this is how I translated her answer:

“I think we could use it sometimes, but if the teacher chooses to use it, I bet many will use it just like they do in their free time, instead of doing what they are told to do” (Girl, year 9).

3.3 Ethical assessments

Researchers have ethical responsibilities when it comes to the participants in their studies, they have to respect them, protect their personal integrity, safety, and welfare. Participants must be informed and consent before any research can take place. The participants in a study must be informed and give consent even if the researcher does not collect any personal data or sensitive information, and even if the participant is anonymized before publishing (De Nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteer, 2016, p. 18).

The consent has to be given voluntarily, meaning that it is given without pressure. Therefore, the researcher must be careful not to give incentives to participate, continue asking when the request has been declined, or imply that there will be negative consequences if one chooses not to participate. The researcher is responsible for informing their participants that they can decline the request to participate or withdraw from the project even after they have consented (De Nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteer, 2016). I sent the consent form along with the information to the teachers I wished to include in my project on Microsoft TEAMS. After doing this there were 5 teachers who expressed a wish to participate, and who then signed the consent form.

The participants in the questionnaire are children, therefore I needed their parents’ consent (De Nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteer, 2016, p. 20). The parents were given the information about the study and the consent form in *Visma Flyt Skole*, which is a platform schools use to communicate with parents. I chose this option of informing the parents to make sure I could reach all the parents by avoiding the documents getting lost in backpacks or in lockers, and because the

platform gives me a list of the names of the children whose parents gave their consent. The children themselves also had the choice to participate or not, even with parental consent. *The Convention of the Rights of the Child*, developed by the UN, states that what is best for the child is a fundamental consideration in all research, and the Norwegian constitution says that children have a right to be heard in research, and that their voices are important (De Nasjonale forskningssetiske komiteer, 2016, p. 20). This is both a reason for why the children needed to consent themselves, but also why the information and questionnaire had to be formulated in such a way that they understood what they were participating in, even when I am not collecting any personal data.

Before I could collect any data, or even ask any possible participants to be a part of the study, had had to send in an application to sikt/NSD. This is because, as mentioned in chapter 3.2.3, any voices in a recording are considered personal information (Datatilsynet, 2019). And to collect personal data sikt/NSD has to agree that the reason for doing so is good, and that there are measures in place to protect the participants privacy. Children are a vulnerable group to do research on and are therefore a protected group that sikt/NDS are especially careful to protect. In the application the interview guides for the teachers, the questionnaires for the students, the information and consent forms for the teachers, and the information and the consent forms for the students and their parents were included.

The information and consent forms for the students and their parents were worded slightly differently from the information and consent forms for the teachers. This was done to make sure that everyone who got these documents were able to understand the purpose of the study and that they were able to understand what the consent form asked of them no matter what educational and language background they had.

3.4 The study's reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure (Price, Jhangiani, & Chant A, 2015, s. 96), and to what extent that the measurement of a phenomenon provides a stable result, a result that is repeatable (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 33). If the study is repeated with the similar participants and the results of both studies find the same result the study is reliable, if the results differ greatly, the results are unreliable, and untrustworthy. In any study it is the researcher's responsibility to make sure they conduct their research in such a way that the study can be replicated by other

researchers. Therefore, the researcher has to be open with how they find their participants, give some insight about who they are, without revealing their identity, and explain their methods of data collection and analysis. This stability measurement of a study is called ‘test-retest reliability’ (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). The reliability of a study also measures internal consistency, this means that every respondent to the questionnaire or the interview has to understand the question in the same way, because if they do not, the questions would measure different constructs and the results would be unreliable (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). This questionnaire was conducted in Norwegian, and in a language that was as precise and simple as possible. This was done to avoid confusion, and to make sure the participants understood what the questions asked of them. The same is true for the interviews with the teachers, they were conducted in Norwegian to make certain that both the participants and the interviewer knew precisely what was asked, and what was answered.

Validity is to what extent the data represent the variables they are intended to (Price, Jhangiani, & Chant A, 2015). When a study has good reliability, one should be confident that the study also has good validity, but exceptions do occur. Face validity is a common way to see if a study has validity, the measure method looks at to what extent the data and results measure the construct of interest at ‘first glance’ (Price, Jhangiani, & Chant A, 2015). It is the quickest way to determine the validity of a study, and it is an assessment of whether the measurements of the methods are reasonable and relevant for the questions at hand. Participants, experts, and the researcher may be involved with determining if the study has face value, and the more participants and other groups to be involved in the study, the more likely the study is to be acceptable (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). One would assume that a study that looks into teenagers and their language learning online includes data about both teenagers and social media habits, if it did not the validity would be less than great.

4. Results

In this section I am presenting the results from the questionnaires and the interviews. Chapter 4.1 centers around the results from the students’ answers to the questionnaire and chapter 4.2 on the beliefs and experiences the teachers expressed on their student’s use of social media in the interviews.

Findings from the questionnaire will be shown through bar-charts and pie-charts depicting the average percentage groups, comparing the different age groups and genders, with their combined percentages.

4.1 Students' beliefs and experiences using social media as a tool for learning vocabulary in English

The first two questions in the questionnaire were close-ended questions, meaning that there were only a limited number of options for the participants to choose from. These questions were included to determine what gender the students identified as and what grade they were in. I included these questions to be able to see if there were any difference in opinion between these groups and to see if there were any differences in their use of social media. In total 91 students answered the questionnaire, 47 girls and 44 boys. 18 participants are in year 8, 35 are in year 9 and 38 are in year 10.

The next two questions aimed to find out where the students believed they could learn English, and where they believed they could learn English the best. As we can see from the bar-chart below (see *Figure 4 Percentages of answers regarding where the students believe they can learn English*) the students agree that they can learn English from TV and films, as this is where their answers are the most similar. In total 95,6% of the participants believe that they can learn English from watching TV and films. 91,2% of the participants believe that they can learn English by using social media. 100% of the girls in year 9 and year 10 believe that they can learn English by using social media, while only 66% of girls in year 8 believe the same. The answers with the highest answer rates for the question "Where do you think you can learn English?" are "Watching TV and films" with 95,6% of in total, "Through social media" with 91,2 % in total, and "At school" with 75,8% in total. In the category of "Other", the students were able to write their own answers, the answers that were written here were "at home," "while listening to music and reading lyrics", and "at dance practice, where we use English terms for different moves when learning a new routine."

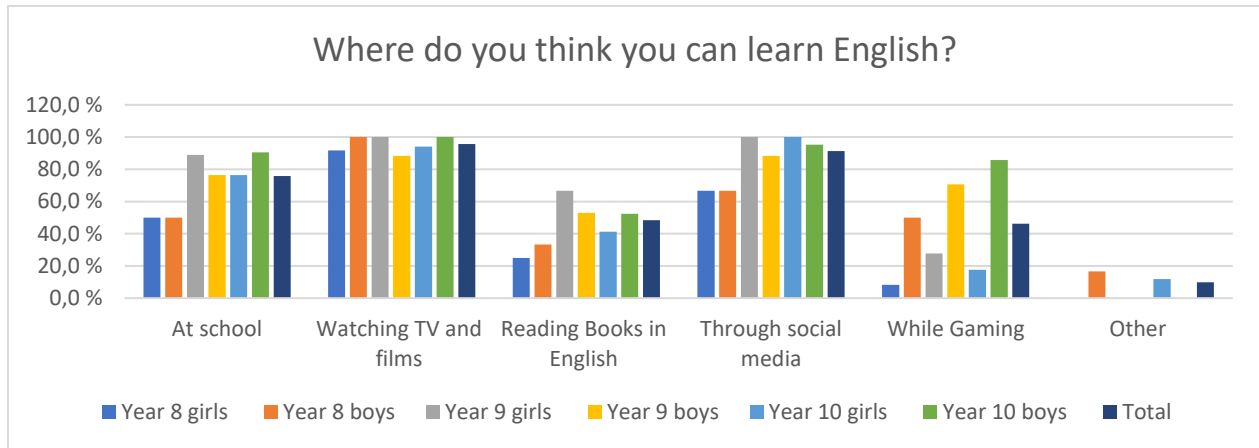


Figure 4 Percentages of answers regarding where the students believe they can learn English

