# MA THESIS

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Exploring Five Teachers' Perceptions of Using Picturebooks in
Norwegian Lower-Secondary EFL Classrooms: A Qualitative Study

Scientific qualitative study

30 credits

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# Abstract

This thesis aims to gain further insight into five Norwegian teachers' perspectives on the use of picturebooks in lower-secondary EFL classrooms. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews of five teachers who work, or has worked, in Norwegian EFL lower-secondary classrooms, theoretical perspectives, and previous research we attempt to answer the research question: *What are five teachers' perceptions of the picturebook genre in lower-secondary EFL classrooms and what factors may impact the teacher's implementations of picturebooks in their teaching?* The theoretical framework of this thesis builds upon perspectives on the picturebook genre, reading in EFL, literacies, reading and motivation and authentic materials in EFL classrooms. Additionally, we review previous research relating to the research question. The methodological design of this thesis consists of qualitative semi-structured interviews which were conducted through *Zoom*. The results show that three of the informants have used picturebooks in their teaching and two have not. The informants find the genre to be relevant for their older students, seeing the possibilities for their student's development of literacies and motivation in the English subject, using the genre as teaching material in interdisciplinary projects, as a tool for differentiating their whole-class teaching, and view the themes as particularly beneficial for their lower-secondary students. Whereas previous research might indicate that teachers do not implement picturebooks with lower-secondary students because they are too childish, the five teachers of this study point to lack of knowledge, access, and time as factors as to why they are not being implemented. What education and personal interests the teachers of this study had also seemed to indicate their implementation of the genre as teaching material.

Key words:
*Picturebooks, EFL, Authentic English Language Literature, English-Language Teaching, Lower-Secondary School, English-Language Teachers, Reading*

## Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven har som mål å gi en ytterligere innsikt i perspektivene og refleksjonene på bruken av bildebøker hos fem lærere som underviser i engelskfaget på ungdomsskoler i Norge. Gjennom kvalitative semi-strukturerte intervjuer med de fem engelsklærerne, som jobber eller tidligere har jobbet på ungdomsskoletrinnet, teoretiske perspektiver og tidligere forskning, vil vi forsøke å besvare problemstillingen; *Hva er fem læreres oppfatning av bildeboksjangeren i engelskfaget på ungdomsskolen, og hvilke faktorer påvirker implementering av bildebøker i undervisningen deres?* Det teoretiske rammeverket i denne oppgaven bygger på teorier som omhandler bildeboksjangeren, lesing i engelskfaget, *literacies,* lesing og motivasjon, og autentisk litteratur som undervisningsmateriale. I tillegg vil denne oppgaven presentere tidligere forskning, som er relevant for problemstillingen. Metodedelen i oppgaven tar for seg kvalitative semi-strukturerte intervjuer som ble gjennomført via *Zoom*. Resultatene fra data materialet viser at tre av informantene har brukt bildebøker som undervisningsmateriale i sin engelskundervisning, mens to ikke har det. Videre viser resultatene at informantene finner sjangeren relevant for sine elever på ungdomstrinnet, og ser flere muligheter for elevers utvikling av lese-, skrive-, muntlige-, visuelle-, og emosjonelle ferdigheter, i tillegg til at det kan påvirke deres motivasjon i engelskfaget. Videre nevner også informantene at bildebøker er givende som undervisningsmateriale i tverrfaglige prosjekter, i tillegg til at det brukes som et verktøy for å differensiere undervisningen. Flere informanter nevner også at temaene i bildebøker er spesielt relevante for deres eldre elever. Mens tidligere forskning viser til at bildebøker ikke blir brukt på ungdomstrinnet fordi lærere mener de er for barnslige for deres elever, viser dataen i denne oppgaven at manglende kunnskap, tilgang på sjangeren og tid er faktorer som påvirker læreres bruk av sjangeren med sine eldre elever. Videre indikerer datamateriale i studien at utdanning og personlig interesse for litteratur påvirker lærernes bruk av bildebøker som undervisningsmateriale.

Nøkkelord:

*Bildebøker, Engelsk som fremmedspråk, Autentisk Engelskspråklig Litteratur, Engelsk undervisning, Ungdomsskoletrinnet, Engelsklærere, Lesing*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Motivation

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries literature has been at the core of the English subject curriculum (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 163) Prior subject curricula of English have presented teachers with specific literary texts to read, however this has changed and the process of choosing literary texts now falls in the hands of the teachers (Ministry of Church Education and Research, 1996; Ministry of Education and Research, 2013: 2019). Birketveit and Williams (2013, p. 7) wanted to inspire teachers, both in the present and future, to draw creatively from a variety of authentic English language literature as classroom material. It was their belief that if learners encountered a variety of texts that engaged them, they would more likely continue to be active independent readers (Birketveit & Williams, 2013, p. 7).

With the rapid digitalization that is happening in Norwegian schools, teachers might struggle to find literary texts that motivate students, opens up for discussions and interpretation, and gives examples of authentic language (Rønneberg & Støle, 2014, p. 169). Schools today are moving from coursebooks to digital learning platforms, and according to Gilje (2021, p. 229) six out of ten students in primary- and lower-secondary schools in Norway have access to a digital device which they can use at school and at home. Studies done during 2020 found that schools spent as much money on digital learning resources as paper-based ones (Gilje, 2021, p. 229).

In February of 2021 the Family – and Culture Committee brought forth the *Recommendation from the Family – and Culture Committee about the Representative Motion regarding a National Strategy to Increase the Desire to Read* (Innst. 258S (2020-2021)). The proposal suggested a strategy with long term measures to increase engagement and interest in reading for the entire Norwegian population (Innst. 258S (2020-2021), p. 1). This has led to the Ministry of Education and Research and The Ministry of Culture and Equality currently working towards a strategy to increase Norwegian people's desire to read (Regjeringen, 2023). According to the Government (Regjeringen, 2023) the PISA assessment of 2018 showed that 15-year-olds in Norway spent less time reading in their spare time than before, and 68% of boys and 48% of girls claimed that they only read if they had to. To develop the strategy, the two ministries are currently gathering insights into the challenges of reading and

the desire to read, and what measures the strategy should include. Additionally, getting feedback on examples on what can develop the desire to read (Ministry of Culture and Equality, 2023). This strategy is to entail several aspects of reading, including reading in school subjects such as English (Regjeringen, 2023).

Using authentic English language literature in English as a foreign language, hereby referred to as EFL, classrooms in Norway has been a part of the English subject curricula of 1997, 2006 and 2020 and therefore this is not a new concept for teachers (Ministry of Church Education and Research, 1996; Ministry of Education and Research, 2013: 2019). However, using authentic English language literature in EFL classrooms can be challenging. Nation (2006) sat out to see how large a vocabulary is needed for typical language use like reading a novel, reading a newspaper, watching a movie, and taking part in a conversation. He stated that 98% coverage of vocabulary is needed for L2 learners to comprehend a written text (Nation, 2006, p. 79). Reading authentic English language literature may therefore be a difficult task for students with lower-language proficiency. However, Birketveit (2013, p. 17) claimed that picturebooks can provide students with access to authentic literature without having to understand 98% of the vocabulary. Despite being an alternative for using authentic English language literature, Birketveit (2013, p. 17) described the genre of picturebooks as undervalued and undiscovered as an EFL resource.

In the English subject curriculum of 2020, it is stated that the students should encounter a variety of literary texts (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). The concept of text is interpreted by the Ministry of Education and Research (2019) in the broadest sense, including all forms of texts. Further, they assert that by reflecting on, interpreting, and critically assessing different types of texts in English the student shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Lastly, according to the competence aims after year 10 students should "read, discuss and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts" and "read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people's literature" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

The idea for this thesis builds upon the notion that picturebooks are undervalued and undiscovered in Norwegian EFL classrooms. More specifically picturebooks seems to be undiscovered as a resource for lower-secondary EFL students. The question then arose as to

whether it is still undervalued and undiscovered, and if not, what are teachers experiences with the use of the picturebook genre with lower-secondary EFL students.

This thesis will explore Norwegian EFL teachers' perceptions of, and experiences with, the picturebook genre in lower-secondary classrooms. Through reviewing literature, previous research, and the conduction of semi-structured interviews an attempt to answer the research question: *What are five teachers' perceptions of the picturebook genre in lower-secondary EFL classrooms and what factors may impact the EFL teacher's implementation of picturebooks in their teaching?* will be made.

In addition to the introduction chapter, there are six chapters in this master's thesis. First, the theoretical framework and previous research will be presented (chapter 2). Secondly, the methodology of the research will be introduced, in which how the data material was collected and analyzed will be explained (chapter 3). In chapter 4, the results will be presented, and the discussion will take place in chapter 5. Lastly, in the final chapter (chapter 6) we will attempt to answer the research question presented, along with possible pedagogical implications.

# 2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis starts of by giving a brief overview on the attempts made to define the picturebook genre leading into a conceptualization of the genre for this thesis. Secondly some perspectives on reading in EFL are presented, with theories on reading and motivation. Thirdly, the terms literacy, visual literacy, multimodality, and emotional literacy are accounted for. From there an overview of authentic literature in EFL, picturebooks in EFL and reader-response theories are presented. After shortly exploring picturebooks as an all-age genre, previous research related to these areas will be presented.

## 2.1 Picturebooks

Picturebooks are unique as they are based on the combination of two levels of communication, the visual and the verbal (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 1). When looking at picturebooks as a genre it is highly beneficial to determine what this entails as there are several definitions of the genre (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 6). Hallberg (1982, p. 165) made the distinction between picturebooks and illustrated books on the notion of iconotext. Iconotext describes the process where illustration and text are intertwined in conveying a message, and how meaning exits in the synergy between the two (Hallberg, 1982, p. 165). Consequently, for a book to be considered a picturebook there needs to be at least one illustration on each spread making the illustrations and textual modes codependent in meaning-making (Hallberg, 1982, p. 165).

Gregersen (1974, p. 243) presented four categories of picturebooks: exhibit books, picture narratives, picturebooks, and illustrated books. Further on, he separated the illustrated book from picturebooks on the basis that the text can exist interdependently in an illustrated book whilst picturebooks are books where text and illustrations are equally important (Gregersen, 1974, p. 243). Furthermore, Rhedin (2001) separated the genre into three concepts: the illustrated text (p. 81) the expanded text (p. 88) and the genuine picturebook (p. 96). According to Rhedin (2001, p. 81) in the illustrated text the verbal text does not rely on the illustrations to convey the message and can stand alone. The distinction between the expanded text and the genuine text is the function the illustrations hold in the text (Rhedin, 2001, p. 104). Whilst in the expanded text the illustrations are the primary voice in conveying the message, in the genuine picturebook the visual and verbal modes are interdependent (Rhedin, 2001, pp. 96: 104).

However, Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 6) critiqued Rhedin's (2001) separation of the expanded text and the genuine picturebook as they claimed that there are no clear criteria for separating the two. Further, Nodelman (1990: 1992) described picturebooks as relatively short texts with illustrations on each spread. In addition, Birketveit and Williams (2013, p. 19) distinguished between illustrated books and picturebooks claiming that a picturebook needs to have at least one illustration per double spread, if not it is considered an illustrated book. Bird and Yokota (2018) examined the distinction of illustrated books and picturebooks. Accordingly, they pointed out how illustrated books and picturebooks are often confused, elaborating that picturebooks are viewed as books with an equal relationship between the verbal text and illustrations (Bird & Yokota, 2018, p. 281). Illustrated books however are more broadly defined. According to Bird and Yokota (2018, p. 281) the only distinction being that there is at least one illustration. Additionally, these illustrations may enhance, decorate, and amplify the text, but the narrative is not reliant on their presence (Bird & Yokota, 2018, p. 281).

Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 14) explored the many ways illustrations and text may interact in a picturebook. Picturebooks that employ verbal and visual modes depicts what Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 14) described as a symmetrical, consonant, or complementary relationship between the two. The verbal and the visual tell the same story, and the verbal may enhance details in the visual. However, it leaves very little, if none, of the interpretation in the hands of the readers imagination. On the other hand, there are picturebooks where the verbal and the visual provide alternative information or contradict each other leaving room for a variety of readings and interpretations (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 17). According to Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 24) picturebooks that employ counterpoint are especially stimulating because they elicit a variety of interpretations, and they involve the readers imagination. Iser (1972, p. 280) also stated that the author should leave room in the text so the reader can use his or her imagination. There are many ways of making use of counterpoint, and Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, pp. 24-25) explored eight varieties of counterpoint, amongst those were counterpoint in address. Counterpoint in address shows how textual and visual gaps are left deliberately to be filled by children or adults (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 24).

According to Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 2), the process of reading a picturebook can be represented by the hermeneutic circle as the reader turns from verbal to visual and back again,

which repeats itself throughout the process. When reading a picturebook it must be understood as a complex system where cultural meanings exceeds its superficial information (op de Beeck, 2018, p. 19). The picturebook presents words and illustrations in what op de Beeck (2018, p. 20) described as a "synergistic relationship". Corresponding to Nikolajeva and Scott's (2006, p. 2) description, op de Beeck (2018, p. 20) further elaborated that readers make meaning through "sustained engagement with the text".

According to Arizpe (2014, p. 94), wordless or nearly wordless picturebooks belong in the genre of picturebooks. The definition of wordless picturebooks presented by Arizpe (2014, p. 94) included picturebooks that are wordless or picturebooks that are nearly wordless relying on the illustrations to carry most of the narrative. It is also important to note that not all wordless picturebooks can be categorized as picturebooks as they do not carry a narrative (Arizpe, 2014, p. 94). In line with Arizpe (2014), Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, pp. 8-9) also made the distinction between narrative and non-narrative wordless picturebooks. Furthermore, Arizpe (2014, p. 96) made it clear that readers need to draw from all available resources when making meaning of a wordless picturebook. Wordless picturebooks are therefore at times challenging to read, and Beckett (2012: 2018) claimed that these books can transcend age boundaries. Moreover, wordless picturebooks makes the reader bring their personal knowledge and experience into the interpretation of the narrative and collaborate with the author to fill in the iconotextual gaps (Arizpe, 2014, p. 96; Beckett, 2018, p. 213).

The arguments made to differentiate between illustrated books and picturebooks have been taken into consideration (Bird & Yokota, 2018; Gregersen, 1974; Hallberg, 1982; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Nodelman, 1989: 1992; Rhedin, 2001). Hallberg's (1982) term iconotext illustrated the unique relationship between the visual and verbal modes when the two are equal in carrying the narrative of the story. Therefore, in this thesis, when the genre of picturebooks is discussed, it is understood as books where illustrations and text together carry the narrative of the story, with at least one illustration per spread. Further the specific relationship of the visual and verbal modes has not been distinguished beyond this, nor the length of the picturebook. Whilst wordless picturebooks are considered by Arizpe (2014) to be included in the genre of picturebooks, it is not embedded in this thesis as this fall beyond the scope of this study.

## 2.2 Reading in EFL

According to Bråten (1997, p. 95) one can separate the technical and meaning-making aspects of reading. The technical aspect of reading implies the decoding of the written text, which can happen through translating the written text into phonological units or by automatic recognition of words. To gain a deeper understanding of the text the reader needs to create meaning based of the written text. This entails bringing previous knowledge and experiences and create meaning with the text (Bråten, 1997, p. 96). The technical and meaning-making aspect work together in the act of reading, in addition, automatic word recognition is necessary to construct meaning (Bråten, 2007, p. 96). Additionally, it can be challenging for students to remember the content of a literary piece, if they struggle to decode the verbal text (Bråten, 2007, p. 96). Further on, Brevik et al. (2020, p. 141) argued that for reading comprehension to be realized there are four elements one needs to consider: the text, the reader, the activity, and the sociocultural context.

Koda (2005, p. 7) asserted that the act of reading comprehension in a second language (L2) differs from reading in a person's first language (L1). Given that L2 readers have prior literacy experience in their L1, they are equipped with the resources to leverage previous linguistic knowledge during the developmental process of L2 reading skills (Koda, 2005, p. 7). Furthermore, when reading in L2 it requires dual language involvement, separating L1 from L2 reading. According to Bernhardt (2011) one needs to consider that reading in an L2 is an interactive process. When the reader lacks comprehension in their L2, they can compensate by drawing from their L1 to construct meaning (Bernhardt, 2011).

As mentioned, the act of reading consists of the technical and meaning-making aspects, and according to Iser (1972, p. 279), one must consider not only the text, but also the actions involved in responding to that text. The idea that the text offers different "schematized views" through which the subject matter come to light, but the actual "bringing to life" is an act of *"konkretisation"* (Iser, 1972, p. 279). Iser (1972, p. 279) then proceeded to define two poles of the literary work, the artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic referring to the text created by the author and the aesthetic to the realization through the reader (Iser, 1972, p. 279). The literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, nor with the realization of the text, therefore it must exist somewhere in between (Iser, 1972, p. 279). It is the convergence of reader and text that brings the literary work into life and cannot be separated from either of the two entities. Rosenblatt (2005) elaborated that the meaning of the text does not exist in the

text or in the reader but in the transaction between the two. The text and the reader cannot be viewed as two separate entities, but as one total dynamic situation (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 7). When reading, the reader will be affected of what they bring "in" to the text, as it is usual to bring previous knowledge and factors such as gender, class, and age, into the text (Reynolds, 2011, p. 133).

Rosenblatt (2005, p. 11) went further into the Aesthetic – Efferent continuum. She claimed that the reading event falls somewhere on a continuum based on whether the reader embraced either a predominantly efferent stance or predominantly aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 11). The two counterpoints of the continuum are based on what Rosenblatt (2005, p. 11) depicted as *"the proportion or mix of public and private elements of sense that fall within the scope of the readers selective attention"*. The efferent stance describes the act of reading when one's attention is mainly focused on what is to be extracted and retained after the reading event. An example brought forward by Rosenblatt (2005, p. 11) was the reading of a manual or when reading for specific information, i.e., a literary analysis. The aesthetic stance is characterized as when the reader adopts an "attitude of readiness" to steer their attention onto what is being lived through during the reading event (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 11). When the reader is moved deeply, bringing their previous experiences into the reading act we move towards the aesthetic reading stance (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 11).

