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Abstract

This thesis explores teacher perceptions of the position and use of literature in the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary school. This is done in order to investigate what challenges new students meet in the transition to university and how this transition can be eased. This is a young field of research in Norway and there have not been done many studies on this particular transition. There has been put more attention to the transition to university during recent years as lecturers at literature courses at the University of Stavanger have recognized that a number of new students seem unable to manage all the reading assigned for the courses at the English one-year study. For this reason, it may seem that there is a need for more openness and communication across the educational system in order to secure a smooth transition for new students.

The research method employed for thesis is qualitative, and semi-structured interviews were carried out with seven teacher informants from three different upper secondary schools in the Stavanger/Sandnes area. The interviews were recorded and written into summaries as the method for presenting the data.

The study revealed that the teachers to a large extent found the focus in the English subject to be on social, historical and cultural topics, suggesting that the English subject is getting closer to a social science discipline. The teachers believed there was too little focus on literature in the upper secondary. As far as the position of literature is concerned, all the teachers were under the impression that many pupils do not favour the reading of literature. It was emphasised across the informants that pupils today often find other ways of being entertained, and that many perceive literature as something forced on them in school contexts, suggesting that a great deal of pupils do not experience pleasure in reading.

The study furthermore indicated that the classroom practice of literature in the upper secondary school is very different from that at the university. Listening to the text in the class, reading in pairs and conducting discussions are seemingly the most frequent ways of approaching literary text in the upper secondary. Furthermore, the pupils would almost never be required to read a text prior to a lesson as nearly all the teachers found it more convenient to approach a new text together with the pupils. Thus the degree of expectations as far as reading is concerned is rather low in the upper secondary.

Another finding suggested that there is a surprisingly low focus on the teaching and importance of reading strategies, seemingly because teachers do not know enough about it or

that they do not find it important enough to devote time for it when they have busy schedules and a list of other competence aims to focus on.

The study also showed that many teachers in the upper secondary do not know enough about how the current teaching is conducted at the university. The teachers suggested more communication between the institutions, visits, introductory courses and more reading in the upper secondary was in order to make the transition smoother.

The results of this project imply that a reconsideration of the position and use of literature in both the upper secondary school and at the university is needed and there needs to be more attention to the benefits and importance of literature both among teachers and pupils. There is also a need for more focus on the particular transition between the upper secondary school and ways of preparing pupils for the academic demands at university level. Finally, more communication between the institutions is seen as decisive for the transition to university to be smoother.

1. Introduction

This thesis is a qualitative study of the position and use of literature in the English subject in the general branch of the Norwegian upper secondary school. Interviews with seven teachers have aimed to get an insight into how they perceive the position and practice of literature in English teaching. This is done in order to look at challenges in the transition from the upper secondary school to university and what measures can be taken to contribute to a smoother transition.

The Norwegian upper secondary school's general branch aims at preparing pupils for higher education. The university experiences an increasing need for a greater insight into both how literature is used in this study-preparing program, and the position of literature as lecturers at the university are sensing a number of new students who struggle to manage the reading assigned for the literature courses.

English courses at university include both grammar, phonetics, linguistics and British and American literature and culture. Many of those who apply for these courses are future teachers.

The educational system needs to be a continuous process with smooth transitions. Similarly it needs to be a system that contributes to the development of the personality and identity of the pupils who become students. The use of literature has multiple functions in teaching contexts. It is important for the development of reading and writing skills, it develops insight into and an understanding of different cultures and it aids a development of identity and personal growth. The former functions may be defined as the tool aspect, which is focused on utilitarianism. The latter two focuses on cultural understanding and personal growth and can be tied to the edification aspect that literature represents.

Pupils who enrol in literature courses at university level need to inhabit a certain set of skills by the time they graduate from the upper secondary school, in order to master requirements they are met with as they approach the university. This transition becomes difficult to master if the university and the upper secondary school think differently about the use of literature, reading and expectations.