The answers were different for where the students think they can learn English the best. 75,8% of the students believe that they learn English in school, but only 56% believe that school is one of the places they can learn English best. Watching TV and film and spending time on social media are the places the students believe they can learn English the best. The girls in year 8 seem to not agree with themselves, 50% of them answered that they think they can learn English in school, but 58,3% of them answered that they believed they could learn English best at school (see Figure 5 Percentages of answers regarding where the students believe they can learn English the best)

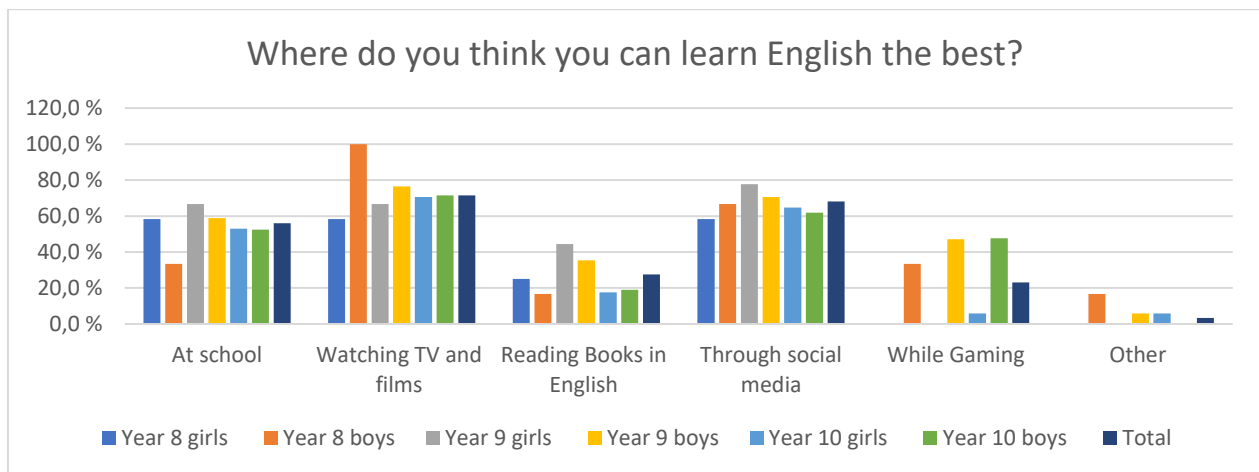


Figure 5 Percentages of answers regarding where the students believe they can learn English the best

The next three questions in the questionnaire sought to find out what social media apps the students use, which ones they used the most, and on what social media apps they met the most

English. Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok are the most popular social media apps across all grades and genders. 100% of the participants reported to using Snapchat, except for a few of the boys in year 10 where 95,2% reported to using the app. TikTok is the next most popular app with the students, 89% reported to using the app, Instagram is in third place with 84,6% students using it. Snapchat and TikTok are the two most used apps by the participants. According to teachers I have spoken to, and some unformal research talking to students, Facebook is mostly used by “old people.” The students in lower secondary school today, seem to mostly use Facebook because this is where they get information about when their sports teams have practices or games, this is reflected in the results from the questionnaire where only 24,2 % reported to using the app. The questionnaire asked the students to report on which two social media apps they use the most, and only 8,8% reports Instagram in their most used apps, and only 2,2% reports Facebook. When asked to choose two, 95,6% reported Snapchat as one of their most used apps, and 82,4% reported TikTok. The next question asked the students to identify on what social media app they encounter the most English (see *Figure 6 Percentages of answers regarding what social media apps the students use the most*). Here the two apps Instagram and TikTok were the most reported answer. 89% of the students answered TikTok, and 42% answered Instagram. Only 16% answered Snapchat, which is expected as this is an app mostly used to communicate with friends. In the category of “Other” a few boys in year 9 and 10 reported using Discord and meeting the most English there.

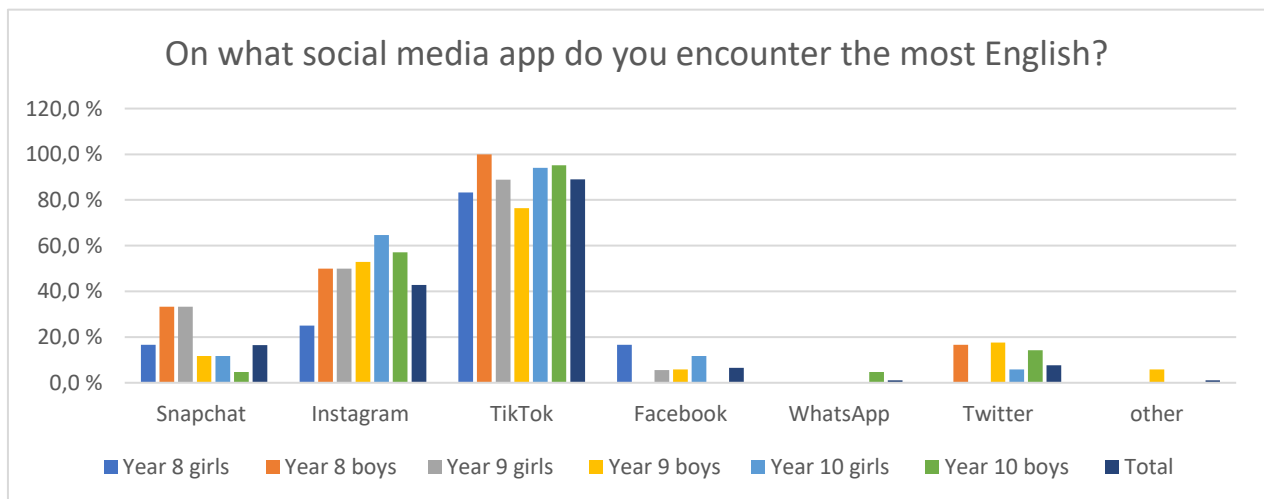


Figure 6 Percentages of answers regarding what social media apps the students use the most

The next four questions in the questionnaire were included to find out what the students believed about using social media as a way to improve their English skills and vocabulary. 94,5% of the participants answered “yes” to the question “Do you think you learn English when using social media?”, 3,3 % answered “no”, and 2,2 % answered “maybe”. 74,7% said that they think their vocabulary would improve by using social media, while 18,7% answered “maybe”, and 6,6% said “no”. There was minor difference in the answers of the separate groups for these questions, and when turning the numbers for the question “Do you think your vocabulary improves by using social media?” into charts all of them looked remarkably similar to the one for the total number of participants, as seen in the figures below.