This thesis does not aim to explore differentiation in EFL teaching. However, it is beneficial for this thesis to give a definition of differentiation and differentiated instruction to answer the research question. Additionally, according to Stuvland (2019, p. 246) there is a need for greater use of differentiation and differentiated reading materials in Norwegian EFL classrooms. There will not be given an in-depth review on the topic but an overview on some guiding principles related to differentiation and differentiated instruction in Norway. According to The Education Act (1998) every student in Norway has a right to differentiated instruction. The Ministry of Education and Research (2017) states that schools must adapt the teaching to the students' abilities and prerequisites, both lower achieving and students with a high potential of learning. Further, the Ministry of Education and Research (2017) elaborates how differentiated instruction means to facilitate with varied assessments, teaching materials, learning arenas and activities so every student can benefit from the instruction. An important part of differentiated instruction is differentiation. According to Idsøe (2020, p. 15), differentiation is seen as a tool for achieving differentiated instruction. Furthermore, Idsøe

(2015, p. 14) stated how the term differentiation can be described as a framework, or a philosophy, which makes it possible for students at all learning levels to develop their potential in education. Moreover, if teachers are to achieve the goal of differentiated instruction, the two types of differentiation, both pedagogically and organizationally, must be fulfilled (Idsøe, 2015, p. 15).

Imsen (2014, p. 20) asserted how all education should be adapted to fit each students' prerequisites. Further on, Imsen (2014, p. 21) described that this makes for many challenges as a teacher, as one class often consist of many students with many different needs and prerequisites. Moreover, Imsen (2014, p. 21) stated that the need for differentiating is of high importance, as teachers need to adapt their teaching and use varied teaching methods and material to be able to reach each student's needs. Additionally, Idsøe (2015, p. 13) mentioned how in the past, teaching was primarily geared towards whole-class instruction, whereas today there has been an increase in the demands for differentiation and adapted teaching for each student. Further on, according to Idsøe (2015, p. 13) if teachers differentiate their teaching, it makes it possible to embrace all students in their classroom.

### 2.2.1 Reading and motivation

Reeve (2005) stated that motivation is one of the key factors of learning. Grabe and Yamashita (2022, p. 224) further highlighted motivation as an important factor in students reading development. Building on that, Grabe and Yamashita (2022, p. 224) claimed that teachers and classroom contexts can have an immense impact on students' motivation. Additionally, they argued that "motivation facilitates engagement, which in turn facilitates achievement" (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022, p. 224). In other words, students need to be motivated if they are to develop their skills in class, including reading skills. Krashen (2004, pp. 28-29) also explored the relationship between reading and motivation, particularly pleasure reading. According to Krashen (2004, pp. 28-29) pleasure reading is not only an enjoyable activity for students to partake in, but it also has pedagogical benefits.

The use of authentic materials can be motivational in language learning by itself (Gilmore, 2007, p. 107). Gilmore (2007, p. 108) claimed that authentic materials are motivational as they convey a message rather than highlight target language. Authentic materials can be chosen to fit the students' specific needs and interests, rather than coursebooks which are usually written for a broader audience (Gilmore, 2007, p. 107). In addition, showing students

that they have the abilities to read authentic materials is also a factor for motivation (Gilmore, 2007, p. 107). Besides, reading fiction is according to Nikolajeva (2014, p. 226) essential for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Furthermore, fictional books, such as picturebooks, are a rich source of knowledge and pleasure (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 226). Birketveit (2013, p. 18) argued that picturebooks are one of the most thrilling and innovative types of teaching materials teachers can use. Moreover, because picturebooks conveys narratives through the illustrations, to the same extent as the verbal text, they are motivational and challenge readers across age and reading proficiencies (Birketveit, 2013, p. 17). Many picturebooks are entertaining, and contain topics related to humor or irony, and can therefore increase students reading motivation (Birketveit, 2013, p. 17).  Furthermore, Nodelman (1992, p. 132) stated that picturebooks offer a different form of pleasure than other types of storytelling, as they contain illustrations. In addition, because they also contain words, they offer a different pleasure than other forms of visual art (Nodelman, 1992, p. 132). Birketveit (2013, p. 17) also stated that as the verbal text in picturebooks often are quite short, they can be motivational for students, as the text density is lighter than in authentic novels. Accordingly, picturebooks can assist students reading development and motivation, as they provide scaffolding through their illustrations, as well as having a manageable length of verbal text (Birketveit, 2013, p. 17).

## 2.3 Literacy

The term literacy has traditionally been described as the ability to read and write. Blikstad-Balas (2023, p. 11) stated that the term literacy originally was used to describe someone who could use the alphabet, as well as make meaning of verbal texts. In addition, Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 372) mentioned how literacy traditionally has been associated with the "basic" skills of decoding and writing printed script. However, the modern understanding of the term acknowledges that meaning is not made only from verbal texts, but also considers literacies that are embedded and embodied in everyday practices, including different modes such as illustrations, design, and performance (Arizpe et al., 2018, p. 372). The new perspectives of the term literacy contain holistic and complex knowledge which includes skills of how to make meaning by decoding words and different modalities (Blikstad-Balas, 2023, p. 12). Furthermore, the international definition by UNESCO described literacy as:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associate with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004, p. 13).

Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 371) connected the fields of literacy studies and picturebook research, and in doing so found mutual benefits to both two fields. As stated by Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 371) literacy studies look at all cultural and social artifacts which produce meaning, in which the research on picturebooks has contributed to the cognitive and social understandings of literacy (Arizpe et al., 2018, p. 371). In addition, the ways in which literacy studies support an understanding of how readers make sense of text have benefited the field of picturebook research (Arizpe et al., 2018, p. 371).

### 2.3.1 Multimodality and visual literacy

Whereas print literacy skills have, for many decades, been sufficient for many communication tasks, the terrain of communication is changing as todays' society is becoming more visually oriented (Jewitt, 2008, p. 241). The digital and multimodal demands within todays' society requires new ways of coding and decoding picture-text relations (Hassett & Curwood, 2009, p. 270). From a multimodal perspective, illustrations, design, texts and so on are referred to as *modes*, in which these modes of communication are resources for meaning-making (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246). Jewitt (2008, p. 243) argued that visual and multimodal forms of textual representation have brought new textual relationships and may even have exchanged writing as the primary medium. Therefore, to make meaning of a text, one must have knowledge of the different modes being used, as each mode plays a discrete role in the narrative as a whole (Jewitt, 2008, p. 247). As picturebooks depend on both the illustrations and verbal text to understand the story and thematic issues, picturebooks are an example of a multimodal text. According to Nikolajeva & Scott (2006, p. 1) the verbal text is mainly used to narrate, whilst the main function of the illustrations is to describe. Furthermore, Hassett and Curwood (2009, p. 271) argued that when using picturebooks in the classroom both students and teachers need to focus on all the various textual elements and modes as meaning is being made.

For several decades the term visual literacy has been defined in various ways. According to Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 374) visual literacy can be summarized as an active process that can lead from awareness of the codes of visual communication to more analytical, critical reading of visual text. Additionally, Raney (1998, p. 38) stated that visual literacy is thinking about "what images and objects mean, how they are put together, how we respond to or interpret them, how they might function as modes of thought, and how they are seated within the societies which gave rise to them". As todays' society is rapidly changing in its ways of communication, illustrations are becoming central to communication and meaning-making (Felten, 2008, p. 60). Even though the visual screen-based world is the normality for most of the students in today's society, this does not mean that students naturally possess visual literacy skills. Nikolajeva (2010, p. 27) also stated that there has been a common prejudice that visual literacy skills come naturally, without being taught or trained. However, where there is evidence of children responding to illustrations, response and understanding are not equal skills (Nikolajeva, 2010, p. 27). Whilst students acquire visual and digital knowledge and skills in their free time, these skills are not always connected nor developed in the classroom, as schools traditionally have placed primary emphasis on textual literacy (Felten, 2008, p. 61). Furthermore, Luke (2003, p. 398) stated that as students' learning is no longer tied to in-class-learning, as they encounter various medias and literacies in their out-of-school lives, the classroom is one of the few places where students do not "blend their knowledge drawn from diverse textual sources and communications media". Additionally, Felten (2008, p. 60) stated that visual literacy should be recognized among the fundamental goals in education, whether it is conceptualized as a distinct set of capacities, or as a part of a larger multimodal literacy. As the relationship between illustrations and text in educational materials are transitioning, the use of visual teaching materials, where students can evolve their ability to understand, produce and use culturally significant illustrations in their meaning-making of a text are emerging in today's education (Felten, 2008, p. 60). When students gain knowledge of how design, symbols and other visual codes work this knowledge contributes to the enrichment of the reading experience, both cognitively and affectively (Arizpe et al., 2018, p. 375). According to Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 375), this is one of many reasons to use picturebooks as teaching material. Furthermore, Arizpe and Styles (2015, p. 123) stated that to expand, or deepen engagement with a picturebook (or other visual artforms), students need to have proficient knowledge of how the illustrations work on its own and with the verbal text, in order to move them beyond literal responses.

## 2.3.2 Emotional literacy

The principles for education and all-round development in the core curriculum states that the schools' mission is the education and all-around development of all students (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Students' all-around development, also referred to as Bildung,[1] can be described as an internal process where schools shall give each student the opportunity to learn and develop their skills and abilities (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). According to Nikolajeva (2018, p. 114) students often lack the full range of human emotions and have not yet fully developed their theory of mind and empathy skills. Additionally, Nikolajeva (2018, p. 116) mentioned that the ability to empathize, rather than just project one's own feelings onto others, does not fully develop until adolescence. Tørnby (2020, p. 131) also mentioned that one of the important parts of education is to help students master their strong emotions.

Emotional literacy focuses on understanding how other people feel (Tørnby, 2020, p. 131). If teachers are to help students in their personal all-around development, they need to have knowledge of how to do so. Several researchers have argued that literature can be used as a tool in the process of developing emotional literacy (Nikolajeva, 2018; Armstrong, 2013). Accordingly, Nikolajeva (2018, p. 114) stated that the genre of picturebooks can be used as a tool when focusing on emotional literacy, as picturebooks evoke emotional engagement through illustrations in addition to the verbal text. Moreover, the representation of emotions and the multimodal aspect of picturebooks is especially beneficial as a tool when students are to develop their empathy for others (Nikolajeva, 2018, p. 116)

## 2.4 Authentic materials and picturebooks in EFL

Krashen (1985) argued through his input hypothesis that in order to acquire a language, language learners need to be exposed to authentic, comprehensible input that is one step above their current level of understanding. When the language learner receives comprehensible input, it is inevitable that they will acquire language (Krashen, 1985). Gilmore (2007, p. 98) defined authenticity as *"An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort"*. According to Simensen (1987) simplified texts are written to illustrate

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[1] The term German term Bildung is here used for the Norwegian word *danning*. Bildung describes the lifelong self-realization process which is impacted by the surrounding culture. The students are to learn the necessary skills and knowledge needed to become independent citizens of society.

a specific language trait, to modify the amount of new lexical input introduced to learners, or to control for propositional input. Linguistic simplification is the dominant approach to text modification for second language learners, spoken or written text is rewritten in shorter, simplified sentences (Long & Ross, 1993, p. 29). The main objective for the simplification is to avoid idiomatic expressions, complex syntax, and low frequency vocabulary items (Long & Ross, 1993, p. 29).

There has long been a consensus that coursebook language is far from the informal communicative language of English most commonly used by speakers of English (Gilmore, 2007, pp. 98-99). Furthermore, Gilmore (2007, p. 103) claimed that traditional coursebooks often have presented learners with a meagre, and frequently distorted sample of the target language. Wiland (2000, pp. 102-103) displayed how coursebooks that were written for L97 were lacking authenticity, and further brought forth examples from coursebooks where authentic literary texts had been simplified to fit the language level. According to Wiland (2000, p. 103) these examples showed how the plot was completely missing and with that the authors voice and poetic language disappeared to. In contrast, authentic materials provide opportunities for input from authentic language use, especially considering how languages needs to be looked at in a context (Gilmore, 2007, p. 103). Moreover, Wiland (2000, p. 103) claimed that as EFL classrooms can never provide authentic language context, teachers should at least provide authentic textual materials. When literature is simplified Wiland (2000, p. 104) feared that students would not experience the joy of literature, therefore as a worst-case scenario, this could lead to a dislike of fiction among the students.

Penne (2010) explored how literary texts are presented in coursebooks for the Norwegian L1 subject in lower-secondary schools, and how Norwegian students are mostly introduced to extracts rather than full length literary works. She presented a quote from a student that explained how the only literary text they read in full was also in fact the only one he really remembered (Penne, 2010, p. 163). When reading fiction, one can emphatically engage with the characters through a logical structure that help create understanding and meaning (Penne, 2010, p. 164). When using extracts of literary texts, the logical structure will be lost, and therefore students will struggle to engage with the characters and plot (Penne, 2010, p. 164). The claims made by Penne (2010) was directed at coursebooks for the Norwegian L1 subject. However, a study done by Drew et al. (2007, p. 327) indicated that Norwegian EFL teachers relied heavily on coursebooks, which will be addressed further in this thesis. Additionally,

Birketveit and Williams (2013, p. 10) problematized the same traits in Norwegian EFL coursebooks as brought forth by Penne (2010).

As mentioned priorly, Drew et al. (2007, p. 327) claimed that Norwegian EFL teachers relied heavily on coursebook materials rather than authentic texts. Authentic texts are not written with EFL students in mind; therefore, the language is more rich, varied, and suggestive than traditional coursebook materials (Birketveit, 2013, p. 18). In addition, coursebook materials often rely on extracts from longer authentic texts leaving readers frustrated because they do not get to read the whole story (Birketveit, 2013, p. 18). As previously mentioned, picturebooks are unique in their form as the verbal and the visual are interdependent in the meaning-making, therefore making it a great tool for foreign language learners (Bird & Yokota, 2018, p. 281; Birketveit, 2013, p. 19; Hallberg, 2022, p. 2; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 1).

## 2.5 Picturebooks as an all-age genre

Beckett (2012) presented picturebooks as a crossover genre, appealing to children and adults. Accordingly, Beckett (2012, p. 1) claimed that picturebooks could challenge readers of all ages, however, she mentioned that the genre lacks attention in most countries. Because of the complex dialogue between illustration and text, picturebooks can provide multiple levels of meaning and invite readings on different levels by all ages (Beckett, 2012, p. 2). Picturebooks offer "the greatest equality" in the reading experience as children can interpret the illustrations, and the adults can read the verbal text (Beckett, 2012, p. 2). However, this does not mean that picturebooks cannot challenge older readers, as many crossover picturebooks are intended for an older audience consisting of underlying themes only older readers will be able to interpret (Beckett, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, Birketveit (2015, p. 2) referred to Barbara Walls definition of the term *dual audiences*, describing books that are written for both children and adults. As the children will understand the text at their level, adults will comprehend a deeper meaning to the stories (Birketveit, 2015, p. 2). Rhedin (2001, p. 208) also wrote that picturebooks are traditionally written for children, however the modern picturebook is intended for an adult audience as well.

For a long time, adults have been viewed as mediators or co-readers of picturebooks, but in recent years they are starting to be recognized as a part of the target audience (Beckett, 2012,

p. 13). Crossover picturebooks seem to have illustrations that cannot be decoded by children and seem to be targeted toward an adult audience (Beckett, 2012, p. 16). Beckett (2012, p. 17) concluded that picturebooks are not only intended for children. Additionally, Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 21) also claimed that many picturebooks clearly are written for a dual audience. Moreover, as there has been an increase of interest in thought-provoking picturebooks, controversial subjects, and disturbing styles of illustrations, the implied age of the readers are being challenged (Evans, 2015, p. 4). These types of picturebooks, often referred to as challenging or controversial picturebooks, include complex themes such as loneliness, violence, sexuality, drugs etc., which many adults find too disturbing for young children to read (Evans, 2015, p. 11). Nevertheless, Evans (2015, p. 5) stated that where many adults find these types of themes too controversial or challenging for children to read, students usually deal with troubling personal problems daily in their own lives. In addition, Costello and Kolodziej (2006, p. 27) stated that as many picturebooks are "sophisticated, abstract, or complex in themes, stories, and illustrations", they particularly suit older children, or adolescents, as younger children will struggle to understand the themes in the books.

According to Roche (2015, p. 79) picturebooks can be used to encourage and develop both critical and visual literacy in people of all ages, as well as spark lively discussions. Baddeley and Eddershaw (1998, p. 58) explored the underlying themes in picturebooks and how older students' response to literature could be developed through linking picturebooks that had common themes. When working with picturebooks they are often loosely linked to a topic and then used as a starting point, this approach however does not consider the potential for working with picturebooks with older students from a literary and artistic point of view (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998, p. 58). When reading a picturebook aloud for students, and thereby invite them to discuss the book, different kinds of knowledge, skills and values are being drawn upon (Roche, 2015, p. 27). In addition, Roche (2015, p. 33) stated that when students are listening to a story, and gets time to dwell on the illustrations, and talk about them with their peers, as well as getting time to discuss the book in class, a new sense of meaning-making comes into being. The approach of discussing the underlying themes in picturebooks can help students expand their own ideas through "listening to, challenging others, demanding evidence, presenting ideas logically, and beginning to summarize their positions" (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998, p. 60). Through readers engagement with the semiotic meaning of the picture-text relationship, picturebooks can provide opportunities for

students to make meaning for themselves about the world and their place in it (Roche, 2015, p. 112).

Reading picturebooks with older children has the potential to stimulate interest and discussion, as the interplay of text and illustrations enable them to read the subtext and gain insight into characters and the underlying themes (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998, p. 58). When reading a picturebook, the reader needs to have knowledge of how to interpret both the verbal and visual modes included (Jewitt, 2008, p. 247). Furthermore, Lehr (1988, p. 340) stated that as picturebooks conveys its message through two modes both the illustrations and text must be considered for the reader to understand the meaning or theme of the story. Miller (1998, p. 380) stated that both fictional and nonfictional picturebooks can make stories come alive for the readers, have relatable lifelike characters, and help readers understand abstract historical and geographical concepts. By including characters in which students can relate to, picturebooks can aid students in their retention of the concepts being presented (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 29). In addition, Owens and Nowel (2001, pp. 36-37) argued that through reading picturebooks teachers can help their students to broaden their social consciousness. Multimodal literature, such as picturebooks, usually has multiple themes, where different individuals can identify different themes in the same book, as themes are subjective to the reader's interpretation. However, the authors purpose of the story should be evident to the readers, as the readers need to comprehend the meaning of both verbal text and illustrations to identify the theme (Jewitt, 2008, p. 247; Lehr, 1988, p. 340; Roche, 2015, p. 101).

Furthermore, in the article by Bishop (1990) the analogy of how books can sometimes be doors, windows and mirrors was presented. When a reader walks through their imagination to become a part of the world created, or recreated, in the literature, this is referred to as a door (Bishop, 1990, p. 3). When a book is a window for the reader, the reader looks through the "window" of the book and gets to know people of different cultures who are different from their own lives (Bishop, 1990, p. 7). This is of importance when students from a dominant social group are to apprehend and understand different cultures and values that differ from what they know from their own lives. Lastly, books as mirrors are explained as literature where the reader can recognize themselves, or their own culture (Bishop, 1990, p. 5). According to Bishop (1990, p. 4), children and young adults often seek for mirrors when they read, wanting to relate to the story presented. Bishop's (1990) analogy speaks to the importance of children being able to see themselves and others in the literature they read, and

the analogy is mainly used regarding multicultural literature. However, it should be noted that the analogy can be thought of beyond multicultural literature and there are a number of ways in which we can see ourselves reflected (McNair & Edwards, 2021, p. 207). Therefore, identity markers beyond culture and race can and should be considered in mirrors (McNair & Edwards, 2021, p. 207).