1.1 The present study and its aim

The aim of this study is to explore the position and use of literature in the English subject in the upper secondary school in Norway. Seven teachers have been interviewed about their perceptions of the position and use of literature in their English teaching and the transition to

university. An insight into this can provide lecturers at the university with more predictability, as they will have widened knowledge about new students' backgrounds. Furthermore, this insight can contribute to making the upper secondary more aware on the transition to university and hence enable teachers to prepare pupils to a larger degree.

This is a field that has not been subject to much research and hopefully this thesis can contribute to a greater insight into the how teachers in the upper secondary perceive the position and use of literature in the English subject and what challenges they find in the transition to university. The thesis thus addresses the following research questions:

- How do Norwegian upper secondary teachers perceive the position and use of literature in the English subject?
- What are the challenges in the transition to university, and what measures can be taken to ease this transition?

1.2 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2 "Context" initially gives an account of Norwegian upper secondary school and the English subject. Furthermore it presents sections on the historical legitimacy of the English subject, the current curriculum and literature courses at the university

Chapter 3, "Theory" presents the theoretical foundation for the thesis. It elaborates on theoretical aspects of reading and the importance of reading strategies. Subsequent sections focus on three models of literature's function in teaching, materials, extensive reading and reading cultures.

Chapter 4, "Related studies", gives an account of research that is held as central to this thesis. These are studies related to reading, transitional aspects and syllabus, all regarded as relevant for the present thesis.

Chapter 5, "Methods" presents the methodology employed in the project. Initially, this chapter elaborates on the theory related to the qualitative method and the semi-structured interview, eventually explaining the process of selecting informants, creating the interviews, conducting them and finally processing them. It also contains sections on validity and reliability, ethics and limitations to the study.

Chapter 5, “Results”, provides the findings of the study. The method for presenting the data is written summaries of the interviews.

Chapter 6, “Discussion”, includes a discussion of the findings, organized thematically according to the nature of the research questions.

Chapter 7, “Conclusion”, sums up the thesis and draws conclusions about the findings and suggests other areas of possible interest for further research.

2. Context

2.1 Introduction

This project was initiated as a result of a growing awareness at the University of Stavanger that new students seem to be unable to manage all the reading during their first year as students. For this reason, lecturers have asked for more insight into the position and use of literature in the upper secondary. Interviewing English teachers in the upper secondary can provide the university with an insight into what new students bring to university in terms of literature and reading experiences. With this established, the university can adjust the teaching in order for a smoother transition. At the same time, research has shown that Norwegian pupils do not inhabit sufficient reading skills (Hellekjær, 2005) and the trend in the upper secondary seems to be that the English subject is losing its popularity and a growing number of pupils do not prioritize literature courses.

The fairly new five-year educational “lektorprogram” at the university of Stavanger educates teachers and is particularly important in relation to the increased attention to what new students bring to university in terms of literature and reading experiences from the upper secondary. These are future teachers who are often going to work in the lower or the upper secondary school.

Two important concepts in this thesis are *literature* and *transition*. Transition is defined as “the process or period of changing from one state or condition to another”¹ and the particular transition between upper secondary school and university is an important aspect of the present thesis. Although many do not transfer immediately between these institutions, the 3rd grade of the upper secondary general branch is nevertheless the last year of formal schooling for national pupils who aim to start their higher education at a university and hence an important foundation for this. Transitions in general are affected by many factors, one important being the degree of academic ethic of the upper secondary curriculum (Smith and Zhang, 2009:4), but also social factors such as family background, social skills, peers, university lecturers and mental health.

Literature is a complex concept that has diverse definitions. It has not yet received a universal and accepted definition although it has been subject to numerous attempts during history and these have also changed through different époques. Looking into Oxford

¹ Oxford Dictionaries, definition of “transition”

Dictionaries provides several definitions of the word, such as “[t]he result or product of literary activity; written works considered collectively; a body of literary works produced in a particular country or period, or of a particular genre”.² These serve as working definitions, but how we perceive literature today is different from the eighteenth century England’s standards of literature. 21st century understandings of literature are often based on “creative” and “imaginative” writings analogous to fiction. According to Barton (2007:167), the words *literature* and *literary* were not connected to the fiction belonging to a specific culture, but it is only during the last hundred years that it has developed into this. Both words have originated from the notion of being educated. Whereas the word *literary* concerns anything that has to do with novels, poems and short stories, *literature* is often more general, whether it concerns travel literature or the assigned readings for academic courses in for example arts or sciences.