DO YOU THINK YOU LEARN ENGLISH BY USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

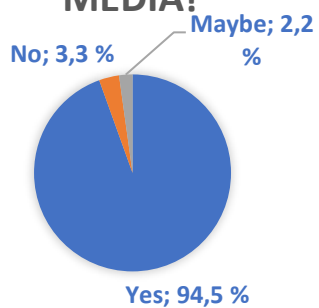


Figure 7 Percentages of answers regarding if the students believe they learn English by using social media

DO YOU THINK YOUR VOCABULARY IMPROVES BY USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

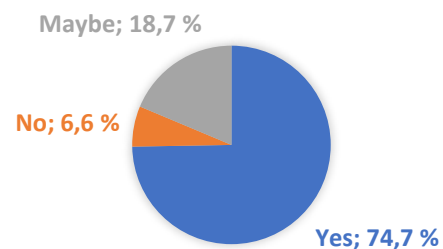


Figure 8 Percentages of answers regarding if the students believe they can learn vocabulary by using social media

The second to last question in the questionnaire asked the students what they think about using social media at school, as a part of a lesson, or as a part of homework or with graded work. There were four categories that became apparent in these answers. Some students were positive to the idea, some were negative, some were indifferent, and some were skeptical.

Among those participants who believed that use of social media apps in the classroom could be positive, some pointed out that their knowledge about and awareness of societal issues could be increased: “I think it would be good to use social media at school, because it can teach us important things about the society we should learn about” (Girl, year 9).Some of the respondents believed that the use of social media could be beneficial and shared their concern regarding their

teachers' skeptical view of the given issue: "I think it would be good because you learn a lot more English on social media than teachers think we do" (Girl, year 9).

Other students were positive to using social media at school as they are familiar with the format, and possibly felt it could offer authenticity some students perhaps feel they lack in school:

- "I think it would be good because social media is a big part of our lives. The language that is used on social media is something we hear a lot and is familiar with" (Girl, year 9)
- "Good. Easy for students to relate or keep up with the lesson when there we do something we are familiar with. It can create more interest for the subject" (Girl, year 10)

Others were positive to using social media at school as they felt it could offer a break in routine, offer new varieties of working with the subject, and give them opportunities to do more practical work in the classroom:

- "I like practical work at school, so I would like it" (Boy, year 9)
- "I think it would be cool with a new way of learning, I like variation at school" (Boy, year 10)

Other students were more skeptical to using social media in relation to schoolwork, some thought it could be fun, but felt they spent enough time on social media in their free time: "I think it could be fun, but I would rather have normal lessons at school, we can use social media at home" (Girl, year 9).

Some of the participants were reluctant to use social media at school, because they worried their classmates would struggle to do what they were supposed to in the lesson, and rather spend their time using social media like they would at home: "I think we could use it sometimes, but if the teacher chooses to use it, I bet many will use it just like they do in their free time, instead of doing what they are told to do" (Girl, year 9).

Other participant expressed concerns about how the social media apps would be incorporated in the lessons, and some felt they would gain more knowledge if social medias were left out of their schoolwork:

- "I don't really think it would be that good, but if you do it right it could be good" (Girl, year 10)

- “As long as it’s used right, it could be helpful and make lessons better” (Boy, year 9)
- “It could work, but without social media the lesson would teach us more” (Boy, year 10)

Some participants expressed negative attitudes towards using social media at school. Some were worried it would be a distraction and take away from their opportunities to learn: “It can be very distracting, and we won’t learn anything” (Girl, year 9).

Others wrote that they already spent much time on social media in their free time, and worried that it would be come too much if they were to spend time on social media at school as well:

- “It won’t be good. Us teenagers already spend enough time on social media. If we are going to use it at school too it would be too much” (Girl, year 10)
- “I don’t think it would be good for us, we already spend many hours on social media” (Boy, year 9)

Multiple participants expressed no desire to use social media at school, and felt that social media had no place at school, and was best left at home:

- “I don’t think we need that at school” (Boy, year 8)
- “I don’t think social media has a place at school” (Boy, year 10)

The last question in the questionnaire was an open-ended question that asked the students to write something about what social media with English content might help them learn, if they believe it helps. Not everyone decided to write something here, but quite a few gave longer, thought out answers, and some gave two-word answers that were still informative of their opinions (ie: “*Vocabulary*” (Boy, year 8)). As previously mentioned in chapter 3.2.4, the answers to this question were color coded based on what category the answers fit in to, vocabulary, formal and informal language, and learning from native speakers. 37 of the answers related to learning vocabulary by spending time on social media. Some respondents said that spending time on social helped them learn vocabulary because they were exposed to different variations of language use on these platforms: “Vocabulary, because when you hear English more often and in different settings it helps you to learn more words and expressions” (Girl, year 10).

Others answered that they acquired vocabulary because they were exposed to large amounts of language on these apps, and that this exposure was helpful, as they encountered unfamiliar words and expressions they could pick up:

- “When you hear more of it (English), you will learn slowly but surely. You learn many new words on social media” (Boy, year 10)
- “It helps with vocabulary by showing me words I have not seen before” (Boy, year 9)

Others felt it could help them increase their vocabulary, but that they needed assistance if that were to happen. This shows that some students are aware of what they need in order to learn, and that some students need more support than just contextual guidance to gain new vocabulary: “It sometimes helps with my vocabulary, but only if I ask what it means” (Girl, year 8).

Some of the participants were concerned with how the language on social media is lacking when it comes to being exposed to more formal language in English. Multiple participants expressed concerns about the language they see on social media, and how abbreviation and slang is often used: “There are many abbreviations on social media so I do not think social media will help me learn spelling” (Girl, year 9). In addition to abbreviations used on social media, some also experienced that the language used on these apps were informal and not very helpful when it came to learning how to use the language in more formal situations:

- “It helps me learn English, but social media is very informal, and the English is not very proper” (Boy, year 10)
- “It is very informal” (Girl, year 8)

Other answers included more than one category, many of these referred to both vocabulary and formal and informal language. Some of the participants who had their answers coded into this category believed that they could learn vocabulary when using social media, but that because of spelling mistakes and informal abbreviations their opportunity to acquire vocabulary were limited: “I believe one can learn many new words and develop one’s vocabulary to a certain extent, because there are many typos and informal abbreviations” (Boy, year 9). Participants were also concerned that they would only be able to use the words they learn on social media when they are speaking. They experience that many creators on social media pay little attention to their

spelling when they post content online, and that therefore they do not learn how to spell the new words they learn:

- “It helps me with my vocabulary, so I know more words when I talk, but it does not help me when I write because many people on social media write things wrong “(Girl, year 9)
- “There are accounts that helps you learn English on TikTok, social media also helps with vocabulary and spelling because you are more exposed to English, but I don’t think I learn the more formal words” (Girl, year 10)

Many of the answers had to be dually categorized in the categories of vocabulary and learning from native speakers. One girl in year 9 expressed concern with how native speakers of English sometimes confuse homophones when writing, and worried that second language learners of English would pick up on these mistakes: “I think I can get a bigger vocabulary when I use social media, but maybe not grammar. Many English and American people don’t know the difference between your and you’re, their, they’re and there, and it would be bad if we learn the wrong thing from them” (Girl, year 9). She was not the only one with concerns about how native speakers of English use the language: “I think using social media can help me learn new words, but you can also learn to use words in the wrong context if the people you follow use the words wrong” (Girl, year 9). Multiple respondents were also positive to the authentic language exposure they get from social media, as it helps them acquire new words and gain confidence when speaking”

- “I learn many new words on social media. It makes it easier for me to know what to say if I have to speak English, this is because I have heard the English language a lot on social media” (Girl, year 9)
- “I get to hear how young people talk, and how they talk to each other” (Girl, year 9)
- “Because a lot of the language I hear on social media is informal I feel like it helps me talk to people like Americans talk, but it does not help me spell or write” (Boy, year 10)

4.2 Teachers’ beliefs and experiences using social media as a tool for learning vocabulary in English

After first asking the teachers for how long they have been teaching English and in what grades they have taught, I wanted to find out what they believed their students social media habits are. As it turns out, they are quite similar to what the students reported themselves. All the teachers

have an impression that the two most used social media apps among their students are Snapchat and TikTok. They also believed that they spend time on Instagram, but that they are more passive than active users, meaning they scroll and look at content more than they post anything themselves.