## 2.6 Previous research

In this section, previous research focusing on reading in EFL, how picturebooks have been used as a motivational tool, as well as a tool for developing students' literacies in the English subject, in addition to how picturebooks have been used to work with themes and in interdisciplinary projects will be presented.

### 2.6.1 Reading in EFL

Bakken and Lund (2018) conducted a study looking at the reading practices of Norwegian EFL teachers. In their study, Bakken and Lund (2018, p. 79) found that the primary concern for lower-secondary teachers of EFL when choosing literature for their classes, was finding texts that their students would find appealing and would engage them. Bakken and Lund (2018, p. 81) interviewed eighteen English teachers from six lower-secondary schools in Norway. They found that the teachers backgrounds influenced their reasonings on these matters (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 82). Further, it appeared that educational backgrounds and specific interests, i.e., history or literature, made some of the teachers prioritize these aspects in their English teaching (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 82). Amongst their findings they reported that the teachers mostly read texts from the coursebooks, and while some of their informants said they wished or intended to read more literary texts, they also expressed concern about availability of resources and time (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 82). A small number of the teachers that participated in this study found the coursebooks to be unsatisfactory, and some argued that it was necessary to source texts elsewhere since the coursebooks did not provide enough depth, and if the students only were exposed to coursebooks texts they could miss out on texts that would provide insight to other cultures or periods of time (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 83). Lastly, they concluded that many of the interviewed teachers viewed reading exclusively to the development of language skills and basic text comprehension (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 86).

Stuvland (2019) looked at the use of four approaches to EFL reading instruction in Norwegian 4th – 5th grades. The study explored what reading materials teachers had available and what materials they used in their teaching. Stuvland (2019, p. 239) found that approximately half of the teachers had no other English books than the coursebook, and a quarter of the teachers had no English books in their library. Moreover, nearly all the teachers found it necessary to make use of differentiated reading materials, however only eighteen percent of the teachers had their students read level-differentiated texts on a regular basis (Stuvland 2019, p. 239). The teachers reported that paucity of teaching hours and little access to materials influenced their reading instruction (Stuvland, 2019, p. 240). In addition, those with fewer materials felt that this influenced their teaching more than other factors and that some teachers felt that the schools were unwilling to invest in reading materials (Stuvland, 2019, p. 240). The findings revealed that a majority of the teachers used a coursebook as the primary reading material in their English lessons, the same indication was prominent in Drew et al. (2007, p. 327) as they reported that there was a heavy dependence on the coursebook amongst the teachers who participated in their study. Furthermore, Drew et al. (2007, p. 335) noted that the Dutch teachers, who had a higher level of formal qualifications in English than the Norwegian teachers, were less coursebook dependent.

Crossley et al. (2007) explored the linguistic features of simplified and authentic texts. In their study they found that simplified texts provided learners with more conferential cohesion and more common connectives and relied more on frequent familiar words (Crossley et al., 2007, p. 27). They however demonstrated more syntactic complexity, less diversity in speech tags, depended less on complex logical operators and displayed less causality. Lastly, they found that there was no significant differences of ambiguity and abstractness between authentic texts and simplified texts (Crossley et al., 2007, p. 27). Long and Ross (1993) conducted a study where they hypothesized that readers of simplified and elaborated texts would have a greater comprehension than readers of unmodified authentic texts. They found that the EFL students who read simplified or elaborated texts had a greater text comprehension than the students who read unmodified authentic texts (Long & Ross, p. 45).

### 2.6.2 Developing literacies through the implementation of picturebooks

Arizpe and Styles (2003) have conducted studies concerning children reading picturebooks in L1 teaching. However, there have been little research conducted on using picturebooks as teaching materials with older students in EFL classrooms. As mentioned priorly, the case

study of Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017) investigated the impact extensive reading of authentic picturebooks had on 11-year-olds in a Norwegian EFL classroom. During and after the project Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017, p. 114) found that, by reading picturebooks, nearly all students had improved their text-linguistic competence, with an overall increase in students' use of adverbials in their final written texts. In addition, the study showed that extensive reading of authentic picturebooks enhanced students' learning motivation, as well as it improved the writing skills of the students (Birketveit and Rimmereide, 2017, p. 114). Furthermore, the study by Wang and Lin (2019) found that using picturebooks with adolescent students served as a great support for their creative writing. As well as stimulating the students' reading skills, their writing skills also developed. Moreover, the students were able to produce texts with coherency, as well as obtain a concept of narrative writing at the end of their project (Wang and Lin, 2019, p. 1).

Premont et al. (2017) conducted a study where they implemented picturebooks as mentor texts in a 10th grade class. These students were native speakers of English, and even though this has other implications than with EFL students we still find this study to have some transferability. Premont et al. (2017, p. 304) found that the writing traits highlighted in the study increased significantly. In addition, the teacher observed that the students were more engaged and participatory during the project (Premont et al., 2017, p. 304). The researchers also found that the students turned to the picturebooks during their writing process for support and as mentors in their writing (Premont et al., p. 301). Villareal et al. (2015) examined how fifth graders created their own picturebooks with picturebooks as mentor texts. They found that when the students were implicitly guided through the elements used in picturebooks, the students themselves implemented these elements in their own picturebooks (Villareal et al., p. 273).

Whereas extensive reading is fundamental for L2 learners' vocabulary learning, Sun (2017, p. 97) argued that EFL learners gets trapped in a vicious cycle because their limited vocabulary makes it hard for them to do pleasure reading. Furthermore, Sun's (2017) study investigated the effect three instructional modes had on young adult EFL learners, focusing on acquiring and retaining vocabulary by using picturebooks as teaching material. The study found that students could both acquire and retain vocabulary after reading and working with picturebooks in the project (Sun, 2017, p. 108). According to the findings, EFL learners could acquire vocabulary with each of the three instructional modes, and retain some knowledge a

month later (Sun, 2017, p. 108). However, the picturebook reading plus collaborative output activity mode was most effective when it came to retaining knowledge, and picturebooks reading plus vocabulary acquisition was the most effective when it came to acquiring new vocabulary (Sun, 2017, p. 108).

The study by Teresa (2019) investigated the potential of picturebooks for eliciting children's spontaneous speech production, by specifically looking into how the children applied their communication skills when exposed to the non-textual elements of picturebooks. The findings of the study suggested that picturebooks were ideal tools for eliciting oral language from young EFL learners. Furthermore, the study by Teresa (2019, p. 260) concluded that picturebooks could be used to expand learning amongst all the students, as well as help students develop their oral language and reading comprehension.

As picturebooks consists of at least one illustration on every double spread, these books come with ample visual support that can enable students to cope with more advanced texts than they usually would (Birketveit, 2015, p. 1). One of the main benefits of reading authentic picturebooks is that they can help readers develop their visual literacy (Birketveit, 2015, p. 1). Furthermore, Birketveit (2015, p. 3) stated that by reading illustrations one can both develop spatial reading as well as visual literacy. In Birketveit's (2015, p. 25) study, the findings showed that students reading skills both intensive and extensive needs to be developed. Additionally, students' ability to read illustrations also needs to be taught and practiced. As picturebooks often can be very complex, playful and bring across important messages, visual literacy skills need to be developed for the readers' to be able to make meaning of the story in picturebooks (Birketveit, 2015, p. 25).

### 2.6.3 Themes in Picturebooks

In the study of Gunn et al. (2022) they looked at children's social-emotional learning through read-alouds using picturebooks. They had chosen multicultural picturebooks and used Bishop's (1990) definition of books as "windows, mirrors and doors", looking into how the readers connected the themes of the picturebooks to their own lives (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 364). The study also found that by having read-alouds, where students could develop and connect their understanding of the stories presented, this could help motivate and increase their interest in reading (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 371). Furthermore, Evans (2015) stated that she had used many challenging visual texts that prompted discussion with her students, reading

about themes such as death, illness, or conflict. Evans (2015, p. 5) argued that in her project the students could relate to the challenging themes, as picturebooks covered personal challenges or issues many of the students had encountered in their personal lives. By exposing students to challenging themes in picturebooks, they could draw upon their background knowledge from their own lives, where the connection to the themes could help motivate or spark their interest in both reading and writing (Evans, 2015, pp. 6-7).

In the qualitative study of Haaland et al. (2022) they used the picturebook *Biblia pauperum nova: Ny bibel for de fattige i ånden* written by Oscar K. and illustrated by Dorte Karrebæk (2012) as teaching material in an interdisciplinary project with 17-year-old students in a Norwegian upper-secondary school. In their study they aimed to study the potential the chosen picturebook had for critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and learning across disciplines. The research project took place in two disciplines, Norwegian language and literature, and Religion and ethics. Haaland et al. (2022, p. 222) mentioned how the lines between the two subjects were blurred as the students integrated the two closely in their reasoning, seeming virtually unaware of which subject they were working with. Furthermore, the study showed that the complex and transdisciplinary character of the picturebook clearly contributed to the students' learning process (Haaland et al., p. 225). Moreover, the findings of the study showed that the students showed a genuine interest in exploring the multimodal aspects, and the complex content of the picturebook (Haaland et al., p. 225).

In this chapter the theoretical framework of this thesis was presented. Starting off with perspectives on the picturebook genre, leading into a conceptualization of the genre. Theories regarding reading in EFL and the motivational factors were also accounted for, leading into an overview of the term literacy and its sub-categories. In the following sub-chapter theories regarding authentic materials in EFL, and picturebooks in EFL classrooms were presented. In addition, views on picturebooks as an all-age genre was reviewed. Lastly, previous research relevant conducted on reading in EFL, using picturebooks as teaching material to develop students´ motivation and literacies, as well as how themes in picturebooks can benefit and challenge older students have been presented. Further, the methodological design of the study will be presented.

# 3. Methodological design

For this thesis a qualitative study was carried out. Where quantitative studies mainly focus on numbers and unchanging data, this type of research did not fit this research project, as this project wanted to look at teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and reflections on a specific topic. However, a qualitative approach can provide in-depth and intensive analyses of the social phenomena being studied, making this research approach the most suitable for this thesis. The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper insight into why and how EFL teachers' perceptions of the picturebook genre in lower-secondary school and how they made use of picturebooks as teaching material. As interviews are well suited to gain insight into informants' personal thoughts and feelings, as well as making it possible for the researchers to access detailed descriptions of informants' experiences (Dalen, 2011, p. 13; Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 77), interviews were chosen as the methodology for this thesis.

In this chapter, the methodological choices for the thesis will be explained. More specifically, this chapter will explain how the interviews were prepared and conducted, how and why the informants were chosen, how the data analysis was carried out, and finally the reliability, validity and ethical considerations of the study will be discussed.

## 3.1 Qualitative Semi-Structured Research Interview

According to Kvale et al. (2015, p. 42), the purpose of conducting qualitative research interviews is to understand different sides of the informants' personal lives from their own perspective. Furthermore, qualitative interviews are described as an interview form where knowledge is constructed through the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale et al. 2015, p. 22). As the goal of this research project was to gain an insight into EFL teachers' personal perspectives on the use of picturebooks, this interview form was most suitable as the research method for this thesis.

In addition to conducting qualitative interviews, the interviews were also semi-structured. Whilst an unstructured interview is informal and uses open questions surrounding one theme, the lack of facilitation surrounding the questions and order (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 78), made it unbeneficial for this study to use this type of structure. Furthermore, structured interviews, where the researchers use predetermined questions and order in the interviews, can make it challenging to gain a broader insight in the reflections of the

informants (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 79). Having this in mind, semi-structured interviews were conducted. An interview guide with an overarching theme was created in advance, with room for adjustments throughout the interview based of the informants' answers (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 79). By conducting semi-structured interviews, the questions could be adapted to each participant and their situation, as well as it made it possible to follow up interesting statements and reflections the informants had. As the informants in this study had many different reflections surrounding the theme of picturebooks with older students, and not all of them had used picturebooks in their own teaching, this type of interview structure seemed fitting for this study.

## 3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were five EFL teachers that were working or had worked in lower-secondary schools in Norway. There are two main methods when sampling, probability samples and non-probability samples (Cohen et al., 2011). For this project it was decided to use a non-probability sample due to time, resources and access to informants. The sampling method used for this project would be described as convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Teachers who were acquainted with the researchers of the study, through student teaching and own schooling were contacted, as well as teachers in Facebook forums created for and by teachers.

As there was limited time and resources for this project, it was useful to conduct a convenience sampling. Hence, practice schools and random schools were contacted through email, which resulted in two informants. After repeated efforts contacting different schools across the country, it showed necessary to turn to Facebook forums created by and for English teachers in Norway. A post was published in these forums where we asked for EFL teachers who had or did not have experience with the use of picturebooks in lower-secondary schools, and who currently worked, or had priorly worked, in lower-secondary schools in Norway. Through these Facebook forums, teachers willing to participate in the study were found and thereby contacted directly with further and more detailed information about the project. After each informant had read the information letter and signed the consent form, the interviews were conducted individually on one occasion through *Zoom.*

The five teachers who ended up being interviewed had different understandings of the genre of picturebooks, varying from using picturebooks actively in their teaching to not having used them at all. The sample consisted of two men and three women, ages ranging from late twenties to late forties, who worked in different parts of Norway. Four of the informants currently worked in lower-secondary schools, and one informant worked in a lower-secondary school up until this schoolyear. As this is a small study this does not make the data generalizable for every EFL teacher in Norway, however it does give an insight into the different views some EFL teachers have on using picturebooks as teaching materials. The informants have been given pseudonyms throughout this thesis; these are presented below.

Informant 1 - Karoline

Karoline is 28 years old and has worked as a teacher for the past five years, four of them in lower secondary. She is currently teaching in a tenth-grade class located close to a larger city in Norway. She has four years teachers' education and a masters in school-oriented educational science, in addition she is now taking continuing education as a part of her position to become a practice supervisor at her school.

Informant 2 - Jessica

Jessica is 45 years old and has worked as a teacher for the past 22 years. She is currently teaching a tenth-grade class in a school located in a smaller city in Norway. She has a five-year university degree from Russia with a focus on pedagogy and English. She is currently studying continuing education in English in Norway.

Informant 3 - Joakim

Joakim is a 28-year-old male that has worked as a teacher for the past 2 years. He is currently teaching in both eight and tenth grade in a school located in the south of Norway. He has a master's in teachers' education with a focus on English, history and Norwegian and is currently taking continuing education in Norwegian as a second language.

Informant 4 - Frank

Frank is a 45-year-old male and has worked as a teacher for the past 20 years. He is currently teaching a ninth-grade class in a school in the north-western part of Norway. He has a university degree in English, political science, media science and practical pedagogical education and is now taking continuing education in the first year English MA program.

Informant 5 - Kari

Kari is a 41-year-old female, who has worked as a teacher for twelve years. She is currently working with higher education in Norway but worked in a lower-secondary school up until the past school year. She has a master's degree in English and a bachelor's degree in German, in addition she has studied practical pedagogical education. She taught at a school in the eastern part of Norway.

## 3.3 Data collection

Prior to the data collection, the project was approved by *SIKT*, previously known as *NSD*. This will be further discussed in the sub-chapter considering ethical considerations. This section will present how the data was collected for this study. Firstly, how the interview guide was created and developed will be described. Secondly, how the pilot interview was conducted will be presented, as well as how this led to changes in the interview guide. Lastly, how the interviews with the five teachers of this study was conducted will be described.

### 3.3.1 Interview guide

Before developing an interview guide, it was found helpful to have sufficient knowledge on the research topic. Therefore, research and theories on picturebooks used as teaching material, specifically with older students, was read prior to developing the interview guide. According to Kvale et al. (2015, pp. 165-166), it is crucial for the researchers to have adequate knowledge and interest of their research topic to fully understand the entirety of the informants' answers. By researching and reading theories and previous research relevant to the topic ahead of making the interview guide, this made it possible to adjust some of the questions which opened for more follow-up questions, in which valuable knowledge on the research topic could be gained from the informants' answers. As a result, an interview guide consisting of central themes and questions related to the topic was developed. The interview guide which was created consisted of open-ended questions that were formulated so that the informants could share their experiences and perceptions, as well as encourage them to share more than what was being asked. Accordingly, Dalen (2011, pp. 26-27) stated that using open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview guide is crucial for the quality of the interview. Furthermore, it was attempted to make questions that were easy to understand.

After finishing the interview guide, the questions were discussed with the supervisor of this thesis. In addition, fellow students, and other supervisors, gave peer validation on the interview guide during a seminar. This made it possible to gain useful insight into how the questions could be adjusted to get the most beneficial information from the informants[2].

### 3.3.2 Pilot interview

It was found useful to conduct a pilot interview before the interview process started. Before the pilot interview was conducted, the recording equipment, "*Nettskjema – Diktafon",* and *Zoom* was tested. The pilot interview made it possible to test our roles as interviewers and establish these roles during the interviews. In addition, it was useful to test the interview guide and evaluate the questions asked. According to Dalen (2013) there should always be conducted a pilot interview before a qualitative interview study.

It would be ideal to conduct the pilot interview with someone who had a similar background as the sample in this project. However, with limited time as well as few teachers willing to participate in the study, it was found necessary to conduct the interview with a fellow student. The informant for the pilot interview had relevant experience with picturebooks and was already working in a combined 1st through 10th grade school. It is often normal to adjust the interview guide after the pilot interview, which was also the case for this interview guide (Dalen, 2013). After conducting the pilot interview, the data showed that some of the questions in the interview guide did not give sufficient data if the informant had not used picturebooks in their teaching. This made it possible to adjust the questions prior to the interviews, making the researchers prepared if this was to occur. In addition, the pilot interview brought new and useful follow-up questions to light, which could help gather more information about the teachers' knowledge regarding the benefits of using picturebooks as teaching material. These adjustments were made prior to the first interview.

### 3.3.3 Conduction of interviews

The interviews were conducted on *Zoom* according to the guiding principles of OsloMet. By interviewing the informants on *Zoom,* it was possible to access participants outside the Oslo region and therefore help provide a heterogenous group to the extent possible with such a small sample. This, according to Thunberg and Arnell (2022, p. 761), is a common advantage

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[2] The interview guide is presented in appendix 1.

brought to light when deciding to make use of audio-visual digital interviews. Not only does this make it possible to access informants in other parts of the country, but it is also easier for the participants to take part in the study. All the interviews and correspondence prior to the interviews were done in Norwegian as this was the preferred choice by the participants. It was also considered that this would allow the respondents to answer more freely and precisely to the questions, leaving less room for misinterpretations. However, each participant was asked prior to the interview if they would prefer the interview to be conducted in English, to which they all answered no. As a result of this the direct quotes from the interviews presented later in this thesis are translated by the researchers of this study.