The second question sought to find out whether the teachers believed their students use of social media helped them increase their vocabulary. The teachers seem to agree that their students learn vocabulary about very narrow topics of interest. One teacher was fascinated about one of her student's vocabulary about make-up specific language, and another was fascinated about their students' vocabulary about social justice topics like gender and sexuality. They express concern that the vocabulary they learn influence their use of their native language, and that it does not necessarily help them learn how to communicate properly in real life situations.

The teachers believe they see evidence of their students' use of social media, both in their written and oral texts. One of the teachers pointed out that they have seen their students use words they do not really know what mean, suggesting they have heard the word online without understanding the context. They have also seen their students misspell words and write them somewhat phonetically, they believe this happened because the students have only heard the word being said, and not written out, meaning they may acquire new words and increase their vocabularies when using social media, but that these words lack visual representation. When it comes to using English orally, the teachers find the students they have now are more confident when speaking than the students they had 10 years ago, especially when it comes to more informal situations. Many speak to each other and answer questions from the teacher freely and confidently, but they still struggle to transfer this confidence to when they are presenting or answering more complex questions.

When asked where they believed their students learned the most English, the teachers had different perspectives. Some believe their students learn the most English in school, that vocabulary, grammar and understanding of the language is mostly and best learned in school. Other teachers believed that when their students have started lower secondary school the foundation of English language learning have already been laid, and the teachers' job is now to help their students to understand how to use the language. One teacher said:

“I believe that exposure to English is what results in the most learning, vocabulary they get from social media, gaming, and TV, but I think what they learn the best in school when it comes to learning English is how to use the language correctly, to learn how to use English differently in different contexts. This is where the school has a significant role.” – Teacher A.

The teachers were asked if they believed that they should make their students aware of how they can expand their vocabulary by using social media. They answered that they think they should, because “language exposure is language exposure no matter what situation they encounter language in” - (Teacher B) and said that they tell their students that they can learn English when they read books or when they watch television so they should do the same with social media. One of their concerns with using social media for language learning is the speed in which everything is happening on TikTok. They are worried that because everything goes so fast and because videos are so short on TikTok that their students do not get the same time to take in what they are hearing and reading as they do when they are watching TV or gaming.

5. Discussion

This section aims to investigate the research statement “Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning”. Finding the answers to the question will be attempted by examining the data from the questionnaires and the interviews, I will be comparing this data to the theory included in the Chapter 2.

The results from the questionnaires and the interviews show that the teachers' impressions of their students' social media use are accurate, and the same as what the students report themselves. The social media apps they use the most are Snapchat and TikTok. However, Snapchat is not one of the social media where students encounter the most English. I believe this is because this is an app mostly used for communicating with close friends, and this is done in their first language, not in English. TikTok is one of the apps the students report to using the most, and one of the apps the students report to encountering the most English on. Here they encounter a multitude of videos, most of them in English. English has become the lingua franca of the internet and

therefore also on social media, it is a language that is no longer “owned” by its native speakers, but now by all users of English (Alharthi, Bown, & Pullen, 2020, p. 319).

What you see on TikTok is determined by an algorithm, which works as a recommendation system, it recommends videos you might want to see based on what you have liked before, what creators you follow, what creators you have chosen to hide, or on what kinds of videos you watch in its entirety without scrolling past it. It is therefore personalized and suited to each individual interests. This might also be the reason teachers find that some students have highly specialized vocabularies about certain topics. If a user of TikTok is interested in social justice topics such as *LGBTQ+ rights*, their For You Page (FYP) will be filled with videos relating to that topic. As a consequence, they will be immersed in language that is relevant to the topic and acquire specialized language. As TikTok shows everyone videos based on what they are interested in, motivation may be a factor in how much time they spend on the app, even though language acquisition is an unconscious process (Eastbrook, 2013, s. 18), the more language they acquire about a certain subject might be motivating to continue learning language so they can understand more about the topic they are interested in. On social media there is content for everyone, no matter what one’s interest are one can find content that caters to that interest. This can result in everyone using social media more than they used to, because they find videos on TikTok or creators on Instagram that match their interest perfectly. Students who are interested in for example K-POP (music genre from South-Korea) will find content creators who cater to this interest, and they might comment on videos, find new similar creators to follow, and find an online-community they feel comfortable in. This might lead them to spending more time on social media because they find it enjoyable and comfortable. If the students have interests that are not specifically Norwegian, they will most likely consume content in English.

Students and teachers seem to agree on where students can learn English. While there is a general consensus that they learn English at school, 75,8 % of the participants answered this, the most popular answers to this question are *using social media* and *watching TV and films*. These were the two categories which got the highest percentages of answers, 95,6 % in total for watching TV and films, and 91,2% in total for using social media. These results are quite similar to the results of the next question, (see Figure 8 Comparison of percentages regarding the questions: *Where do you think you can learn English, and Where do you think you can learn English the best?*) where only 56% of the participating students believed that they learned English best at school, 71,4 % of the students believed that they learned the best while watching TV and film, and 68,1 % of students answered social media.

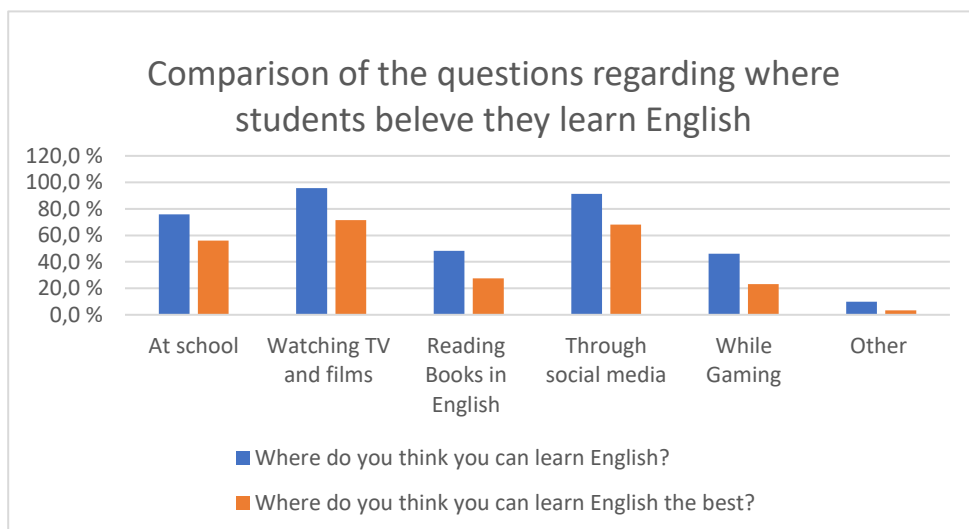


Figure 8 Comparison of percentages regarding the questions: *Where do you think you can learn English, and Where do you think you can learn English the best?*

These answers correspond well with what the teachers said. They seem to agree that their students acquire large amounts of vocabulary outside of school, and that their job as teachers is to mediate and teach their students how to use their newly acquired words in the right context and inform them of where it belongs in the grammatical system. One student's response to the open-ended question about what they think social media with English content might help them learn was "I feel like social media teaches us more English today than we learn at school, for example on TikTok you can learn another language easier and faster" (Girl, year 10). Some words may

fall right in to place for students, they may have seen or heard the word enough on audio-visual media such as social media, or on TV, or while watching films to be able to use the word properly, other times teachers might pick up mistakes students make, either orally or when written. Sometimes students may just think that a word sounds cool and think that the word is close enough to what they really mean, that they use it haphazardly when writing or speaking. This suggests that the student is on his or her way to gain a new word in their vocabulary, but that they may need some guidance to understand what it really means or how to use it properly. This is where the teacher can help. Sometimes it might be necessary to explain what word class and what word family the word belongs to, to help the students understand how to conjugate the word, and where to place it in a sentence, other times it might be enough to explain what the word means, or have the student look up the word in a dictionary to get some further insight.

As teens in Norway average three hours of screentime every day, and one of these hours is spent on social media (Bakken, 2022), it is not a great surprise that they feel like they learn English while watching TV and using social media. Consuming content on social media and watching TV series and films are somethings most teenagers enjoy, and as language acquisition is an unconscious process dependent on how often one comes in contact with the language and new words (Schmitt, 2008, p. 338), it makes sense that new words are acquired while spending time on these activities. Spending time on social media and learning new words could lead to students spending even more time on social media, not necessarily because they enjoy acquiring a larger vocabulary, but because this new vocabulary could unlock their understanding of more content online. This is intrinsic motivation, where students engage in activities because they find it enjoyable (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011, p. 496). Some students may spend time on social media because they enjoy the fact that their vocabulary increases as well, the feeling of learning and knowing more words can also be motivational if the student is someone who wishes to be fluent in English.

One of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire asked the students to write something about what they think they can learn while they use social media. Many answered that they believe they can learn vocabulary while using social media. Some of the students gave more substantial answers, while others just wrote “vocabulary”. A few students in year 10 wrote that they learn new words when using social media because they encounter the language often there. One girl in

year 10 wrote, “Vocabulary, because when you hear English more often and in different settings, it helps you learn more words and expressions”. She was not the only one with an answer like this, other students in her year wrote similar answers where the message was that the amount of English they encountered on social media was helpful when it came to learning vocabulary. Students in year 8 and 9 did not allude to the fact that the amount of English they encounter may be helpful when learning vocabulary in English, this may suggest that this is something the students become aware of when they grow older. It could also depend on the teachers, the teachers in year 10 may have made their students aware of the fact that in order to grow a large vocabulary in English they need to listen to and read English, but if the teachers in year 9 have not, the difference in answers from the students in the different years could be explained. Students in year 8 and 9 also answered that they learn vocabulary when using social media. They answered that social media help them learn new words because they encounter words they have not seen before on these platforms, so even though they do not mention that repeated exposure to a word is helpful when learning a word, they are aware that they can learn new words by being exposed to language. One of the students expressed concern that she only learned the new word if she asked someone what it meant. This brings us back to the fact that an important role the teachers have is being a support for students’ vocabulary learning, and to the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development refers to what a student is able to do on their own, what they are able to do with support, and what they are not yet able to achieve (Mcleod, 2023). This student who says she will learn a word if someone tells her what it means, needs support, either from teachers, parents, or other students, in order to learn the new words, and with enough support and guidance she may be able to learn some strategies she can use when encountering unknown words in the future. This students’ need for additional support when acquiring a second language shows how important it is that teachers differentiate when teaching. Learners require different learning strategies to reach their language learning goals, for some immersion and contextual clues are enough to learn a new words, while others may need more assistance in order to do so.

Quite a few students in this study were concerned with the fact that many pay little attention to grammar and spelling when posting content on social media. Students reported that they may learn new words and pronunciation, but that exposure to the English language on social media is

unhelpful when it comes to learning how to spell words correctly. Multiple students answer that they encounter informal abbreviations and spelling mistakes online. One girl in year 9 worried that people could learn the wrong words for things, because native speakers of English sometimes struggle with the difference between homophones. *Homophones* are words that are pronounced the same but have different spelling and meaning. This year 9 girl was concerned that because native speakers sometimes confuse *your* with *you're*, or confuse the words *there*, *their*, and *they're*, that these mistakes would cause second language learners of English to make the same errors when they write. Another year 9 girl wrote that using social media helps her expand her vocabulary, however her impression was that it only helped her when she speaks, and not when she writes “because many people on social media write things wrong”. As the main goal of English language teaching is to help students to become able to communicate, both orally and in written form (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016), teachers must guide their students when it comes to the orthographical form of vocabulary. Teachers have a responsibility to make their students aware of differences between how the particular word classes behave, and how they can recognize what word class a word belongs to in order to use it properly in a sentence, and how to conjugate it. As teenagers spend a significant amount of time consuming content on social media, and as some of these participants are concerned with how native speakers make mistakes, teacher should make sure all their students are aware of the fact that native speakers of a language also make mistakes when using their own language. They can correlate this to how Norwegian students make mistakes when writing in Norwegian themselves, and therefore they should be critical to not only some of the content on social media, but of the language awareness of the people they see online as well.

Both the teachers and the participants of the questionnaire said that the students are confident when speaking in informal situations. Teachers believe that their students acquire large amounts of language online, but that they need some help with organizing and conceptualizing the new words and phrases they learn. The teachers expressed that they are impressed with how confident their students have become when they could speak freely, they described experiences where their students spoke freely and confidently when speaking to each other or when talking about topics they are interested in. The teachers explained that they have always had some students who were confident speakers of English, but that there are more students like this in their classes now.

Some of the students said that using social media helps them to know how to express themselves when speaking because they have been exposed to so much English language on social media. Some of this exposure has to be attributed to TV and film as well, as they spend much time-consuming audio-visual media on TV too. *Social media* and *TV and film* are the two places the students reported to learning the most English from. On social media they are exposed to natural unplanned language in contrast to when watching most TV series and films, this seems to be appreciated by some of the students who answered “I get to hear how young people talk, and how they talk to each other” (Girl, year 9) to the question on what they think they might learn from using social media. Another answered “Because a lot of the language on social media is informal I feel like it helps me talk like Americans talk...” (Boy, year 10).

The curriculum for English states that students should be able to express themselves with fluency adapted to purpose, recipient, and situation (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 8), it also states that the students should be able to use language in both formal and informal situations (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 2). The teachers agree with each other that the students are capable of expressing themselves with confidence and fluency when speaking with each other in informal situations in the classroom, or when playing with the language with friends. However, they struggle more with adapting to more formal situations, such as when they are giving presentations, or are asked questions in class. The teachers attributed this to their students’ exposure to informal language on social media, and some of the students reported the same. “There are accounts that helps you learn English on TikTok, social media also helps with vocabulary and spelling because you are more exposed to English, but I don’t think I learn the more formal words” (Girl, year 10). Another wrote “It helps me learn English, but social media is very informal, and the English is not very proper” (Boy, year 10). This concern that the English they encounter on social media is informal and “not very proper” reveal language awareness among the students. It shows that the students are aware that they need to adapt how they use language in different situations and that some situations require more formal language than other situations. Using formal language requires more precise language than informal language, formal language is mostly used when writing, but it is also necessary when speaking in some situations (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, pp. 298-299). At school students must use formal writing when writing essays or other written work, and when they are giving a presentation. When they are in

situations where they must use more formal language when they write, they have the opportunity to use longer and more complex sentences, they must stay away from contractions such as *can't* or *it's*, and use more precise language. When they speak in more formal situations, they have the opportunity to make a plan of what they are going to say beforehand, and they therefore have some time to make sure they use the correct grammar and use precise vocabulary (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, pp. 298-299). This is not something they learn how to do by spending time on TikTok or Instagram in their free time, and therefore something that teachers have to give them the opportunity to practice and become skilled at.