A risk that needed to be consider when deciding to conduct the interviews with the help of *Zoom* was technical difficulties. Thunberg and Arnell (2022, p. 761) reviewed research related to audio visual digital interviews and concluded technical difficulties were an issue or a concern in most cases. When using audio visual digital platforms high bandwidth is needed. Further, Thunberg and Arnell (2022, p. 761) highlighted the issue of experience using the program prior to the interview, however they pointed out the fact that *Zoom* is described as user-friendly.

A risk analysis form was filled out to consider all the factors included when conducting audio-visual digital interviews. Firstly, it was concluded that the informants would have knowledge of digital visual means of communications to the extent that it would not hinder getting the data needed. Further, during the Covid-19 pandemic schools were largely online, hence the informants had been accustomed to digital platforms in the last few years. As there was no way of controlling where the informants logged onto *Zoom,* it was emphasized that the informants needed to be in an environment where they would not be interrupted. This point is made by Thunberg and Arnell (2022, p. 764) as this will arise ethical considerations if other individuals than those who have agreed to participate might be recorded. *Zoom* was tested prior to the interviews, as well as it was made sure that the informants were familiar with the program.

For this research audio recordings were sufficient, and it was not required to record more sensitive data than necessary such as. *Zoom* was accessed with a license from OsloMet, where sound and picture could be recorded. However, *Nettskjema – Diktafon* was used to record sound following the guidelines provided by OsloMet. According to Kvale and Brinkmann

(2015, p. 205) the most common way to record interviews is by audio recording. To take notes during the interview would have been an option, on the other hand this could result in misinterpretations and unprecise data. When using audio recordings, the researcher is able to maintain focus on the topic and dynamics of the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). To make sure no data was lost, two separate devices, that had been tested prior to each interview, were used to record the interviews.

Prior to the interviews the informants were sent an information and consent letter, where they signed the consent form and returned it by email according to OsloMet guidelines. These consent forms were immediately saved to OsloMet's own cloud service to maintain privacy. The informants received a link to the *Zoom* meeting prior to the interview and reminders of the interview time and date. Additionally, the guidelines created by Glesne and Peshkin (cited in Dalland, 2018, p. 80) was followed, as firstly, we introduced ourselves and the project and why we wanted to conduct the interviews. Secondly, the main purpose of the study was explained, as well as how the sample was selected and which implications that could arise for the participants were described. Each informant was also reminded of how their privacy would be upheld during the project and their rights to withdraw or gain insight to the data or finished thesis later. Lastly, to make the participants feel comfortable and therefore get more accurate data, we assured each one that there were no wrong or right answers, and that the conversation would be recorded. It was decided to take notes during the interviews to remember details and follow up questions, this was also explained prior to the interviews. As *Nettskjema – Diktafon* only allowed one-hour recordings, the informants were asked about their experience, education, age, and location before starting the recording, and the responses to these questions were written down as notes.

During the interview the interview guide was followed to the best of our ability. However, it was at times challenging to follow the structure of the guide, and to maintain the spontaneity of the conversation we had to move back and forth to let the informants share their thoughts and reflections. At the end of each interview, the informants were asked if there was anything that felt they did not get to share and their thoughts about the interview. According to Dalland (2018, p. 84) this can help make the interview a positive experience for each participant. When each interview ended, the notes from the interviews were reviewed and immediate thoughts and reflections were added.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

When transcribing an interview from oral to written form the interview becomes structured in a way that is more suitable for further analysis, and this is a part of the analysis itself (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021, p. 206). When transcribing interviews there are many technical and interpretive concerns that one needs to consider (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021, p. 207). As we transcribed half of the interviews each it was important that there was a common understanding on how the interviews should be transcribed. It was decided that the transcriptions should not include every pause or hesitation as this was not relevant for the research question in this thesis. Kvale and Brinkmann (2021, p. 212) stated that there is no right or wrong way of transcribing, however it is important to consider what is suitable according to the research question. To strengthen the reliability of the transcriptions it was decided to check each other's transcriptions to make sure nothing was lost in translation. Kvale and Brinkmann (2021, pp. 211-212) emphasized how two people may interpret the same audio recording in very different transcriptions. This could be the outcome if the audio quality is poor, or if the transcribers have different approaches in their transcriptions. However, as both researchers were present during each interview, and read each other's transcriptions, we did not feel that this occurred in the transcription process. [3]

When analyzing the data material, it was chosen to do a thematical analysis where we looked for themes in the data. Clarke and Braun (2017, p. 297) stated that thematic analysis is used for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting themes from the qualitative data collected. As the purpose of the interviews was to gain a deeper insight in to EFL teachers' perceptions of picturebooks as teaching material, this type of analysis was found the most useful. Furthermore, the flexibility of thematical analyzing made this approach most useful in the projects, as it allowed to access the informants' personal perspectives and reflections (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 298). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 83) mentioned how themes in a thematical analysis can be identified in an inductive or deductive way. As the themes identified in this thematical analysis were strongly linked to the data collected, an inductive analysis was used for this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Moreover, an inductive analysis allowed the coding process to take place without trying to fit the data into an already existing coding frame, making the thematic analysis data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83)

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[3] An example of transcription is presented in appendix 2.

Kvale and Brinkman (2021, p. 216) stated that it is important to consider how one plans on analyzing the data prior to the data collection process, therefore the interview guide was developed with key topics in mind. Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2021, p. 226) stated that coding data involves finding key topics or subjects amongst the material, and later putting these answers in their own category. Having this in mind, the finished transcriptions were printed out and read through and the different topics and subjects were marked in different colors. Each researcher did this on their own first, and later compared their results. The main purpose of this process was to find common overarching categories across the data material. As a result, four overarching categories were found, in which the results were divided into. The categories were "Teachers' views on picturebooks", "The function of picturebooks", "The use of picturebooks" and "Resources". Further on, a table was made for each category, dividing the informants' answers into summaries, and based of the summary's keywords were extracted and thereby a list of keywords for each category was created in the last column[4]. Doing this made it easier to gain an overview of the data material and made the next step of interpreting and discussing the results easier.

## 3.5 Research validity and reliability

In this section the choices that have been made to enhance the research quality of the study will be clarified by discussing the validity and reliability of the research project.

### 3.5.1 Validity

If any research is to be valued as meaningful or effective it requires a strong sense of validity (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 179). Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011, p. 204) stated that there are different methods to improving the validity of qualitative data, where one example is to compare the data from the interviews with previous research and theories on the same topic, which already have been proved valid. By having read different research and theories in relation to the research topic before and during the project, it was found that much of the data in this thesis corresponded with previous research and theories, strengthening the validity of this project. Another way of strengthening the validity is to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible, this includes biases from interviewer, interviewee and the questions being asked (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 204). Arguably because we as researchers are highly interested

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[4] An example of this process is presented in appendix 3.

in this topic there are some bias brought from the interviewers' side. This could weaken the validity of the project, as the informants could be influenced by us as interviewers to provide desirable responses, rather than their true reflections or thoughts. However, to limit this to the extent possible the interview questions were to a large degree open-ended as well as the use of follow-up questions gave the informants the possibility to share their views on the topic.

### 3.5.2 Reliability

When looking at the reliability of research projects the research must show that it would give similar results if it was to be carried out on a similar group of informants in a similar context (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 199).  There were five informants in this study, in which two informants were recruited through their acquaintance to the researchers of the thesis, and three were recruited through Facebook forums created for and by English teachers in Norway. Recruiting informants through forums can be problematized, in which one might assume that the teachers who respond to these types of inquires do so as they are highly interested in the topic, and thereby have additional knowledge, different to what the majority of teachers in Norway would have. However, the teachers who were recruited through the forums all had different understandings of the picturebook genre, in which some of them had never used the genre in their own teaching. It may be argued that since all the informants in this study had different knowledge of the genre of picturebooks, in addition to the variation in their use of picturebooks as teaching material, the reliability did not get weakened by recruiting informants through forums.

Furthermore Silverman (1993), as cited in Cohen et al. (2011, p. 204), argued that one way of strengthening the reliability of the research is to make sure at each informant understands the question(s) in the same way. Another method for strengthening the reliability of the research project is to compare the research data to previous research or with different participants. This is also shown by Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p. 23) who stated that reliability can be shown by testing the same research with other participant groups or different research materials, and if the results are equivalent, it shows high reliability. By having informants of different age-groups, genders, education, and parts of Norway, and having research data that showed many similarities with previous research and theories, one could argue that the reliability of this research project is strengthened.

## 3.6 Ethical considerations

Prior to the interviews all the participants signed a consent form. As stated by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 77), consent protects and respects the informants in their right of self-determination, giving them the possibility to consider the risks and benefits of being involved in the research project. The consent form also stated that the participants could draw their consent at any time, making sure that the ones choosing to participate did so out of their free will.

As the data collection process would include collection of sensitive data such as voice recordings and names of the participants, we had to get approval from *SIKT*. We sent a notification form for data handling of sensitive information. The project was assessed to be in alignment with the rules and regulations regarding sensitive data in the beginning of December 2022. As the interviews were recorded by using *Nettskjema – Diktafon* they were stored on an encrypted cloud service and only accessible by us. All documents and files regarding the participants were coded so they could not be traced back to each participant as well as saved on the cloud service provided by OsloMet. This was all done accordingly to the guidelines provided by OsloMet.

An important part of the ethical considerations in research projects is to focus on preserving the dignity of the participants involved. Whilst this research project did not touch any highly sensitive subjects, there was still a need for the participants to feel wanted and welcomed when participating in the interviews. At the start of each interview, it was explained to the informants that the main goal of the interviews was to gain their insights and reflections on the topic. Furthermore, we tried to reassure the informants throughout the interviews by nodding, smiling, and saying "yes", acknowledging what was being shared.

To ensure the participants privacy, and that the data would be kept safe, a risk analysis was done, factoring in what could potentially happen during the data collection process and when storing the data afterwards. As well as considering the possible challenges of data collection, the possible technical difficulties in the data collection process was discussed and considered before conducting the interviews. Additionally, a data management plan was created to ensure that we upheld the laws and regulations in the duration of the project.

This chapter has explained how the research project was conducted. How the data was collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews, and how the data has been processed

has been described. By explaining the methodological choices and assessments which were made during the process we hope to have made the research transparent, making it possible for the readers to understand the process behind the results which are to be presented in the next chapter.

# 4. Results

In this chapter the results of the project will be presented and described, based on the research question: *What are five teachers' perceptions of the picturebook genre in lower-secondary EFL classrooms and what factors may impact the teacher's implementation of picturebooks in their teaching?* As the data was thematically coded into four different categories, this chapter will be divided into four sub-chapters, based on the categories: "Teachers' perceptions of picturebooks as a genre" (4.1), "the use of picturebooks" (4.2), "the function of picturebooks" (4.3), and "resources" (4.4). The quotes presented are retrieved from the transcriptions and translated by the researchers of this study.

## 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of picturebooks as a genre

At the beginning of each interview the informants were asked to describe their understanding of picturebooks as a genre. The participants had differing answers to this questions, various educational backgrounds, and experience with picturebooks in EFL. Beneath, the informants' background and experience with picturebooks, as well as their descriptions of the genre is presented. In this sub-chapter the results will be displayed with one paragraph dedicated to each informant.

Karoline finished her education five years ago and could not recall having encountered picturebooks during her education. She could neither recall being introduced to the genre after finishing her teacher training. When asked what her understanding of the genre was, she answered *"I was going to ask you when we started, but if we have lower-secondary in mind, I believe that it is a book with a variation of illustrations"*. She later added that she considered the genre to include longer literary texts, i.e., novels and short stories, which was accompanied with illustrations. Furthermore, she explained that she had used *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* written by Sherman Alexie and illustrated by Ellen Forney (2007) in her teaching which she described as a picturebook. She elaborated that it had some illustrations throughout the narrative, but added that these are scattered throughout, and the verbal text could carry the narrative on its own.

Joakim, who had finished his degree two years ago, had first encountered picturebooks in relation to his continuing education in Norwegian as a second language and had seen the transferability to English. Joakim described the picturebook genre as *"Picturebooks, I gather*

can be quite a lot, everything from comics with speech bobbles to traditional picturebooks, with just some horizontal text (…) so somewhat everything that has illustrations linked to text".

Likewise, Jessica had first encountered picturebooks in her continuing education and had not been introduced to the genre in her initial teacher training. Jessica, when asked, answered that "First and foremost, I think that it is children's books. (…) like maybe it is created for those between three and eight years old, that is what immediately comes to mind". When she elaborated how she had encountered the genre she could not recall specifically where she had acquired this understanding and added that she understood it as "children's books or (books with) many illustrations and a small amount of text".

Frank had made use of picturebooks prior to his continuing education. However, after starting his continuing education in the first year English MA program he had what he described as an "awakening" regarding the literature they offered their students. He had also through his continuing education broadened his knowledge of the genre. When he was asked to give a definition of the genre he answered: "It is books with illustrations, and not necessarily text, so pictures and illustrations. Of very much varying lengths".

Kari, who was no longer teaching, had first heard of picturebooks after she left the profession. During her teacher training she had not encountered the genre and commented that she finished her education a long time ago. Additionally, she had studied linguistics rather than literature, but added that she had an interest in literature and spent a great deal of time reading. When asked what her understanding of the genre was, she answered:

> If you had asked me a week ago, I would have probably said that picturebooks are
>
> books where you have actions which are illustrated (…) now, however, I have recently
>
> attended a workshop (…) and there I was explained that picturebooks are books where
>
> the illustrations complement the action, not just books with illustrations.

### 4.1.1 Picturebooks as an all-age genre

When asked whether they found the genre of picturebooks to be beneficial to older students, there was some variation between the informants' answers. Frank answered, "Those who do

not acknowledge picturebooks as relevant for older students lack knowledge about the genre *"*. Further, Frank elaborated that because the themes in picturebooks usually have many layers and are universal in which each reader may find some aspects relatable to their own lives, students of all ages would benefit from reading picturebooks. Whereas Jessica described picturebooks as books intended for children, particularly age 3- to 8-year-olds, she explained that she viewed the genre beneficial for all ages. Additionally, Jessica answered that because of the relatable themes, as well as the various possibilities the genre poses for differentiated teaching, picturebooks would be useful as teaching material for readers of all ages.

Kari had up until recently viewed picturebooks as children's literature and therefore not considered how they could benefit her older students. According to Kari, she had previously believed that the themes in picturebooks would be too childish for her older students, making them not relatable, and therefore not useful as teaching material with her students. However, Kari explained that her students had worked with the novel *Matilda* written by Roald Dahl and illustrated by Quentin Blake (1988), stating that even though this book primarily targeted younger readers, her students found several aspects of the novel relatable to their own lives. Furthermore, Kari explained that as she recently had gained more knowledge on the genre of picturebooks, she saw no issue in implementing the genre as teaching material with her older students. When asked to elaborate Kari explained that:

> I think my students would benefit from it, and the thing with picturebooks is that you
> can use them to, for example, introduce different topics and spark discussions. In
> addition, as they are short in length you can read the entire book in one lesson, which
> is something I believe my students would appreciate.

Joakim had also experienced a shift in his understanding of the genre and went from viewing the genre as children's literature to an all-age genre. Moreover, Joakim explained that whereas he had always found visual elements beneficial with his students, he had previously believed that the themes in picturebooks were intended for young readers. However, Joakim elaborated that he frequently used comics as teaching material, explaining that his students seemed to favor teaching material consisting of illustrations, and therefore decided to try picturebooks with his students as well. Furthermore, Joakim stated that he was pleasantly surprised as he noticed that his students connected to the themes and were able to draw lines from the books to current affairs.

Karoline did not share the view of the other informants and explained that she felt as though she lacked knowledge about the genre. On one hand, she could see why it would be beneficial for her students, but she could not claim to have considered this much prior to the interview. Karoline elaborated that she had used books containing some illustrations in her teaching and mentioned that she believed illustrations could assist her students in their decoding of the verbal text. Further on, Karoline explained that whereas she believed illustrations could assist older students in their reading experiences, she did not feel confident in using picturebooks as teaching material due to her lack of knowledge on the genre.

## 4.2 Use of picturebooks

This section will present how the informants used picturebooks in their teaching, why they chose to use picturebooks and why some of the informants have chosen not to use picturebooks in their previous teaching. When the five teachers were asked if they had used picturebooks in their teaching three out of five stated that they had used them: Jessica, Joakim, and Frank. Karoline and Kari had no experience using picturebooks in their teaching. Karoline had not really considered picturebooks as an option for her students. Kari had up until recently had the same view, however she had just weeks prior to the interview attended a seminar discussing picturebooks. Because of this her view had changed, but since she was no longer teaching lower secondary, she had no opportunity to try this for herself. In addition, most of the informants stated that their view on picturebooks had changed from seeing them as not relevant for their students age-group, to viewing picturebooks as beneficial for all ages.

Firstly, Joakim stated that he often used picturebooks as a supporting tool for low-achieving students if the class was to read literature that was too challenging for some of his students. Additionally, he used picturebooks as models for specific writing traits for low-achieving students. The results indicated that all the teachers who actively used picturebooks in their teaching, used them to teach specific topics. As Jessica mentioned, picturebooks often cover universal themes, which made them easy to implement in English teaching. Additionally, she found the topics covered to be excellent discussion starters for her students. Furthermore, Frank stated that "I found it (picturebooks) very useful as a gateway or entry point to a topic. I recently used *The Rabbits*[5] as an entry point when teaching about colonization, Australia, and

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[5] Written by John Marsden and illustrated by Shaun Tan (1998)

New Zealand". When asked to elaborate on how he worked with this in class, Frank explained that:

> We started with the book, without talking about colonization specifically, and kind of
>
> used what happened in the book and transferred it to real events in history. So, firstly
>
> we read the book and thereby drew lines to real-life events.

In addition, Jessica stated that she had used the picturebook *The Giving Tree* written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein (1964) when she taught about the topic "love and relationships". Jessica explained that she started off by showing pages from *The Giving Tree* (1964) on a screen and read out-loud for her students. According to Jessica, her students got emotionally invested in the picturebook, in which she stated that "Some of my students even started crying at the end of the book. (…) It was very interesting to see them get so emotional, and I could see that the book meant something to them".

Both Frank and Jessica had used picturebooks to teach different topics in their classes. Additionally, Kari mentioned that she could see many potential ways of implementing picturebooks in her teaching, specifically when teaching about different topics. Kari stated that:

> I think picturebooks can be a great tool to spark discussions about different themes and
>
> topics. When working with, and discussing, the topics in picturebooks, it can make it
>
> easier for the students to engage as they often can relate to what is being presented.

As Karoline and Kari had not used picturebooks in their teaching, they were asked if there was a reason for it. Kari stated that whereas she now had gained more knowledge on the genre of picturebooks and thought that they could benefit students of all ages, she had earlier believed that they would be too childish for her students at lower secondary. When asked to elaborate Kari explained that:

> I used to think my students were too old to read picturebooks. I did not think that the
>
> themes in picturebooks could challenge my students, and even though I have always
>
> used illustrations and found them beneficial, I thought picturebooks were for children,
>
> and therefore did not see any relevance in using it as teaching material for my
>
> students.

Joakim explained that the themes and topics in picturebooks makes them advanced as they require different types of interpretation skills. Furthermore, he mentioned that the themes in picturebooks made it possible for his students to draw lines from the book into their own lives, in which his students could relate to the themes on a personal level. Additionally, he explained that:

> When using picturebooks as teaching material, it is important to present the topic in the book and show how it is relevant for the students. By drawing lines between the illustrations and the story, in addition to showing them (students) how the themes are relevant in today's society, picturebooks becomes way more interesting to use as materials with older students, and in my experience, it seems like they like it a lot.

Jessica and Frank had their students work with post-reading activities after reading *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan (2001), and *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (1964). Jessica had let her students choose from a variety of tasks, ranging from creating a new cover for the book, writing alternative endings, and writing poems based of the book. Frank had his students recreate spreads from the book by taking pictures in their local area. Joakim however had weighted the language aspect of the picturebooks and had his students write texts after reading with a focus on transferring specific writing traits in their own texts.

Jessica, Joakim, and Frank had all used picturebooks as a part of interdisciplinary projects, cooperating with other subjects such as history, science and Norwegian. Furthermore, Karoline mentioned that she wished she had the time to plan more interdisciplinary projects, in which she added that if she had more knowledge on different types of literature, such as picturebooks, this could be helpful in her teaching. The informants who had used picturebooks as a part of interdisciplinary projects argued that the universal themes in picturebooks made it possible for different subjects to overlap. Joakim stated:

> (…) History and English, and Norwegian and English are subjects that are easily combined, which makes it possible to work interdisciplinary with these subjects. (…) Even if you use books that are written in English you can easily combine other subjects, as the themes often arises in different subjects as well.

In addition, Jessica stated that she had used picturebooks in an interdisciplinary project about love and relationships, where picturebooks served as the main reading material in their

English lessons. Furthermore, Jessica explained that by using picturebooks as teaching material, her students were able to discuss the topic in class based on the information they gathered from the picturebooks presented. Comparable to this project Frank had used picturebooks as teaching material when they worked on an interdisciplinary project concerning sustainability. Frank stated that the themes and illustrations in the picturebook chosen made it easy to combine different school subjects in their project, as well as the picturebook made it possible to make diverse and creative tasks for his students.

The results indicated that all the informants thought that picturebooks could be used as a tool for differentiation in their teaching. Frank, Jessica, Joakim, and Karoline stated that picturebooks could be used as support for low-achieving students. Furthermore, Karoline stated that many of her students who struggled with longer texts found it useful to use visual aids to understand the story or theme presented. She had recently read an illustrated book where she found that the students who usually struggled with reading now relied on the illustrations presented in their meaning-making. In addition, Jessica stated that:

> I think many students, especially those who have reading disabilities or are low
>
> achieving in the English subject, find it difficult to read longer texts without any visual
>
> aids. (…) I think picturebooks can motivate students who struggle with reading as they
>
> do not contain as much text, are supported by illustrations and that it is something new
>
> that they are not used to in their teaching.

According to the results, most of the informants believed that picturebooks could support low-achieving students. However, only two of them stated that they also could support high-achieving students. When Frank was asked how picturebooks could be adjusted for his students' abilities, he answered "I think they (picturebooks) can be adjusted to fit all students' abilities, from simple vocabulary learning to more advanced interpretation skills where they can draw lines from the illustrations to the topic they are working on". Jessica mentioned how high-achieving students could be challenged to reflect further on the topics in the picturebook, encouraging them to compare the themes in the books to current affairs.

When Karoline was asked the same question, she answered that if she encountered students that were high achieving in the English subject, she would have challenged them by using a different type of literature, rather than picturebooks. In her opinion, picturebooks were too

short and not challenging enough, and she predicted that her higher-achieving students would react negatively to them. Joakim stated that he used to think that picturebooks were too easy or childish for his students, as he considered the amount of text in picturebooks to not be enough. When asked to elaborate, Joakim explained that as he now had obtained more knowledge on the genre of picturebooks this was no longer something he viewed as a challenge, adding that his students had responded positively to picturebooks in their teaching regardless of their level of mastery in the subject.

## 4.3 The function of picturebooks

When asked how picturebooks could be implemented in their teaching the informants pointed to several learning outcomes. All the informants answered that because picturebooks are visual they could benefit their students. However, the function the picturebook could have in their teaching varied.

### 4.3.1 Literacy

Frank, Jessica, and Joakim stated that they used picturebooks to help develop students' literacy. In addition, Karoline and Kari mentioned that they could imagine using picturebooks to develop their students' literacy. Moreover, the informants mentioned that they mostly emphasized developing writing, reading and oral skills.

Jessica, Joakim, and Frank stated that they had used picturebooks when working with developing students' writing skills in their lessons. Moreover, they all mentioned that after their students had read a picturebook, they used spreads from the picturebook or the theme in the picturebook as an entry point for writing tasks. When asked how picturebooks assisted students in developing their writing skills, Frank explained that:

> I think it is easier to write (…) when you are assisted by visual aids, it is easier to
> 
> understand what is happening, and my experience is that it is more engaging and
> 
> motivating for the students, rather than a traditional book without any illustrations.

Both Jessica and Joakim mentioned similar experiences with their own students. Furthermore, Jessica, Joakim, and Frank all stated that when their students were to write own texts, after working with picturebooks, they often used words and phrases presented in the picturebook. Additionally, Joakim stated that:

(…) if the relationship between the verbal text and illustrations are symmetrical or complementary, it makes it easier for the students to understand the context of the book, learn vocabulary and use it in their own text as they are assisted with the visual aids from picturebooks.

When working with picturebooks, Frank, Jessica, and Joakim, found the genre to have a positive effect on the development of their students' oral skills. In various degrees, all the informants claimed that picturebooks could assist students' oral development in their second language. According to Frank "Conversations in English, based on the illustrations in picturebooks or self-produced illustrations has worked well". Furthermore, Frank stated how his students often focused on vocabulary when reading picturebooks and mentioned that he could often observe that students used the words or phrases, from the picturebooks they had read, in their own conversations. Additionally, Jessica and Joakim also stated that reading picturebooks could help students develop their oral skills, as the illustrations assisted their vocabulary retention and sparked their imagination, which made it easier to have conversations in their second language. Even though Karoline had not used picturebooks in her own teaching, she argued that using illustrations to spark conversations had worked well in her class when they read illustrated books. Similarly, Kari also argued that picturebooks could be great conversations- and discussion starters, as the themes usually made it possible for students to draw lines from the book to current affairs or events and feelings in their own lives.

Jessica stated that as picturebooks could be interpreted in many ways, her students could show a different set of skills than just the basic reading and writing of verbal texts. Furthermore, Jessica explained how her students had worked with creative tasks after reading picturebooks, where the students were to make roleplays. According to Jessica, this worked very well in her classes, stating that:

I have students who find it difficult to speak and write in English, but who loves to perform. When using picturebooks as the entry point to their roleplay, they can rely on the illustrations and in my experience, this makes it easier to use words and phrases, often drawing on the picturebooks we have read.

When working with the visual aspects of picturebooks there was an ambiguity amongst the informants. When asked if they had actively worked with reading illustrations, and focused on visual literacy in their teaching, Kari and Karoline answered that they had not thought about it, Jessica and Frank felt that they did it non-intentionally, and Joakim answered that he did this actively in his teaching. Frank explained that even though he had knowledge of how he could introduce and work on developing his students' visual literacy skills, they often focused on other aspects of the picturebooks. Furthermore, he explained that he might had taken it for granted that his students knew how to read illustrations. However, Frank also stated that reading illustrations can be very difficult and is something they as teachers should focus on during their teaching.

Joakim, who was the only one that mentioned that he had actively focused on visual literacy development with his students, argued that reading illustrations requires another set of reading skills to understand the information being presented. When asked to elaborate, Joakim stated that:

> (…) the multimodal way of reading requires the reader to read different layers in order to understand the text. I could tell that my students did not have a lot of practice reading illustrations, whether it was illustrations in a regular English book, a map, or different types of illustrations.

Furthermore, Joakim explained that he had used picturebooks with a lot of illustrations where the students were required to understand the illustrations in order to contain the information they needed to understand the whole story. Joakim explained this as: "(…) I focused on this consciously to help the students practice reading whole text, including illustrations, and not just the verbal text". Even though Karoline claimed she did not work with interpreting illustrations, she did however mention that she had worked with interpreting the illustrations presented in the illustrated book her class had read earlier.

### 4.3.2 Motivation

The results indicated that all the informants, whether they had used, had not used, or wanted to use picturebooks in their teaching believed that picturebooks could motivate their students. According to Frank, his students reported a lack of motivation in their student surveys.

Furthermore, Frank elaborated that by using teaching materials where students can relate to the topic, this would most likely help increase their motivation in school. Moreover, he argued that using picturebooks, rather than traditional coursebooks, could help motivate students as they are easy to understand and often contain universal topics that are relevant for students' personal lives.

Jessica mentioned that because picturebooks are fun and manageable for most students, her students were more enthusiastic, participated more than usual and showed motivation in classes when picturebooks were used as teaching materials. Furthermore, Jessica explained that:

> Usually when my students are to read books, they lose motivation instantly. But when we read picturebooks, I think because there is not as much text, and there are illustrations, and a new type of material, they are more motivated.

When Kari was asked what motivated her students in their English classes, she explained that variation was the most important and motivational factor. Kari explained that her students favored using different types of teaching materials, as well as doing different activities and tasks in class. Even though Kari had not used picturebooks as teaching material in her own teaching, she stated that picturebooks could be very beneficial as teaching material as they are short, easy to use and could spark discussions on topics relevant for her students. Furthermore, Joakim's experience was that his students responded well to the variation of materials and in his experience his colleagues were "old fashioned". He felt as they tended to lean towards traditional teaching materials and therefore picturebooks were a welcomed change.

According to Jessica, Joakim, and Kari, the text density and length of picturebooks made reading more engaging for their students. Furthermore, Jessica argued that as picturebooks are short, students get the possibility to read a whole book in one sitting, rather than excerpts of text which is often presented in traditional coursebooks. Similarly, Kari mentioned that:

> When my students were to read novels, many of them lost motivation as it was a lot to read, and that the reading sessions went on for several weeks. (…) one of the advantages of using picturebooks, in my opinion, is that you can read them in one session, and I think many of my students would prefer that.

## 4.4 Resources

This section will present the teachers answers to the questions regarding access to picturebooks, the teaching materials used other than picturebooks and the time spent when preparing lessons including picturebooks.

### 4.4.1 Access

When asked about the access to picturebooks in their school, the informants' answers suggested that they all thought that there was little to no access to authentic English language picturebooks in their schools. Jessica and Frank, who were using picturebooks in their teaching, had bought these themselves. None of the informants had access to class sets of picturebooks and therefore encountered challenges when working with the genre in their teaching. Joakim explained that the school library did have some picturebooks available, but these were far from satisfactory. The issue of access usually meant that they had one copy of the book for the entire class. Frank said "We have used one book for the whole class. We cannot afford a full class set, (…) the picturebooks we have access to I have purchased as a part of the curriculum for my studies*". When asked how they then worked with picturebooks in their classes most of the informants answered that they had to scan the books and display them on a projector in their classrooms. None of the informants problematized the legal issues arising when distributing these picturebooks i.e., copyright laws. They did however point out that this cannot be viewed as a satisfactory substitute for the experience of reading a physical copy of the book. As Karoline stated:

> In my opinion the learning outcome is bigger when they have access to a physical
>
> copy of the book because they are able to flip the pages and have it in front of them
>
> rather than read from an E-book on their iPads.

Jessica pointed out the fact that she viewed it as an aesthetic experience to be able to read from a physical copy of the book and described how her students largely used tablets during their classes. Karoline and Frank shared this view explicitly and unprompted mentioned how their students mostly used digital resources in all subjects, and Frank mentioned:

> (…) Fully digital is not necessarily a hundred percent positive. I read a study where
>
> they stated that students should read physical books and not just off the screen, and
>
> that includes writing by hand and not on a computer (…) We have a school library, but

we have offered too much digital resources. I believe it is more straining on the eyes

and affects the concentration to read off a screen all the time.

### 4.4.2 Coursebooks and digital resources

All the informants made it clear that they mostly used digital resources in their teaching and shared their views that the coursebooks provided by the schools were not adequate. When asked why they did not view the coursebooks as adequate most stated that the topics discussed were outdated and not relevant for their students, Joakim said:

There are a lot of the topics that feels inadequate for my students, like in one of the

chapters they discuss TV-shows from the nineties and when my students are born in

2008 you have already lost them. It was probably suitable 15-20 years ago, but now it

is my view that they are really outdated.

In line with this statement, Kari stated that the material felt outdated, she also added that the texts provided in coursebooks are "simplified to the point that it becomes too easy, like you are trying to be so pedagogical that it becomes irrelevant for the students". She addressed this issue by searching for material outside the coursebooks. Frank explained how they at his school had focused on what books the school provided and when asked in what way, he answered:

Much of what we have read has been very boring. The students should be able to relate

to what they are learning (…) some forms of literature stands the test of time for

example Roald Dahl and such, but there has been a lot of boring reading material

really. And when you look at the student surveys, we saw that motivation is where we

score the lowest. So, I believe that by providing literature they enjoy a bit more, you

might increase their motivation, this includes picturebooks as well.

Earlier Frank explained how their school library was being updated with more up to date literature with topics which their students would hopefully find more interesting.

In the previous years the informants had been working closely with the implementation of the Knowledge promotion of 2020. Karoline described working with the Knowledge promotion reform as starting from scratch, contrasting her first years as a teacher where she relied more on the coursebooks provided. Now, however, she found that the coursebooks and digital resources provided were not sufficient by themselves. Kari also felt that the coursebooks came up short as they usually were not updated to the current curriculum, in which she turned to websites and other materials as supplement. As the coursebooks were created with either the subject curriculum of 2006 or 1997 in mind, they felt old, outdated, and lacking in some areas. Karoline further added that their school would not buy more books and rather invested in online learning platforms. The informants all explained how their schools relied on digital learning platforms, some as a substitute to the traditional coursebooks and some in addition to coursebooks. And as mentioned prior, Frank did not view this shift as inherently positive.

### 4.4.3 Time

Karoline explained that she felt as the available time in her workday was inadequate for staying updated on current research, and materials for her teaching. Further, she described how her motivation to stay updated on her professional field had slowly decreased from her first years of teaching. When asked if Kari felt that there was enough time during the workday to search for and read literature she stated, "I mean if you are only meant to use time at work you will barely have time to stay updated on your professional field".

Jessica described how she had an underlying interest in literature and that she already spent much time outside of work reading and searching for materials to use. Additionally, she explained how the teachers who already have an interest in literature at her school were the ones who stayed updated on research and available literature. Joakim shared the same experience of having to spend time outside of work, however not to the same extent that Jessica described. Frank was the only informant that felt that he did have enough time during his workday to plan and research new material, but he made note that this could be because he now was a student and held a 60 percent position providing him with continuous input and more time in his schedule. When asked what the biggest challenges were when working with picturebooks Frank answered:

> The challenge is that it must be planned well, it needs to be well thought out if not it is
>
> not going to work. The students will view it as "just" a comic, and they might take it

too lightly, so it has to be put in a context at least. (…) There needs to be a clear purpose and an aim that you present to the students, so that they are able to understand the correspondence. It is not like we are reading Donald Duck.

In general, there was a consensus around the fact that there is little to no access to picturebooks at the schools and that they were granted little to no time during their workday to stay updated and discover new material. Jessica stated "The only thing I really wish for is that we could afford to buy more class sets of books. It is not the same to project an E-book or PDF-file to the entire class; because that is what we end up doing". Lastly, all the informants stated that they believed the material provided in coursebooks or digital resources were not sufficient when working with the subject curriculum of 2020.

The analysis showed that Jessica, Joakim, and Frank, had used picturebooks as teaching material in their own teaching, whereas Karoline and Kari had not. The responses from the informants indicated that picturebooks were primarily used as an entry point when working with a specific theme, in interdisciplinary projects, and as a tool for differentiating their teaching to reach all students learning potential in the English subject. Additionally, the results seemed to suggest that the schools' resources, teachers' personal interest in literature, and time was the main factors for not choosing to use picturebooks as teaching material in their EFL teaching at lower-secondary schools. These categories will now be discussed further in light of the theoretical framework and previous research.

# 5. Discussion

In this chapter the categories presented priorly will be discussed in light of the theoretical framework. As some elements of the categories seem to be overlapping, this will also be the case for the discussion. Firstly, teachers' perceptions of the genre of picturebooks will be discussed. Secondly, the use of picturebooks followed by the function of picturebooks. Lastly, resources such as knowledge, access and time will be discussed.

## 5.1 Teachers' perceptions of the genre of picturebooks

As made clear in the theoretical framework regarding picturebooks, this thesis has made the distinction between illustrated books and picturebooks. Therefore, when discussing the genre of picturebooks it is understood as books where the visual and verbal modes are equal in carrying the narrative with at least one picture on each spread. This thesis does not however specify the different relationships between the visual and the verbal. Additionally, as mentioned earlier wordless picturebooks have been excluded in this thesis.

When looking at the five informants understanding of the genre, both similarities and discrepancies between the informants and the definitions presented in the chapter regarding the genre of picturebooks were noticed. Karoline's understanding of the genre leaned towards longer literary texts accompanied by illustrations, i.e., novels and short stories. Karoline was the only one of the informants who limited the genre to longer literary texts with illustrations, and her understanding was further elaborated when she introduced *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* written by Alexie Sherman and illustrated by Ellen Forney (2007) as a picturebook. According to Hallberg (1982, p. 165) illustrated books are, and should be, separated from the picturebook. As the verbal text primarily carries the narrative, and the illustrations are subordinated to the verbal mode, the book Karoline described as a picturebook would be considered an illustrated book. Looking at her definition considering Nodelman's (1990: 1992) definition, both the length of the book, and the frequency of illustrations in the book, argues that it should be considered an illustrated book. However, as mentioned prior, this thesis does not consider the length of the book to delineate the genre. Even with this in mind, it should be noted that Karoline's understanding of the genre is not the same understanding as this thesis' conceptualization of the genre and would bearing this in mind more closely resemble the definition of an illustrated book.