The fact that teachers report that their students seem to be more confident when speaking in informal situations now than they were ten years ago is a positive outcome of social media use among teens. It means that students are more equipped to speaking informally on the spot and can travel and communicate with people from other parts of the world with more confidence and fluency than previous generations. When travelling formal language is not the most important aspect of language to master, communicating without misunderstandings is. As the use of social media is a world-wide phenomenon one can imagine that teens around the world will be able to communicate with each other very well when they meet someone who does not share their first language. This opportunity of being able to communicate with almost anyone might be a motivational factor for Norwegian learners of English. Only 3,3% of the students who participated in this study said that they do not think they learn any English by using social media, while 94,5% answered that they do. The acquisition of English for Norwegian learners of English is likely a by-product of the students spending time on something they find enjoyable. Even though most of the participants agree that they acquire vocabulary and learn something about pronunciation when they consume content on social media, it is doubtful that the majority of the students use social media with the goal of learning English in their free time. The extramural English activities, using social media and watching TV and film are incidental learning activities. The participants are presumably not opening the TikTok app on their phones with a specific language learning goal in mind, but they spend their free time on social media because they find it fun, or because it is a distraction and a time filler.

Both participants of the questionnaire and the teachers agree that students acquire English when they are spending time on social media. It is something that students probably find fun and

enjoyable, which is therefore motivating to a degree. To spend time on social media to learn more about your interests may cause students to want to expand their vocabularies in order for them to understand more of what is being said in videos on TikTok or posts on Instagram about the topic. This is intrinsic motivation that causes a student to spend time on something because it is enjoyable (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011, p. 496). This desire can result in students acquiring a larger vocabulary, and not only words related directly to the topic, but also other words. The language immersion the students experience on social media is not only helpful when it comes to learning new words, it also gives them opportunities to listen to native users of English speak, and how non-native users of English speak. They hear native pronunciation in many dialectal variations, what order they place their words in, and how they use idioms and colloquialisms. This is, as already discussed in this chapter, helpful for students' oral skills. This language immersion can be compared to how humans learn their first language. Children subconsciously learn their first language because they are constantly surrounded by it, and context provides them with enough information to understand the meaning of words without adults having to explain it to them (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, p. 35). First and second language acquisition are quite similar, however second language learners may need more help in the beginning stages of learning the language as they are not immersed in English to the same extent as they are when they are teenagers. With help students can connect the new words they learn in English to what they know the word to mean in Norwegian, making the learning process easier and faster (Eastbrook, 2013, p. 20). Many videos on TikTok and Instagram are captioned, meaning students can both see how a word is spelled and at the same time hear how it is pronounced. As oral input leads to a more durable retention of words, and written input leads to retention of a larger number of words (Zhang & Graham, 2020), both oral and written input at the same time must have positive effects on vocabulary learning for second language learners of English.

The students who participated in this study worried that since the language on social media is so informal that their vocabularies would suffer because of it. Teachers also see that their students have greater informal vocabularies than they do formal vocabularies, and that their students are better at informal communication than they are at formal communication. This is a factor to consider when using social media in school, however formal use of language is something the teachers have to teach and make their students aware of how to use. It has to be practiced, and as

the curriculum states that students must learn how to “create meaning in formal and informal situations” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 2), it is the responsibility of the educators to give their students the opportunity to practice the skill of using formal language.

Students reported both positive and negative attitudes to incorporating the use of social media at school. Some positive attitudes were that students enjoy varied lessons where they do not just read and answer questions. Some liked the idea of trying something new at school with a medium they are already familiar with. “I think it would be good because social media is a big part of our lives. The language that is used on social media is something we hear a lot and is familiar with.” (Girl, year 9), others pointed to wanting to try it because they saw it as practical rather than theoretical work they could do at school. One student wrote “Good. Easy for students to relate or keep up with the lesson when there we do something we are familiar with. It can create more interest for the subject” (Girl, year 10), implying that incorporating the use of social media in school may increase students’ motivation for the subject, as it is something they are already interested in. Other students were more skeptical to the idea because they were worried about how it would be used, they did not come up with any suggestions as to how it could be done “right”, but they were concerned that they would not learn much from using social media in lessons or as homework, and that the lessons would teach them more if social media was not a part of it. One student was also concerned that her classmates would use the social media platform in the lesson just like they would at home, and not pay attention and do what they are supposed to. The students who were negative to it said that using social media would be too distracting, that they already spend enough time on social media and do not need to spend time on it at school as well. Multiple students said that they do not think social media have a place at school and should be kept at home. These concerns are valid and something the teaches have to take into account when planning their students work.

The teachers had similar opinions as their students when it comes to using social media at school. They also said that since the students spend so much time on social media in their free time, using it at school could be too much for them. The teachers also pointed to the fact that not all students have permission from their parents to use the different social media platforms or choose not to use one or more of the popular social media apps themselves. This must be considered when planning lessons or creating homework or assessments where the social media apps are used.

Another concern was raised when discussing this topic, their students' privacy. If they are to use social media when teaching, they have to be mindful of the fact that they cannot force their students to post anything on social media that they create at school. This limits the sort of activities one can use social media for at school, as social media is specifically made to be "social" and for communicating with other people. If students do not want to post on TikTok or Instagram, other kinds of activities have to be planned.

5.1 The study's limitations

This study has some limitations. These limitations have possible impact on the results of the study, and the quality of the findings. Firstly, in this study there are 91 students participating, and only 5 teachers. Secondly, the interview with the teachers were not done as one group- interview, but in one pair interview, and three individual interviews. Lastly, there is limited research on the topic of social media and second language acquisition in lower secondary schools. Most research on social media and second language acquisition is focused on university students outside of Europe.

While there is quite a large number of students participating in this study, 91 in total from the three years of lower secondary school, there are only 5 teachers. The fact that there are only 5 teachers could limit this study's generalizability and may not include the perceptions and experiences of other English teachers in Norway. Even though the students in this school are representative for the population of eastern Norway according to SSB, the students participating in this study are mostly monolingual, with few exceptions. This was accidental, as the students who were asked to participate was based on what classes the teachers in this study taught and were not chosen based on any criteria of who the participants were.

Originally the interview method was planned to be one group- interview, however the teachers' conflicting schedules hindered that. This prevented most of the teachers who participated in this study to be able to discuss their opinions with each other. A potential consequence of this could be that the data collected from the interviews has been limited and is less than what it could have been if they had the opportunity to discuss and get ideas from each other during the interview.

There is limited research on the topic of using social media to acquire a second language in lower secondary schools. Most of the research I have found is on university students, and on other

forms of extramural English. This points to a further need for research on this topic, both in Norway and in other parts of the world. As social media is used worldwide, research on this topic could be applicable for not just the teens in the particular country the research is conducted in, but also for teens in other countries too.

6. Conclusion

The current research aimed to investigate the research statement:

Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning

Based on a mixed-methods study consisting of questionnaires answered by students in lower secondary school, and interviews of their teachers the research in this study found some interesting beliefs and experiences of social media and vocabulary learning in English. The overall consensus is that the students acquire vocabulary when they spend time on social media. Both students and teachers agree that social media can be a useful tool for language learning, as they are exposed to both spoken and written language. However, both groups of participants express some concerns about the language on social media, and how transferable it is to the classroom and other formal language situations.