Joakim's description differs from Karoline's, and whilst her description was rather limited Joakim described it as any text that has illustrations linked to the text. He specifically mentioned comics and traditional picturebooks, further emphasizing the link between illustrations and text. Comics are considered to be their own genre (Saguisag, 2018, p. 323) and a discussion on the relationship between the genre of picturebooks and comics does not fit the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this will not be explored further, and the genres will be considered as separate. Joakim's definition is broad in the sense that it includes any text that has illustrations, however he mentioned what he describes as traditional picturebooks. Why he chose this phrasing is hard to tell without more elaboration, but he indicated that he viewed this as books with illustrations and a small amount of verbal text. Looking at this thesis' conceptualizing of the genre, what corresponds is the link between text and illustrations. On the other hand, he does not specify the frequency of illustrations nor their function regarding the written text. Therefore, it seems as if his understanding of the genre differs from the conceptualization presented in this thesis.

As already established Jessica was the only informant who specifically viewed picturebooks as children's literature. However, she was also the one with the most specific description of the frequency and number of illustrations and text. According to Hallberg (1982) it is the relationship of the visual and the verbal in conveying the narrative of the story that helps us make a distinction between illustrated books and picturebooks. Gregersen (1974) also explains how in picturebooks illustrations and text are equally important. Jessica's definition does not include whether the book needs to be carrying a narrative or not, nor does she specify the relationship between the visual and verbal modes. Compared to this thesis' conceptualized definition of the genre, Jessica's emphasis on the higher number of illustrations does show some correspondence. Yet, her understanding is unclear and excludes the relationship of the visual and verbal modes and compared to the conceptualization presented in this thesis does not separate illustrated books to the same degree.

Frank's description is not far off from Jessica's, but he does include wordless picturebooks. It seems that in his understanding what separates picturebooks from other genres are the illustrations, and in line with Jessica he does not specifically elaborate on the relationship between the modes. As already discussed, in the thesis conceptualization of the genre this thesis emphasizes this relationship on the basis on Bird & Yokota (2018), Gregersen (1974), Hallberg (1982), Nikolajeva and Scott (2006), Nodelman (1990: 1992), and Rhedin (2001).

Additionally, as in the case of Joakim and Jessica, his description could fit that of any illustrated book. Frank's inclusion of wordless picturebooks corresponds with Arizpe (2014) who claimed that they are a part of the genre even though these are left out by others (Gregersen, 1974; Hallberg, 1982; Nodelman, 1990: 1992; Rhedin, 2001). However, even though both Arizpe (2014) and Beckett (2012: 2018) acknowledged these as a part of the genre, as mentioned prior, this is not included in this thesis. What separates his understanding the conceptualization of the genre in this thesis is then the broad definition including illustrated books and wordless picturebooks.

Lastly, Kari had changed her view on the genre. She had initially understood it as books where you have actions which are illustrated and now described it as books where the illustrations complement the action, not just books with illustrations. As far as the informants' descriptions go, this is the one closest to this thesis' conceptualization of the genre. Even though this description does not cover all the elements presented in this thesis, it does showcase the relationship between illustrations and the text. Further, she described how in picturebooks the illustrations are complementary to the action. This relationship is only one of the ways the visual and verbal modes may interact in a text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 14). Nevertheless, this could imply some understanding of the relationship that exists between the visual and the verbal. Likewise, to Jessica, Joakim, and Frank, she did not implicitly differentiate between narrative and non-narrative picturebooks.

To briefly summarize, the informants' understandings and definitions of the genre showed both similarities and differences. Looking at their understanding considering the conceptualization made in this thesis, it was found that whilst the function and relationship of the visual and verbal in meaning-making was emphasized, the informants mostly separated picturebooks on the presence of illustrations. The aim of this section is to discuss and shed light on the differing understandings of the genre, both between informants and the conceptualization of the genre. In the next section, the informants' perceptions of the genre will be further discussed looking at picturebooks as an all-age genre.

### 5.1.1 Picturebooks as an all-age genre

There has previously been a common assumption that the genre of picturebooks were only intended for young readers (Evans, 2015, p. 4; Costello and Kolodziej, 2006, p. 27). Additionally, picturebooks have often been presented as children's literature in picturebook

theory (Gregersen, 1974, p. 243), but in later years picturebooks have been considered to have a dual audience, recognizing that they are also written for an adult audience (Beckett, 2012; Birketveit, 2013; Rhedin, 2001). Karoline and Kari had not used picturebooks in their teaching and was therefore asked if there was any reason for not implementing the genre in their teaching. In response, Karoline stated that she had not really considered picturebooks for her older students prior to being asked to participate in this study. Whilst she mentioned that she could see how the visual elements could help her students decode text, she believed that picturebooks would not challenge her higher-achieving students. Beckett (2012) claimed that even though picturebooks are multimodal this does not make it easier for adults as the books often cover themes that challenge the reader and demands skills for decoding and interpreting the narrative. Joakim and Kari had previously agreed with the view that picturebooks were intended for a younger audience only, but this had changed. What had kept Kari away from picturebooks was the idea that the themes covered would be too childish for her students. As Costello and Kolodzjei (2006) and Evans (2015) claimed, the number of illustrations might cause older readers to assume that the genre is intended for a younger audience, yet Evans (2015) highlighted the often-challenging themes covered by picturebooks. Kari had used the novel *Matilda* written by Roald Dahl and illustrated by Quentin Blake (1988) in her lessons, a novel she described as intended for a younger audience. When asked to elaborate why they decided to use this book, Kari explained that she had found the topics covered to be universal. Now that she had acquired more knowledge about the genre of picturebooks, she found the topics covered to be ideal for discussions with older students.

On the other hand, Jessica defined picturebooks as books that were made for children, but she argued that the genre was excellent as teaching material for older students. Furthermore, Jessica explained that she actively used picturebooks as teaching materials with her lower-secondary students and stated that she found the genre very beneficial for older students. Similarly, Frank stated that picturebooks definitely were beneficial for older students, in which he elaborated that because picturebooks consists of many themes and layers, they can be interpreted in many ways, in which young readers will not be able to comprehend the meaning of the narrative in the same way more experienced readers would. Beckett (2012, p. 2) argued that picturebooks can challenge readers of all ages and showcased the interaction between the illustrations and verbal text in picturebooks which can provide multiple levels of meaning. Further on, whereas young readers do not have enough experience in reading and interpreting multiple levels of meaning, an older audience will be able to comprehend a

deeper meaning of the narrative presented (Beckett, 2012, p. 2; Birketveit, 2015, p. 2). This is also mentioned by Costello and Kolodziej (2006, p. 27) who claimed that many picturebooks particularly suit older readers, as they often are "sophisticated, abstract, or complex in themes, stories and illustrations".

According to Evans (2015, p. 4) there has been an increase in thought-provoking picturebooks, which has challenged the implied age of the readers. Furthermore, Beckett (2012, p. 1) also mentioned how most countries lack attention regarding the fact that picturebooks can challenge readers of all ages. Likewise, Karoline herself pointed to the lack of knowledge as a reason to why she did not view them as beneficial for older students, and Kari and Joakim had only viewed them as beneficial after they had acquired more knowledge on the genre. As there has been an increase in picturebooks with themes primarily made for an older audience (Evans, 2015, p. 4), as well as a lacking attention on the field of picturebooks in most countries (Beckett, 2012, p. 1), a scarcity of knowledge about picturebooks as a genre may have contributed to the assumption that picturebooks would be too childish for an older audience. Accordingly, Frank argued that those who believe that picturebooks are not intended, nor beneficial, for older students lack knowledge about the genre of picturebooks. Furthermore, Frank argued that whilst picturebooks are very suitable for older students, he expressed that there are some factors one need to consider when using picturebooks as teaching materials with older students. Most importantly, Frank expressed that when using picturebooks as teaching material with older students, the lessons need to be well thought out, having a clear purpose and an aim in order for the students to clearly understand the correspondence between the teaching material chosen and learning outcome expected.

## 5.2 The use of picturebooks

When working with picturebooks in the EFL classroom there are several possibilities as to how they can be used. As described priorly, picturebooks can provide an authentic language learning experience that could be difficult to achieve without authentic literature (Wiland, 2000). The results showed that Jessica, Joakim, and Frank all had experience using the genre of picturebooks as teaching material with their lower-secondary students, and this sub-chapter will look further into how the informants implemented picturebooks in their teaching and discuss these practices in light of relevant theories and previous research.

Joakim explained how he had used picturebooks to model language and writing traits for lower-achieving students and how he would search for books which would model the writing trait extensively. The study conducted by Premont et al. (2017) found that using picturebooks that modeled specific writing traits led to the students making use of them in their own writing. Using picturebooks as model texts was also found useful by Villareal et al. (2015) who examined how guiding the students through elements in picturebooks made them apply these traits in their own writing. However, Premont et al. (2017) found that simply providing students with picturebooks with the desired writing trait is not sufficient and that the writing traits needed to be modeled by the teacher for the students to apply these in their own writing. Additionally, in the study done by Villareal et al. (2015) the students were implicitly instructed in the elements of picturebooks, which they later applied in their own text creation. By simply providing students with picturebooks which model the desired writing traits without further instruction, this might not provide the learning outcome Joakim aimed for.

Frank had used the picturebook *The Rabbits* written by John Marsden and illustrated by Shaun Tan (1998) in his lessons about colonization. He drew lines from the book to the topic of colonization, having the students reflect on how this book could be connected to the topic of colonization. Inviting students to discuss the book after reading can according to Roche (2015) have them draw upon different kinds of knowledge, skills and values and creates a new sense of meaning-making. Jessica mentioned that she had read picturebooks together with her entire class which were based on historical figures. Both Frank and Jessica argued that with picturebooks the students expressed a deeper understanding of the topics than they had experienced prior. Accordingly, Miller (1998, p. 380) stated that reading fictional and nonfictional picturebooks can make stories come alive for the readers and therefore can help readers understand abstract historical and geographical concepts. Additionally, Roche (2015) argued that readers engagement with the semiotic meaning of the picture-text relationship could provide students with opportunities to make meaning for themselves about the world around them.

Beckett (2012, p. 16) pointed to the underlying themes in picturebooks, and that these could challenge even older readers. Evans (2015, p. 4) claimed that there has been an increase in picturebooks that deals with thought provoking themes, further adding that these picturebooks would be more suited for older students than younger ones. Frank, Jessica, and Joakim expressed the same opinion regarding the picturebooks they had used. Frank mentioned that

he had used the picturebook *The Red Tree* written and illustrated by Shaun Tan (2001), which focused on themes such as mental health and loneliness. According to Frank, the themes in this picturebook captured his students' interest and worked well as teaching material for this subject. Furthermore, Jessica explained that when her students were to learn about the topic "love and relationships", they used *The Giving Tree* written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein (1964) as the main reading material in their class. Moreover, Jessica stated that the illustrations and themes in the picturebook made for great discussions and made it easier for her students to participate in the discussions on the topic as the students could personally relate to it. As older students can read the subtext of the picturebook, on a different level than younger students, this can stimulate their interest and spark discussion (Baddeley & Eddershaw, 1998, p. 58). Discussing picturebooks can draw upon different kinds of knowledge, skills, and values (Roche, 2015, p. 27). The underlying themes in picturebooks are often universal, and there are often several themes covered by one picturebook (Roche, 2015, p. 101), because of this the informants viewed them as particularly suited for interdisciplinary projects. Haaland et al. (2022) claimed that the complex transdisciplinary character of the picturebook genre made them ideal for interdisciplinary projects. Jessica argued that as the themes in picturebooks often are universal, they can easily connect different subjects to the same theme, making picturebooks a great tool in interdisciplinary projects.

Creating new works of literary texts or remediating the picturebooks into new forms of text lets the students engage with the picturebook on a deeper level (Rosenblatt, 2005). Frank and Jessica both had experience working with post-reading activities linked to picturebooks. When interacting with any form of text the literary work exists in the interaction between the reader and the text (Iser, 1985). This in turn implies that every reading act is unique, and by providing students with post reading activities that are based of this notion can provide students with opportunities to engage deeply with the picturebook. When one engages with the picturebook on this level they are reading it aesthetically, according to Rosenblatt (2005). The counterpoint of the continuum is as mentioned efferent reading, signified as reading mainly focusing on what is to be retained after the reading act. Not only does providing students with post-reading activities give them opportunities to move from the efferent reading stance, but it also encourages it. Both Jessica and Frank observed that the tasks opened for creative pathways, and their students had shown more engagement and motivation than they had done in the past.

The results showed that all the informants believed that picturebooks could be used as a tool for differentiating their students' teaching. As mentioned in the core curriculum, schools must adapt the teaching to the students' abilities, both low- and high-achieving students (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). All the informants mentioned that they believed picturebooks could be a beneficial tool when differentiating for low-achieving students in their teaching, explaining that many students found it helpful to have visual aids when reading a story. Furthermore, Joakim mentioned that students who struggled to read and write in English could be assisted with picturebooks as reading material, as the illustrations could help them in their meaning-making of the story. Accordingly, Bråten (1997, p. 96) claimed that if a reader is to make meaning of a text, the technical aspect of decoding verbal text needs to be present. Besides, Bråten (1997, p. 96) explained how students who struggle to decode verbal text also struggle to remember the content, making it challenging for them to make meaning of what they have read. However, as the relationship between the visual and verbal modes in picturebooks are equal in carrying the narrative (Bird & Yokota, 2018; Gregersen, 1974; Hallberg, 1982; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Nodelman, 1990: 1992; Rhedin, 2001), readers can use the illustrations as support in their meaning-making. Nodelman (1990, p. 13) argued that the visual modes in picturebooks can help the readers decode the verbal text, as the illustrations transfer information to the reader, functioning as a visual aid. Jessica also mentioned that because picturebooks usually consists of a short amount of verbal text, in addition to having illustrations that can support students in their interpretation of the story, picturebooks could help motivate students who were reluctant or low-achieving readers. In line with Jessica's argument, Birketveit (2013, p. 17) claimed that as picturebooks often are quite short, they can assist reluctant and struggling students in the development of their reading engagement, as the manageable length of verbal text can motivate and challenge readers across their age and reading skills.

Whereas all five informants mentioned that picturebooks could be used to support low-achieving students, only Frank and Jessica argued that they could challenge high-achieving students as well. As mentioned by Imsen (2014, p. 21) and Idsøe (2015, p. 13), one way of differentiating in whole-class situations is by using varied teaching methods and teaching materials. According to Frank the students that were high achieving in the English subject could be challenged to interpret the illustrations and use them to draw lines to the topic they were working on. In addition, Jessica mentioned how high-achieving students could try to

find additional layers to the theme and make reflections on how they could be compared to current affairs, or the students' personal lives. Jessica's statement corresponds to the claim made by Roche (2015, p. 101) who mentioned that as picturebooks usually has several themes, each reader may identify different themes in the same book, making the themes in most picturebooks subjective to the reader's interpretation. However, most of the informants stated that they had not thought about using picturebooks with high-achieving students. Furthermore, Karoline stated that if she had students who were high achieving in the English subject, she would challenge them by other types of literature, explaining that picturebooks would be too short in length.

The informants' responses indicated that they all believed that picturebooks could be used as a tool for differentiating in their EFL teaching. However, the results suggested that the teachers believed the differentiation would happen naturally when students reflected and interpreted different layers of the picturebook. As there has been an increase in the demands for differentiated teaching, teachers are being challenged to adapt their whole-class teaching, to fit each student's prerequisites and needs (Idsøe, 2015, p. 13; Imsen, 2014, p. 21; Stuvland, 2019, p. 246). Furthermore, as picturebooks are complex as teaching material, and can be interpreted in many ways, the assumption that picturebooks can be used as a tool for differentiating EFL teaching can be made. However, teachers need to intentionally focus on differentiation in their teaching, both pedagogically and organizationally, for them to reach the goal of differentiated instruction (Idsøe, 2015, p. 15)

## 5.3 The function of picturebooks

Jessica, Joakim, and Frank, who used picturebooks actively in their own teaching, mentioned several possibilities and functions for the genre as teaching material in EFL teaching. In addition, Karoline and Kari, who had not used picturebooks in their teaching, shared their views on what they saw as the possibilities of picturebooks as teaching material. Some of the functions mentioned was using picturebooks as teaching material to develop students' literacies, motivation in the English subject, and using picturebooks as a supplement to the traditional coursebook.

### 5.3.1 Literacy

Joakim, Jessica, and Frank mainly used picturebooks to develop students' literacy skills, focusing on reading, writing, and oral skills. They had all used picturebooks as entryways into writing tasks, which the study of Wang and Lin (2019) showed could provide students with support in their writing. As mentioned previously, Jessica had her students choose between nine creative tasks based of the picturebook they had read. Additionally, Jessica mentioned how her students turned to the illustrations for visual support in their own writing process. Similarly, Premont et al. (2017) noticed how the students turned to the visual elements in the picturebooks for support in their writing process. Even though this study was done with native speakers of English, one can observe that both demographics lean on the illustrations as visual aids. Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017) found that picturebooks served as a great tool for improving students writing skills, as nearly all the students who participated in the project had improved their text-linguistic competence after the extensive reading of authentic picturebooks.

Bråten (1997, p. 96) explained that in order to make meaning of a text the reader needs to maintain the flow of reading, this entailing automatic word recognition. If not, students will struggle to remember what they have read and therefore lose the meaning-making aspect of reading. Kari experienced that her students struggled to maintain their focus in longer reading sessions when reading novels. Karoline described one of her students who was a struggling reader in English and that the student often did not complete reading assignments. As Bråten (1997, p. 96) described, it is difficult to maintain interaction with any literary text if the reader cannot practice automatic word recognition. In the study of Bakken and Lund (2018) they stated that many teachers viewed reading exclusively to the development of language skills and basic text comprehension. Additionally, their study showed that only reading traditional coursebooks did not provide enough depth, as students could miss out on literature that provided insight into other cultures, periods of time and topics which were relevant to their own personal lives (Bakken & Lund, 2018, p. 83). In line with this, the results seemed to suggest that Jessica, Joakim, and Frank all believed that literature that was relevant for their students' lives would motivate their students in terms of reading, which in turn would help develop their students' reading skills. Jessica, Joakim, and Kari also mentioned how picturebooks has an advantage in being short in length, making it possible for their students to read the whole story in one sitting, rather than reading extracts of texts which is often presented in traditional coursebooks. As mentioned by Penne (2010, p. 164) extracts of

literary texts can make the text lose the logical structure, which can cause students to struggle when engaging with the characters and plot. This is also mentioned by Jessica, who stated that her students seemed to favor reading whole text instead of extracts. Similarly, Birketveit (2013, p. 17) argued that as picturebooks traditionally are shorter in length, language learners are not as easily put off, as they often are by longer texts.

According to Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 372) the modern understanding of the term literacy acknowledges that meaning is not only made from verbal text, but also considers literacies that are embedded and embodied in everyday practices, such as illustration, design, performance, and thereof oral skills. The responses from the informants seemed to indicate that using visual aids in their teaching could assist their students in developing their oral skills. This is also mentioned by Birketveit (2013, pp. 17-18) who stated that because picturebooks are multimodal, they give readers an opportunity to both understand and produce additional language, as well as expand their communication skills. Accordingly, Jessica, Joakim, Frank, and Kari stated that the illustrations in picturebooks could make it easier for their students to draw information from the stories, and thereby use words or phrases in their oral communication. Furthermore, Kari argued positively for using picturebooks as conversation or discussion starters. As mentioned priorly in this chapter, Roche (2015, p. 79) stated that picturebooks can be used to spark lively discussions among students of all ages. In addition, Baddeley and Eddershaw (1998, p. 58) argued that picturebooks has the potential to stimulate interest and discussion among older students. This corresponds to the statement made by Kari, who mentioned how she wanted to use picturebooks with her lower-secondary students, and believed that the multimodal aspect of picturebooks, as well as their universal themes, would make for great discussions among her students.

According to the input hypothesis presented by Krashen (1985) language learners needs to be exposed to comprehensible input that is one step above their current level in order to learn a new language. Materials presented in Norwegian lower-secondary EFL classrooms vary and previous research showed that Norwegian teachers relies heavily on coursebooks as teaching materials (Bakken & Lund, 2018; Drew et al., 2007; Wiland, 2000; Penne, 2010; Stuvland, 2019). Coursebooks often depend on extracts or simplified versions of literary texts rather than full length authentic literary texts (Gilmore, 2007; Wiland, 2000; Penne, 2010). According to Long and Ross (1993, p. 45) EFL students who read simplified or elaborated texts had a greater text comprehension than those who read authentic unmodified texts. The

main objective of simplifying texts is to simplify the linguistic features. However, Kari described the texts presented in coursebooks as; *"simplified to the point that it becomes too easy, like you are trying to be so pedagogical that it becomes irrelevant for the students.",* this corresponds with the claim made by Wiland (2000), who emphasized that the voice of the author and plot loses it place when literary texts are simplified or when using extracts. The results seemed to suggest that all the informants agreed with this statement as most of them argued that the coursebooks available to them, if they had any, were not enough to cover the competence aims presented in the English subject curriculum of 2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) they rely mostly on resources found elsewhere.

Jessica also mentioned how her students that were reluctant speakers in their second language seemed to find it easier to speak out loud when they were assisted by picturebooks. Moreover, she stated that when relying on the illustrations when communicating, rather than verbal text, her students seemed more confident in speaking, more motivated and participated more in whole-class discussions. In line with Jessica's argument of using picturebooks to develop students' oral skills, the study by Teresa (2019) suggested that picturebooks would be an ideal tool for eliciting oral language from EFL learners. Moreover, Teresa's (2019) study argued that when EFL learners were exposed to the non-textual elements of picturebooks, the visual elements scaffolded them in their language learning, and developed students' oral language skills and reading comprehension.

### 5.3.2 Visual Literacy

The results indicated that all five informants believed that visual support is of high importance when working with students' literacy development. However, only Joakim stated that he consciously worked on developing his students' visual literacy skills. As mentioned by Hasset and Curwood (2009, p. 270) todays' society is increasingly becoming more visual, resulting in a strong demand for new ways of coding and decoding picture-text relationships. In addition, Arizpe et al. (2018, p. 375) argued that when students gain knowledge on how the visual modes interact and make meaning, their reading experiences will be enriched both cognitively and affectively. Similar to this view, Joakim argued the importance of students' development in visual literacy skills, in which he explained that students need knowledge in how to interpret and draw information from illustrations in order to understand the story being presented. Joakim also stated that because picturebooks are multimodal, they require a

different way of reading, where both the illustrations and the verbal text need to be understood to understand the story.

Frank mentioned that he would like to prioritize the development of visual literacy skills amongst his students, however, he had not yet incorporated this in his teaching. Furthermore, Frank stated that he had previously believed that his students read illustrations naturally, and therefore had not focused on this in his teaching when using picturebooks. This corresponds with the statement made by Nikolajeva (2010, p. 27) who mentioned that there has been a common preconception that visual literacy skills come naturally, and therefore does not need to be trained. However, Felten (2008, p. 61) argued that even though students may acquire some knowledge of visual skills in their free time, their visual literacy skills also need to be developed in their education as these skills are not always connected, nor developed in the EFL classroom.

### 5.3.3 Emotional literacy

Jessica had used *The Giving Tree* written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein (1964) with her students in relation to themes such as love and relationships. The book tells the story of a boy and a tree throughout the boy's entire lifetime and Jessica described this as a very moving story. Her students had gotten very emotional when reading the book, some even started crying. Nikolajeva (2018, p. 114) examined the connection between picturebooks and the development of student's emotional literacy and found that picturebooks can be a beneficial tool in this process. The students that were emotionally evoked by the book seems to have taken an aesthetic reading stance, enabling them to be moved deeply by the narrative (Rosenblatt, 2005). An important part of the school's education mandate is helping students master their emotions, and having them interact with literature where they can emotionally engage is a crucial part of this process (Tørnby, 2020). Assessing what kinds of literature that enters the classroom is important. As Bishop (1990) explained, it is important to use literature which students can either relate to, observe other cultures or experiences, and even become part of a different world, in other words mirrors, windows and doors. Having students engage with literature, taking an aesthetic stance, they can develop their empathy either by personally relating to the story or obtaining new perspectives on situations outside their own personal lives. This classroom situation shows how older students can emotionally engage with literature commonly viewed as intended for children, playing an important part in their emotional literacy development. Accordingly, Evans (2015) argued that in her project the

students could relate to the challenging themes in picturebooks as it related to their personal challenges, or issues. Not only could it help develop emotional literacy, but Gunn et al. (2022) noticed that when literature acted as mirrors the students' interest in reading increased. According to Bishop (1990, p. 4) it is common for young adults to seek for mirrors when they read, which teachers like Jessica does take advantage of when choosing literature. Bakken and Lund (2018) found in their study that lower-secondary EFL teachers primary concern when choosing literature for their classes was that their students would find it appealing and engaging. The other informants of this study also stressed the importance of choosing literature that their students found relatable, and therefore could increase their motivation for reading which will be discussed further in the next section.

### 5.3.4 Motivation

As mentioned prior in this chapter, authentic materials can be motivational for EFL students. Grabe and Yamashita (2022, p. 224) explained how motivation facilitates engagement, and engagement facilitates achievement. Taking this statement into consideration, one can argue that if students are to achieve higher reading skills, the teaching and teaching materials need to increase students' motivation. Further on, several researchers have argued that picturebooks can function as a great tool for increasing students' motivation, as the visual and verbal modes are equal in carrying the narrative, assisting the students in their meaning-making of the narrative (Birketveit, 2013, p. 18; Hallberg, 1982; Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 226; Nodelman, 1992, p. 132; Rhedin, 2001). A claim also made by the informants, in which Frank, Jessica, Joakim, and Kari mentioned that picturebooks could be used as a motivational tool in their EFL teaching, arguing that their students would be more motivated in terms of reading, writing, and talking in English when using picturebooks as teaching material.

However, as discussed previously, the study by Bakken and Lund (2018), showed that EFL teachers in Norwegian classrooms tend to rely heavily on traditional coursebooks as their teaching material. In addition, the findings from the doctorial study by Stuvland (2019) showed that most teachers who took part of the study used traditional coursebooks as their primary reading material. Frank and Jessica mentioned that they favored picturebooks as teaching material over traditional coursebooks, arguing that picturebooks could motivate their students as the visual aspect could assist them in their understanding of the story, as well as the universal and relatable topics would make it possible for their students to draw lines from the narratives presented into their own lives. Additionally, Jessica described how her students

often lost motivation when they were asked to read, explaining that many of her students found it challenging to read whole books, consisting of only verbal text. However, Jessica elaborated that when using picturebooks as teaching material, her students had expressed an increase in their motivation, in which Jessica explained that because picturebooks are manageable in length, as well as they are a relatively new form of teaching material, her students seemed to enjoy working with this type of literature. In line with Jessica's statement, Birketveit (2013, p. 17) argued that as picturebooks contains a lot of illustrations, and have a manageable amount of verbal text, they can assist students' motivation for reading, which in turn will help their development of reading skills. Moreover, Nodelman (1992, p. 132) mentioned that picturebooks offer a different type of pleasure than other types of literature as the number of illustrations, in addition to the verbal text, makes them unique from other types of literature and can therefore help motivate students reading motivation. As authentic materials can provide rich, idiomatic language in a specific context, it makes them a great resource for EFL students (Birketveit, 2013, p 18). Jessica described how her students had showed a new form of enjoyment of literature when she had introduced them to picturebooks. Indeed, Gilmore (2007, p. 107) claimed that authentic materials are motivational because they convey a message rather than highlight the target language. With picturebooks drawing from both the visual and the verbal to create meaning, as pictured in our conceptualizing of the genre, they are a great source of authentic material as the visual can help students use context to understand the verbal text (Bird & Yokota, 2018; Gregersen, 1974; Hallberg, 1982; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Nodelman, 1990: 1992; Rhedin, 2001).

## 5.5 Resources

The English subject curriculum implicitly states that students should encounter a variety of authentic literary texts, including picturebooks (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). However, many teachers still rely heavily on extracts and material provided by coursebooks. Bakken and Lund (2018, p. 82), Stuvland (2019, p. 240) and Drew et al. (2007, p. 327) found, in their studies, that their participants relied primarily on coursebooks in their teaching and their main concern for making use of other literary texts was time and availability.

Contradictory to previous research, the small sample of teachers in this thesis did not rely mostly on coursebooks, but rather on resources and materials accessible through digital platforms, which Frank described as a substitute for coursebooks. One could question why the

informants did not rely mostly on coursebooks, contradicting the findings in the studies presented. Firstly, Karoline described how she had mostly relied on coursebooks in the beginning of her teaching career, but with the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion of 2020 she felt forced to look elsewhere for teaching materials. Secondly, Karoline explained how she felt that the coursebooks at her school were outdated, and struggled to find teaching material that fulfilled the demands of the competence aims in the English subject curriculum of 2020. As Karoline's school was now becoming more digital, the school did no longer prioritize buying physical books, resulting in the teachers relying more on digital platforms. In addition, Frank explained how he did not have access to coursebooks for his students as his school had turned to digital platforms instead. As schools are becoming more digital every year it is not uncommon for teachers to not have access to coursebooks (Gilje, 2021). Additionally, if the informants did have access to coursebooks, Joakim argued that they felt outdated and irrelevant for the students. Frank was critical towards a fully digitalized school and felt as the school was lacking in access to physical books after switching from coursebooks to digital learning platforms. To counteract the lacking coursebooks the informants turned to authentic materials found outside the coursebooks. Gilmore (2007) claimed that authentic materials could provide learners with access to authentic language exposure, which Wiland (2000) claimed is impossible to achieve without authentic materials. Wiland (2000) feared that when students only were exposed to simplified literature and extracts this might stop the students from experiencing the joy of fiction. Additionally, Karoline claimed that the student's learning outcome was bigger when using physical books. The illustrations and the verbal text in picturebooks are what urges the reader to continue reading (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 152).

Nevertheless, the results of this study showed that access and availability to picturebooks was the informants main concern for not making use of these types of literary texts. Accordingly, Stuvland (2019, p. 240) found that the teachers indicated that availability to materials had an impact on their reading instruction. The informants claimed to not base their teaching on the coursebooks provided as they viewed them as unsatisfactory. This claim corresponds to the findings in the study by Bakken and Lund (2018, p. 83), who found that some of the teachers saw it as necessary to search for literature outside the coursebooks. Since 2018 the Knowledge promotion reform of 2020 has been introduced, and the informants argued that this was a factor as to why they did not turn to coursebooks as their main source of material anymore. Additionally, the results showed that some informants, such as Jessica and Frank,

would spend their own money to be able to provide their students with picturebooks, and the access to the genre in their schools was scarce. As reported in Stuvland (2019, p. 240) and Bakken and Lund's (2018, p. 82) studies, there was a scarcity of material accessible in the schools, which seems to be prevalent in many cases already reported. Looking at reasons why teachers do not bring picturebooks into the lower-secondary classroom Birketveit (2013, p. 17: 2015, p. 1) claimed that picturebooks are an undervalued and undiscovered resource in the EFL classroom. Karoline and Kari had never used picturebooks in their teaching and explained that they felt as though they did not have enough knowledge about picturebooks. However, amongst some of the participants it was found that whilst the knowledge was present amongst the majority, the access was hindering the implementation.

In the study of Bakken and Lund (2018, p. 82) they found that what their participants prioritized in their teaching relied on their educational background and interest. Amongst the participants in this project, this was also found to be true. As their educational backgrounds and interest in literature varied, the results indicated that the informants with a specific interest in literature relied largely on authentic literary texts outside the coursebooks. Karoline stated that she had little interest in reading herself, whilst Jessica specifically mentioned that she had always loved reading and spent a great deal of time outside of work researching and reading literature. Additionally, Karoline questioned whether she had studied any specific literature as part of her degree, mentioning that she could not remember if it was a part of her courses in her teacher-education. Similar to Karoline, Joakim described how he had chosen courses that focused more on language rather than literature in his education, which had resulted in him not encountering various types of literature during his teacher training. Kari mentioned that she had a special interest in literature and reading but had not made use of picturebooks in her teaching. During her teacher training and through her work as a teacher she had not become aware of picturebooks as a resource for lower-secondary students. In the study by Drew et al. (2007) they found that formal qualifications did have an impact on how much teachers relied on material outside of the coursebooks provided. In line with the findings from Drew et al. (2007), Jessica and Frank, who both had used picturebooks as teaching material in their EFL teaching, was studying continuing education in English and had been explicitly introduced to picturebooks as a part of their studies. Additionally, Joakim was studying continuing education in Norwegian as a second language and had been introduced to the genre as a part of his studies, in which he had transferred his use of picturebooks into the EFL classroom as well. Karoline, however, who was also studying

continuing education, studied to become a practice supervisor at her school and therefore did not encounter the genre of picturebooks in her continuing education. As Frank, Jessica and Joakim were studying continuing education in English and Norwegian as a second language, as well as being three out of five informants who frequently used picturebooks as their teaching material with their older students, this corresponds to the findings in the study of Drew et al. (2007), suggesting that the formal qualifications of the teachers does have an impact on the teachers' choice of teaching materials. In general, the results implied that whether the participants found picturebooks relevant for their students depended largely on their educational backgrounds and interest in literature.

However, as knowledge of the genre, access, and interest in literature seemed to impact the implementation of picturebooks, the time available was also a concern amongst the informants. Karoline who had not used picturebooks wished for more time to stay updated on the field, and Kari claimed that if you only were to spend time at work to research new teaching methods and materials you would barely have time to stay updated on the professional field. According to the study done by Bakken and Lund (2018) the teachers wished to make use of more authentic literary texts, however they were concerned with the time available. The teachers in the study done by Stuvland (2019) were concerned with the paucity of teaching hours available and mentioned that this had an impact on their reading instruction. Jessica and Joakim also claimed that the lack of time available was an issue for implementing authentic literature in their lessons, and Jessica stated that she mostly found and read literature outside of work hours. On the other hand, Frank did not spend much time outside of work hours. He claimed that he had much experience with teaching and therefore spent less time planning his lessons. Nevertheless, he was the only one of the informants who stated that he had reduced work hours because of his continuing education where he was able to stay updated on his professional field and had access to new teaching materials and methods.

# 6. Conclusion

This thesis has explored five teachers' perceptions of picturebooks in lower-secondary EFL classrooms and their own experiences with using picturebooks in EFL through the research question: *What are five teachers' perceptions of the picturebook genre in lower-secondary EFL classrooms and what factors may impact the teacher's implementations of picturebooks in their teaching?* This research question is two folded, one element looking at teachers' perception and the other at their experiences with the implementation of picturebooks in their own teaching. However, these combined can give an insight into the teachers' perspectives concerning the picturebook genre. This section of the thesis will attempt to answer the research question, first looking at teachers' perceptions.

## 6.1 Teachers perceptions of the picturebook genre in Norwegian lower-secondary EFL classrooms

The teachers of this study had different experiences with using picturebooks in their teaching. It was their view that picturebooks does belong in the lower-secondary classroom, but Karoline was concerned whether they could challenge her students enough. The view of picturebooks as children's literature has been an established view by many, however this view is being challenged by scholars such as Beckett (2012), Birketveit (2013: 2015), Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017), Evans (2015), Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) and Rhedin (2001) to mention some. Frank, Jessica, and Joakim were all passionate about continuing to challenge the view of picturebooks as only intended for younger audiences, and they all saw the multitude of possibilities when reading picturebooks with their students. Kari's retellings are examples of this shift as she had up until recently viewed the genre as intended for younger students but had now, after attaining more knowledge about picturebooks, changed her opinion on the matter.

There are nuances in the informants understanding of the genre and their view on its place as all-age literature. Previous picturebook theory and research presented picturebooks as an undervalued and undiscovered resource for older students (Beckett, 2012; Birketveit, 2015: 2017). However, this statement leaves the question as to why it is undiscovered and undervalued. Frank claimed that not acknowledging the place picturebooks holds in lower-secondary EFL classrooms shows the lack of knowledge about the genre. And whilst this is his take on the matter, this seems to be true for Karoline. She could not seem to grasp how to

implement picturebooks in her teaching and explained that she also felt as though she did not have enough knowledge about the genre. None of the research reviewed in this thesis explored the relationship between knowledge about picturebooks and teachers understanding of the genre. However, Drew et al. (2007, p. 335) found in their study that formal qualifications do, to some degree, influence what teachers relied on for materials found outside the traditional coursebooks. Besides, Jessica, Joakim, and Frank all had realized the potential of picturebooks through their continuing education.