TikTok and Instagram were the two social media apps the students reported they encounter the most English, these two apps were also among the platforms the students used the most in their free time. The results of the questionnaire revealed that the students believe they acquire vocabulary in English when they spend time on social media. The students believe that hearing natural speech and seeing how words are spelled are beneficial for their vocabulary learning. Teachers told of their experience with their students developing very specialized vocabularies by using social media, as the content they see is formed by their interests. The teachers therefore worried that the vocabulary their students acquire while spending time on TikTok or Instagram does not necessarily help them communicate about other topics.

The questionnaire revealed the students' opinions of the language they meet on social media. The students find the language they encounter on social media to be very informal, and expressed concern that this would hinder their acquisition of more formal language. The students expressed

that they acquire language on social media, but that the language might not be helpful for them when they need to write or make presentations in school, the teachers expressed the same concern. The language they acquire is however relevant and useful in more informal situations, such as when traveling, communicating with international friends, and making content online. The teachers believe that their role in their students second language English learning is to guide their language use and language learning. Teachers are responsible for facilitating situations where their students can practice using formal English. The teachers participating in this study said that when their students have reached the level of proficiency and language awareness that they have when they start lower secondary school, the teachers' responsibility is to guide their students in how to use the language and how to organize the vocabulary they acquire on social media in their English lessons. The motivational factor of using social media for vocabulary acquisition and learning is something the teachers could use in their favor, as when the students find something enjoyable, they are more likely to spend more time doing it. Some students already said that using social media at school could be fun because they are familiar with it, and this could make it more enticing for the students to continue their language learning journey.

Teachers believe that the exposure to language their students get on social media help with oral production of language. The findings from the questionnaire show that the students believe that the language they encounter online helps them communicate orally. The participants mention that listening to people speak in natural situations on social media, helps them understand how to use the language when speaking, and that these examples of natural language use are good examples to follow. The teachers participating in this study said that their students are more confident when speaking today than previous students they have had, and they attribute this development to the increasing popularity of social media in the last decade.

The students were ambivalent to using social media at school. Some were positive to the idea, as they are familiar with the different apps, and their content. This familiarity could be a good motivation for continuing their language learning, but some worried that using social media would be distracting and unhelpful at school. They worried that their classmates using the social media app like they would do at home instead of doing what they are supposed to do in the lesson. If social media is to be used as a pedagogical tool in the classroom, it should be used wisely in order to engage the hesitant students.

In conclusion social media has significant impact on second language learners of English language acquisition and language learning in lower secondary school. Social media with English content help students acquire language as they are immersed in large amounts of the target language every day. There are some concerns about the formality, the spelling, and the grammar of the language on social media, but this can be corrected by their teachers. The exposure to the English language online is positive for Norwegian students of English in lower secondary schools production of written and spoken language.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Intervjuguide elever 8-10 trinn

Formålet med denne undersøkelsen er å finne ut av hva deres meninger og erfaringer med bruken av sosiale medier og engelsklæring er.

Jeg skal bruke svarene deres i min masteroppgave for å svare på problemstillingen min: *Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning* (Sosiale medier og engelsklæring; en undersøkelse av engelsklæreres og elevers meninger og erfaringer med rollen sosiale medier har for vokabularlæring utenfor skolen.)

Kryss av for det svaret som stemmer best for deg, kryss av for flere der det står at du skal det. Svar alle spørsmål.

1. Hvilket kjønn har du?

- Gutt
- Jente
- Ikke-binær
- Annet

2. Hvilket trinn går du på?

- 8.trinn
- 9.trinn
- 10.trinn

3. Hvor tenker du at du kan lære engelsk? (kryss av for alle som gjelder for deg)

- På skolen
- Når jeg ser på TV-serier og film
- Når jeg leser engelske bøker
- På sosiale medier
- Når jeg gamer
- Annet:.....

4. Hvor tenker du at du lærer engelsk best? (kryss av for alle som gjelder for deg)

- På skolen
- Når jeg ser på TV-serier og film
- Når jeg leser engelske bøker
- På sosiale medier
- Når jeg gamer
- Annet:.....

5. Hvilke sosiale medier bruker du? (kryss av for alle du bruker)

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- Twitter
- Annet:.....

6. Hvilke to sosiale medier plattformer bruker du mest? (maks 2 kryss)

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- Twitter
- Annet:.....

På hvilke sosiale medier møter du mest engelsk? (kryss av for alle som gjelder for deg)

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- Twitter
- Annet:.....

7. Tror du at du lærer engelsk av å bruke sosiale medier? Ordforråd

- Ja
- Nei
- Usikker

8. Språket på sosiale medier er mindre formelt enn språket man lærer på skolen

- Helt enig
- Litt enig
- Verken enig eller uenig
- Litt uenig
- Veldig uenig

9. Tror du at du får bedre ordforråd i engelsk av å bruke sosiale medier med engelsk innhold?

- Ja
- Nei
- Kanskje

10. Har dere brukt sosiale medier i undervisning? (I klasserommet, eller som lekse eller vurdering?)

- Ja
- Nei
- Husker ikke

11. Hva syns du om å bruke sosiale medier i undervisning? (I klasserommet, eller som lekse eller vurdering)

12. Er det noe du tenker at sosiale medier med engelsk innhold hjelper deg å lære (for eksempel: rettskriving og ordforråd)?

Appendix B

Intervjuguide – Sosiale medier og engelsklæring

Introduksjon:

1. Hvor lenge har du jobbet som engelsklærer?
2. På hvilke trinn underviser du i engelsk?

Problemstilling for masteroppgaven:

Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning (Sosiale medier og engelsklæring; en undersøkelse av engelsklæreres og elevers meninger og erfaringer med rollen sosiale medier har for vokabularlæring utenfor skolen.)

1. Hvilke sosiale medier har dere inntrykk av at elevene bruker mest?
2. Har dere inntrykk av at elevenes bruk av sosiale medier hjelper dem med å utvikle et større ordforråd i engelsk, i så fall, hvordan?
3. Tenker dere at elevene er bevisste på at de tilegner seg engelsk når de bruker sosiale medier med innhold på engelsk?
4. Bør lærere bevisstgjøre elevene om hvordan de kan bruke sosiale medier for å utvikle et større vokabular i engelsk?
5. Føler dere at dere kan se spor av elevenes bruk av sosiale medier i de måtene elevene bruker vokabularet sitt på?
6. Har dere brukt sosiale medier i undervisning eller oppgaver med å utvikle vokabular som hensikt, hva har dere inntrykk av at dere og elevene fikk ut av dette?
7. Er det noe elevene har blitt bedre på, når det kommer til deres vokabular, etter at sosiale medier ble så tilgjengelig?
8. Er det noe elevene har blitt dårligere på etter at sosiale medier ble så tilgjengelig?
9. hvor tenker dere at elever lærer engelsk best?
 - a. På skolen, tv/fil, sosiale medier, fra engelske bøker, gaming, osv.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet: *Elever og læreres perspektiver på sosiale medier og engelsklæring?*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å *undersøke sosiale medier i sammenheng med engelsklæring*. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette prosjektet er en del av min masteroppgave i engelsk ved OsloMet. Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke elevers og læreres meninger og erfaringer med bruken av sosiale medier og hvordan dette påvirker engelsklæring.