During the interviews the informants who had implemented picturebooks in their teaching were asked how and why they had chosen picturebooks as teaching material. Frank, Jessica, and Joakim had similar answers, in which they mentioned that the themes in picturebooks could be used as an entry point to writing lessons, and in interdisciplinary projects, due to their universal themes, in which students could easily draw lines from the narrative to their own lives, or current affairs. In line with this, Beckett (2012), Costello and Kolodziej (2006), and Evans (2015) also argued that because picturebooks often cover universal and challenging themes, they are particularly suited for older students. Further, Frank, Jessica, and Joakim stated that picturebooks could be used as a tool for developing students literacy skills, including sub-categories of literacies such as visual and emotional literacy. Several studies have been conducted, investigating the relationship between picturebooks and students' literacy development, such as Birketveit (2015), Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017), Sun (2017), Teresa (2019), Villareal et al. (2015), and Wang and Lin (2019). In line with the findings from these studies, the informants in this project stated that picturebooks were beneficial as a tool for assisting students in their development of reading, writing and oral skills. In addition, Joakim stated that picturebooks could be used to develop students' visual literacy skills, arguing that these skills do not come naturally for the students. Accordingly, Felten (2008, p. 62), Luke (2003, p. 398) and Nikolajeva (2010, p. 27) stated that visual literacy skills need to be developed in education, as the visual skills brought from students' out-of-school lives, would not be developed if teachers do not focus on this in their teaching. Jessica also mentioned how her students' emotional literacy skills were developed when her students read the picturebook *The Giving Tree* written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein (1964). By having students emotionally engage with literature, it can assist them in mastering their emotions, in which picturebooks can be a beneficial tool (Nikolajeva, 2018, p. 114; Tørnby, 2020).

All the informants mentioned that picturebooks could be used to differentiate students teaching. Further, all five informants stated that the many layers, and relatable themes usually found in picturebooks made it possible for low-achieving students to develop their skills in the English subject. When asked if they thought picturebooks could be used with high-achieving students, Karoline answered that she believed that the genre would not be challenging enough, thereby favoring other teaching materials with high-achieving students in the English subject. However, Frank and Jessica both argued that the genre could be used to challenge students at all ages and at all learning levels. All the informants stated that picturebooks can be motivational for their students. Accordingly, Arizpe and Styles (2003), Birketveit (2015) and Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017) all mentioned how picturebooks could have a positive impact on students' motivation, as picturebooks often amuse and challenge the reader, as well as the manageable amount of verbal text in the genre and the fact that picturebooks are short in length makes it possible for the students to read through the whole story in one sitting. Lastly, Gilmore (2007) argued that using authentic materials in EFL teaching can be motivational for students, which the informants of this study also found to be true for their students.

## 6.2 What factors may impact teacher's implementation of picturebooks

Three teachers had made use of picturebooks in their teaching: Joakim, Jessica, and Frank. And two had not, Karoline and Kari. Analyzing and discussing the results indicated some factors that could impact the implementation of picturebooks. Not surprisingly, what knowledge the informants had regarding picturebooks also had an impact on the implementation of them. Those with the most relevant continuing education, Jessica, Joakim and Frank, who were studying or had studied continuing education in English and Norwegian as a second language, were also the ones that most frequently used them. The coursebooks provided, if they had any, were described as unsatisfactory and irrelevant for their students. Because of this they had turned to other materials, such as picturebooks. Not only was their coursebooks outdated, but they all worried that their students were unmotivated and hoped that turning to materials outside the coursebooks might increase their engagement and motivation. As discussed, using authentic materials relatable to students' personal lives, and especially picturebooks, can increase students' engagement and motivation.

However, even the teachers with the most knowledge of picturebooks found access to picturebooks to be one of the greatest challenges in their implementation. Karoline, who had not used them, usually relied on material accessible to her. Joakim had found some picturebooks at his school but did not find the selection to be satisfactory. Jessica and Frank had both purchased their own copies, and this led to them only having access to one copy for the whole class.

## 6.3 Pedagogical implications

The Recommendation from the Family – and Culture Committee about the Representative Motion regarding a National Strategy to Increase the Desire to Read (Innst. 258S (2020-2021)) was presented in the introduction of this thesis. This recommendation has led to the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Culture and Equality starting the work to develop a strategy that aims to increase the desire to read amongst the Norwegian population (Regjeringen, 2023). The ministries are working to gather insight into the challenges of reading and developing the desire to read (Regjeringen, 2023). In turn, looking at how to increase students desire to read one needs to consider reading in all subjects. The results of this study indicated that teachers find that students' motivation and engagement for reading might be influenced by what materials they use, and that lower-secondary EFL students find picturebooks to be engaging and motivational. The lack of access to picturebooks amongst the informants proved to be a reoccurring challenge, and some even bought their own copies to be able to implement picturebooks in their teaching. Additionally, according to these results, teachers need to acquire more knowledge of the genre picturebooks to be able to implement them in their teaching. Looking at the results of this study, to be able to increase students' interest and engagement for reading, this strategy needs to consider access to a variety of reading materials in schools and give teachers opportunities to increase their knowledge of literature, such as picturebooks. Additionally, as the subject curriculum in English specifically states how teachers should implement a variety of authentic English language literary texts schools should accommodate for materials outside of the coursebooks or digital platforms provided (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

## 6.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

This study only consists of five teachers and therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to the population. Additionally, it was challenging to find studies that looked at teachers' perspectives and experiences with picturebooks in lower-secondary classrooms.

Therefore, further research on the views of teachers regarding picturebooks in lower-secondary classrooms with a bigger and more generalizable sample is needed. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore how teachers' knowledge of picturebooks may impact to what the degree the implementation of picturebooks is successful. As the results indicated that picturebooks are sometimes used as teaching material without much consideration as to why and how it should be implemented in the EFL classroom, it remains unclear as to what effect this might have on the learning outcome of the students. Lastly, wordless picturebooks are not discussed in this thesis and as mentioned by Arzipe (2014) and Beckett (2012: 2018) these picturebooks can transcend age boundaries and offers possibilities for the lower-secondary EFL classroom. However, only one of our informants included these picturebooks in the definition of the genre. It would therefore be beneficial to explore lower-secondary teachers' perceptions of wordless picturebooks and to what extent these are being used in Norwegian lower-secondary EFL classrooms.

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# 8. Appendices

## 8.1 Appendix 1: Interview guide

<div align="center">

**INTERVJUGUIDE**

</div>

*FAKTASPØRSMÅL*

- Navn og alder
- Utdanning (hvilken, hvor)
- Hvor i landet jobber du nå?
- Hvilken stilling har du i dag?
- Hvor lenge har du undervist?
- Hvilket trinn og fag underviser du på?

*INTRODUKSJONSPØRSMÅL*
**Tema 1: Lærernes forhold til bildebøker**
- Hva legger du i begrepet bildebøker?
- Kan du beskrive hvordan du ble kjent med begrepet bildebøker?
    - var bildebøker et tema i din utdanning?

*NØKKELSPØRSMÅL*
**Tema 2: Lærernes erfaringer**
- Hva er din erfaring med bildebøker i undervisningssituasjoner?
    - Hvis brukt;
        - Når har du brukt det?
        - Hvilke temaer ble de brukt til?
        - Hva ble gjort i undervisningen og hva var formålet med å bruke bildebøker?
        - Har du brukt de i andre fag?
    - Hvis ikke brukt;
        - Er det en grunn til at du ikke har brukt det?
        - Hvilke materialer bruker du?

**Tema 3: Lærernes refleksjoner rundt bildebøker**
- Hva ser du på som muligheter og utfordringer med å bruke bildebøker som undervisningsmateriale?
- Dersom de hadde brukt bildebøker som undervisningsmateriale:
    - Hvorfor valgte du å bruke bildebøker som undervisningsmateriale?
    - Hvilken opplevelse satt du igjen med etter å ha gjennomført opplegget?
    - Hvordan opplevde du at elevene responderte på opplegget?
- Er det noen faktorer som har bidratt til at du har brukt det?

I: Hvordan opplever du at elevene dine har tatt imot bildebøker, når du har presentert de?

IO: De setter pris på det, vi har jobbet mye med det estetiske også. Jobbet mye med å lage egne illustrasjoner, sånn one-pagere, som vi har jobbet en del med i mange ulike fag da. Det man faktisk tegner, og jeg tror nok at bildebøker har vært en inspirasjon der, og produsert sine egne tegninger da.

I: Har dere, når dere har jobbet med bildebøker, jobbet med hvordan å lese bildene, tolke bildene?

IO: Rent sånn teknisk så har vi ikke hatt fokus på det. Jeg har hatt fokus på det i studiene, men det er ikke sånn, tenker sånn fra venstre, notere, lesing og den biten der og diverse virkemidler, men det har vi ikke hatt i undervisningen.

I: Vet du, kan du tenke noe eller reflektere noe om hvorfor dere ikke har brukt tid på det?

IO: Ja, det har vært fokus på tema. Men det er absolutt interessant å ha brukt tid på det. Time and movement, en artikkel som jeg husker vi leste på studiet, der man går veldig detaljert inn på hvordan bildebøker leses og ulike virkemidler

I: Føler du at selv om dere ikke har hatt noe fokus på å lese bilder, at elevene har den kompetansen likevel, at de får det til selv?

IO: Tar det for gitt, burde kanskje ikke gjort det. Og der er det litt kulturavhengig også ikke sant, med hvordan det leses i den for eksempel arabiske verden eller norske verden, tradisjonelle er jo venstre mot høyre ikke sant, men det er kanskje ikke så lett for alle, så note to self, vi bør ha fokus på hvordan vi leser bilder.

I: Har du jobbet noe tverrfaglig med bildebøker?

IO: Ja. I høst så jobbet vi med en bildebok som het the promise, som handler egentlig om sånn race, eco, awareness, miljøvennlighet, eco-citizens ogsånn ikke sant. Så det jobbet vi tverrfaglig med, med samfunnsfag og naturfag.
I: Vil du fortelle litt mer om hvordan dere jobbet med det da?

**Kategori:** Resources

| Informanter | Oppsummering | Meningsfortetting | Stikkord |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Husker ikke å ha blitt introdusert til bildebøker i sin utdanning. Opplever at det er lite tilgang på bøker ved skolen og ønsker å bruke ressurser hvor alle elevene har tilgang på en kopi hver. Kunne selv ønske hun var flinkere til å holde seg oppdatert på hva som er tilgjengelig av ressurser. Opplever at prioritering av tid og «ork» påvirker hva slags innhold hun bruker i undervisning, og at motivasjonen for å sette seg inn i nye opplegg eller ressurser er lav. Kunne selv ønske at hun kunne fått mer påfyll av fagstoff som f. Eks. bildebøker. | - Ikke blitt introdusert til bildebøker i sin utdanning<br>- Tilgang på BB er en faktor<br>- Motivasjon og interesse for litteratur<br>- Mer påfyll av fagstoff | - Utdanning<br>- Egen motivasjon<br>- Tilgang og ressurser<br>- Tid |
| 2 | Ble introdusert for bildebøker i videreutdanningen sin og har selv en stor interesse for litteratur. Har selv gått til innkjøp av bildebøker som hun mener kan brukes i undervisningen. Opplever selv at en faktor for å kunne ta i bruk bildebøker er tilgang på klassesett, og at å vise PDF versjonen på skjerm ikke er et fullverdig tilbud. Mener selv at hun har en egen motivasjon for litteratur som igjen gjør at hun ønsker å ta det i bruk i større grad. Bruker mye tid utenfor arbeidstid for å holde seg oppdatert og finne nye ressurser. | - Videreutdanning har gitt mer kunnskap om bildebøker<br>- Tilgang på BB er en faktor<br>- Stor motivasjon for litteratur<br>- Bruker mye tid utenfor arbeidstid | |
| 3 | Ble først introdusert for bildebøker gjennom videreutdanning i norsk som andrespråk. Har ikke tilgang til bildebøker til alle elevene. Opplever selv at bruk av illustrerte bøker og bildebøker kommer av egen interesse, og bruker noe tid etter arbeidstid på å finne nye ressurser og undervisningsmetoder. Fått noe påfyll fra utdanning gjennom medstudenter. | - Ikke blitt introdusert for bildebøker i utdanningen sin | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | - Mer kunnskap gjennom videreutdanning<br>- Egen interesse for BB og illustrerte bøker |
| 4 | Studerer for tiden lærerspesialist og har gjennom dette blitt introdusert for bildebøker i større grad. Har kjøpt bildebøker som pensumlitteratur på studiet, og skolen har ikke råd til å kjøpe klassesett. På skolen har de hatt fokus på hva slags litteratur de tilbyr elevene og opplever at det har skjedd et skifte på denne fronten. Har ikke tilgang på en bildebok til hver elev, men har scannet og delt i OneNote slik at alle har tilgang. Opplever selv at han ikke bruker mye tid utenfor arbeidstid, men mener selv at dette er fordi han jobber 60% og har jobbet en del år i skolen. | - Videreutdanning hvor han har fått påfyll om bildebøker<br>- Kjøpt bildebøker selv gjennom studiet<br>- Ikke tilgang til klassesett på skolen<br>- Bruker ikke mye tid utenfor arbeidstiden |
| 5 | Nylig fått påfyll gjennom en workshop om bildebøker. Ikke blitt introdusert for bildebøker i utdanningen sin, men er glad i litteratur. Brukt mye forskjellig av graphic novels og andre illustrerte bøker, men ikke bildebøker. Skolene hun hadde undervist på hadde lite tilgang på bøker. Brukt mye tid på fritiden på å lese bøker som brukes i undervisning. Informanten mener at hvis du kun skal bruke arbeidstiden din rekker du ikke en gang å oppdatere deg på fagfeltet. Liker selv å lese og har en egen motivasjon for dette. | - Fått mer påfyll om bildebøker nylig<br>- Brukt mye illustrerte bøker fordi dette var tilgjengelig<br>- Brukt mye tid på fritiden på å lese bøker som kan brukes i undervisning. |

## 8.4 Appendix 4: Approval from SIKT

**◆◆ Sikt**

Meldeskjema / Teachers Views on the Use of Picture books in Lower Secondary Sc... / Vurdering

# Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

| **Referansenummer** | **Vurderingstype** | **Dato** |
|---|---|---|
| 725895 | Standard | 01.12.2022 |

**Prosjekttittel**
Teachers Views on the Use of Picture books in Lower Secondary School

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

**Prosjektansvarlig**
Hilde Tørnby

**Student**
Sofie Wettermark

**Prosjektperiode**
01.12.2022 – 05.06.2023

**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 05.06.2023.

Meldeskjema ☑

**Kommentar**
OM VURDERINGEN
Personverntjenester 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.

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG
Du må lagre, sende og sikre dataene i tråd med retningslinjene til din institusjon. Dette betyr at du må bruke leverandører for spørreskjema, skylagring, videosamtale o.l. som institusjonen din har avtale med. Vi gir generelle råd rundt dette, men det er institusjonens egne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet som gjelder.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

– lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen

- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

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).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

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. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Lykke til med prosjektet!

# Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

## *"Teachers' Views on the Use of Picture books in Lower-Secondary School?"*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se nærmere på bruken av bildebøker i engelskundervisningen i ungdomsskolen.. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

**Formål**
Formålet med denne studien er å få et innblikk i læreres tanker og refleksjoner rundt bruken av bildebøker i engelskundervisningen på ungdomsskolen. Vi er på utkikk etter både lærere som tar i bruk bildebøker i sin undervisning, og de som ikke gjør det. Dette prosjektet inngår i vår masteroppgave innenfor lærerutdanningen ved OsloMet.

**Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**
OsloMet – Storbyuniversitetet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

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

Vi ønsker å intervjue engelsklærere som jobber eller har jobbet på ungdomsskoletrinnet i Norge, der vi har et ønske om å intervjue 4-6 informanter.

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

Vi ønsker å gjennomføre et semistrukturert intervju helst fysisk, men dette kan også gjennomføres digitalt dersom det er vanskelig å få gjennomført intervju fysisk. Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer det et intervju på ca. 45 minutter som vil gjennomføres en gang mellom perioden desember 2022 og januar 2023. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp på lydopptak. I intervjuet vil vi stille spørsmål om dine erfaringer rundt bildebøker, refleksjoner og tanker rundt bruken av bildebøker på ungdomstrinnet.

**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 prosjektgruppen og veileder som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene. Studentgruppen består av Andrea Varan Øien og Sofie Dybvadskog Wettermark. Veileder er Hilde Tørnby. Lydopptak vil lagres på en kryptert ekstern server. Du vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon.

**Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**
Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes når oppgaven er godkjent, som etter planen er etter 2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil lydopptak slettes.

**Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra OsloMet har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

**Dine rettigheter**
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:
- OsloMet ved Sofie Wettermark 40725798, Andrea Varan Øien 46957504 og Hilde Tørnby – Hildet@oslomet.no
- Vårt personvernombud:

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

*Hilde Tørnby*                                                    *Andrea Varan Øien og Sofie Wettermark*
(Veileder)                                                                         (Studenter)

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# Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *«Teachers' Views on the Use of Picture books in Lower-Secondary School»*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐  å delta i intervju

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## 8.6 Appendix 6: Co-author declaration

**OSLOMET**

### Medforfattererklæring

Om to eller tre studenter gjennomfører og/eller skriver masteroppgaven sammen, skal det legges ved et medforfatterklæring, jf. emneplan MGMO5900:

*"For studenter som velger å gjennomføre masteroppgaven som gruppearbeid, skal det gå tydelig fram i egen redegjørelse hvordan arbeidet er fordelt, og hvordan hver enkelt oppfyller kravet om selvstendig vitenskapelig arbeid. Her benyttes en medforfattererklæring som begge eller alle tre parter signerer."*

**Masteroppgavens tittel:**

**Teachers Views on the use of Picture Books in Lower Secondary**

Redegjørelse på hvordan arbeidet er fordelt, og hvordan den enkelte oppfyller kravet om selvstendig vitenskapelig arbeid:

Vi samarbeider om datainnsamling og transkriberer først to intervjuer hver, for så å gjennomgå hverandres transkribering. Kapitelene har vi forskjellige deadlines på, og jobber sammen, men med forskjellige deler av tema. Vi gjennomgår hverandres utkast, kommer med kommentarer og arbeider tett sammen gjennom hele prosessen.

Undertegnede bekrefter å ha bidratt til følgende deler av masteroppgavearbeidet:

| | |
|---|---|
| Prosjektskisse, idé og tema for masteroppgaven | Ja/Nei |
| Praktisk gjennomføring av studien for eksempel innhenting av data | Ja/nei |
| Analyse, drøfting og tolkning av resultatene | Ja/Nei |

Undertegnede har lest og godkjent den innsendte versjonen av masteroppgaven

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Oslo | 31/1/23 | Sofie Wetterman |
| Oslo | 31/1/23 | Andrea V. Øien |
| | | |
| (sted) | (dato) | (signatur) |

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