Forskningsspørsmål:

- *Social media affordances: examining lower secondary school EFL teachers' and pupils' beliefs about the role of social media in extramural vocabulary learning* (Sosiale medier og engelsklæring; en undersøkelse av engelsklæreres og elevers meninger og erfaringer med rollen sosiale medier har for vokabularlæring utenfor skolen.)

For å undersøke dette vil jeg sammenligne synspunkter fra elever og lærere, og forsøke å finne ut av om lærere kan se bevis på bruken av sosiale medier i elevers tekster og i elevers muntlige aktivitet. Samtidig ønsker jeg å finne ut av om elever og lærere ser på ulike sosiale medier som noe man kan bruke i undervisning for å gjøre språklæringen enklere og mer interessant.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta i denne spørreundersøkelsen fordi du går på ungdomsskolen. Jeg ønsker at to klasser fra hvert trinn på skolen du går på skal svare på den samme spørreundersøkelsen som deg.

Jeg ønsker svar fra elever på ungdomsskolen fordi det er dere som kan fortelle om deres eget syn på temaet om å bruke sosiale medier for å lære engelsk, både på fritiden og i klasserommet og hva slags sosiale medier dere møter engelsk på.

Jeg ønsker svar fra elever på alle tre trinnene på ungdomsskolen for å se om det er noe forskjell i svarene deres når dere blir eldre.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å bli med på dette betyr det at du fyller ut et spørreskjema på papir i skoletiden. Det vil ta under 15 minutter. Spørreskjemaet har spørsmål som handler om hvilke sosiale medier du bruker, om du tenker at du lærer engelsk når du bruker sosiale medier, og om du tenker at sosiale medier kan være med på å gjøre det å lære engelsk enklere.

Jeg ønsker også å intervju noen få elever (3-5 stykker) for å stille noen oppfølgingsspørsmål hvis det er noe som er uklart for meg etter spørreundersøkelsen. Dette vil også ta rundt 15 minutter, og intervjuet vil gjøres i grupper. I intervjuet vil jeg ta notater slik at det ikke samles inn annen informasjon om det annet enn hvilket kjønn du har og hvilket trinn du går på.

Foresatte kan få tilsendt spørreskjemaet ved å sende en epost til:

rebekka.mingar-stangeland@nittedal.kommune.no (arbeids-epost)

eller

s360854@oslomet.no (student-epost)

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig for deg å svare på spørreundersøkelsen. Hvis du velger å delta kan du når som helst trekke deg uten at du må fortelle om hvorfor. Hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg vil det ikke gi noen negative konsekvenser for deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Det er kun jeg, Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland, og min veileder ved OsloMet, Valeriy Tuyakov, som vil ha tilgang til dine personopplysninger.

- Ditt navn vil ikke knyttes til masteroppgaven, og kommer kun frem i dette samtykkeskjemaet. Samtykkeskjemaet vil lagres adskilt fra andre data.
- Du vil ikke kunne bli gjenkjent i masteroppgaven eller i datamaterialet jeg samler inn fra spørreskjemaet og intervjuet.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 23.06.23. Etter prosjektslutt vil spørreskjemaene og samtykkeerklæringen lagres frem til 31.12.23 for etterprøvnbarhet av datamaterialet og resultatet. Etter denne datoen vil spørreskjemaene og samtykkeerklæringene slettes.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *Oslomet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning* har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

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

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

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

- *Oslomet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning* ved *Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland*, s360854@oslomet, eller min veileder *Valeriy Tuyakov*, valeriyt@oslomet.no
- Vårt personvernombud: Ingrid S. Jacobsen personvernombud@oslomet.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via:

- Epost: personverntjenester@sikt.no eller telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Med vennlig hilsen

Valeriy Tuyakov

(Veileder)

Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland

(Student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Elevens navn: _____

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om forskningsprosjektet *Elever og læreres perspektiver på sosiale medier og engelsklæring* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til at mitt barn kan:

- å delta i spørreundersøkelsen (spørreskjema)
- å delta i gruppeintervju

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

(Signert av foresatt, dato)

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet: *Elever og læreres perspektiver på sosiale medier og engelsklæring?*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å *undersøke sosiale medier i sammenheng med engelsklæring*. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

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For å undersøke dette vil jeg sammenligne synspunkter fra elever og lærere, og forsøke å finne ut av om lærere kan se bevis på bruken av sosiale medier i elevers tekster og i elevers muntlige aktivitet. Samtidig ønsker jeg å finne ut av om elever og lærere ser på ulike sosiale medier som noe man kan bruke i undervisning for å gjøre språklæringen enklere og mer interessant.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får spørsmål om å delta i prosjektet fordi du er engelsklærer ved ungdomstrinnet. Jeg ønsker å snakke med lærere med ulik lengde arbeidserfaring som engelsklærer, slik at jeg kan få tilgang på perspektivene som kommer med lang tid i yrket, og perspektivet som kommer med å være relativt nyutdannet. Rundt 6 lærere på skolen du jobber på kommer til å få en henvendelse om å delta.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer det at du blir med i et gruppeintervju med rundt 5 andre engelsklærere. Det vil ta deg mellom 45-60 minutter. Intervjuet vil gå inn på temaer som handler om sosiale medier og engelsklæring, om dere ser bevis for bruk av sosiale medier i elevers muntlige og skriftlige tekster, og hva slags syn dere har på å bruke sosiale medier i undervisningen.

Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp på en diktafon, når intervjuet er avsluttet overføres filen til en server knyttet til OsloMet. Intervjuet vil så transkriberes før opptaket slettes.

Det er frivillig å delta

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

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Det er kun jeg, Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland, og min veileder ved OsloMet, Valeriy Tuyakov, som vil ha tilgang til dine personopplysninger.
- Ditt navn vil jeg erstatte med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data, datamaterialet vil så lagres på en server knyttet til OsloMet
- Du vil ikke være gjenkjennbar i masteroppgaven

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 23.06.23. Personopplysningene (stemmen din) vil anonymiseres forløpende etter intervjuet gjennom transkribering, og opptaket slettes etter prosjektslutt, senest 30.12.23.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *Oslomet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanninger* har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

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

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

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

- *Oslomet – storbyuniversitetet. Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanninger* ved *Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland*, s360854@oslomet, eller min veileder *Valeriy Tuyakov*, valeriyt@oslomet.no
- Vårt personvernombud: Ingrid S. Jacobsen personvernombud@oslomet.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via:

- Epost: personverntjenester@sikt.no eller telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Med vennlig hilsen

Valeriy Tuyakov

(Veileder)

Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland

(Student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om forskningsprosjektet *Elever og læreres perspektiver på sosiale medier og engelsklæring* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

å delta i et gruppeintervju

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

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix E

Sikt/NSD approval:

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer

623774

Vurderingstype

Standard

Dato

16.02.2023

Prosjekttittel

Masteroppgave, Sosiale medier og engelsklæring

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

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

Prosjektansvarlig

Valeriy Tuyakov

Student

Rebekka Mingar-Stangeland

Prosjektperiode

01.01.2023 - 23.06.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.12.2023.

Kommentar

OM VURDERINGEN

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

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG UTVALG 2: FORELDRE SAMTYKKER FOR BARN

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om barna.

KOMMENTARER TIL INFORMASJONSSKRIVET

Informasjonsskrivet ditt har følgende mangel:

-Du må oppgi dato for når du planlegger å slette opplysningene i samtykke skrivet som samsvarer med det du har oppgitt i meldeskjema (31.12.2023).

Du trenger ikke å laste opp den oppdaterte versjonen i meldeskjemaet.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

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

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

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

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

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Lykke til med prosjektet!