Historically, more ideological criteria would decide what was regarded as literature. According to Eagleton (1983:17), “writing which embodied the values and ‘tastes’ of a particular social class qualified as literature, whereas a street ballad, a popular romance and perhaps even a drama did not”. Eagleton also underlines that fiction was not a prerequisite for a text to be literary, in fact was the 1700 England not sure whether the new novel genre would be regarded as literature. Literature as we know it today, started to develop during what is labelled the ‘romantic period’, when the literary category was limited to creative and imaginative work. Although the term *literature* encompasses far more than only fiction, the term is most commonly used to refer to creative writing. Consequently, in the following *literature* and *fiction* is used more or less interchangeably when referring to creative and imaginative writing. In other words, literature and fiction is used as oppositions to factual texts, often labelled non-fictional prose.

In order to understand the context of the topic in question, this chapter will discuss the English subject in the Norwegian school system, both historically and today, the focus on literature, the curriculum, and English courses at university level.

2.2 Upper secondary in general

After the tenth grade, which represents the last level of the compulsory lower secondary school, pupils approach the upper secondary level. In Norway, all 16- to 19-year olds have the

² Oxford English Dictionary, definition of “literature”

right to upper secondary education. They can choose between vocational education training and programmes for general studies.³ This thesis is concerned with the general branch of the upper secondary, as this is the educational path that prepares pupils for higher education. This branch offers pupils different courses to choose between depending on their interests and future plans. The first year is the same for all, while the second and third depend on which of the three specializing areas the pupil chooses. These are science related subjects, language, social science and economy, and arts.

The overall aim of the upper secondary school is formulated in the Norwegian core curriculum based on the upper secondary education act, § 2 principal aims,

The purpose of upper secondary education is to develop the skills, understanding and responsibility that prepare pupils for life at work and in society, to provide a foundation for further education, and to assist them in their personal development.⁴

These aims are general, meaning that they apply across all subjects. They are the foundation for the rest of the core curriculum, which states that the purpose is to educate pupils according to seven types of human beings. These are the spiritual human being, the creative human being, the working human being, the liberally educated human being, the social human being, the environmentally aware human being and the integrated human being, the latter being all the types merged together. The core curriculum is furthermore the basis for, and an important part of the current curriculum, *Knowledge Promotion*, hereafter referred to as *KL06*. The English subject is the main subject of focus in this thesis, and should prepare pupils for active participation in society in general and help them develop their identity and personal growth. The structure, content and aims of this subject are presented in the following section, which is subsequently followed by a historical look at the legitimacy of the English subject.

2.2.1 The English subject

English was the first foreign language in Norway (Sørheim and Drew, 2009:109) and as a school subject it has been compulsory from grades one to ten in Norwegian schools since 1997. This implies that when pupils approach the upper secondary level today, they have had ten years of English teaching. In vg1, which is the first year of upper secondary school, English is compulsory for all pupils. After that, it is voluntary during the next two years. As

³ Ministry of Education, "Upper Secondary Education and Training"

⁴Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. "Core curriculum"

the first year is obligatory, it serves as a basic introduction to English. The second year English subject offers the course “International English”, while the third year allows pupils to choose between “Social Studies English” and “English Literature and Culture”. This thesis covers teaching of English across the three years of the upper secondary.

According to the Norwegian curriculum, the purposes of the English subject for vg1 hold that it is “both a tool and a way of gaining knowledge and personal insight”⁵. Hence, the English subject is a means to language development such as reading and writing skills, but it does also have an important edification aspect to it. Similarly, as the purposes for the vg1 course, the objectives for English programme subjects in vg2 and vg3, state that,

English is both a utilitarian subject and universally educating. For the individual, having a good command of a language can bolster one’s self-confidence and sense of security and help one’s development in a variety of situations. English literature and other cultural expressions can be a wellspring of experience, satisfaction and personal growth.

This reflects the overall aims of the English subject and indicates that it is multiple in the way that it aims to develop both language proficiency and personal development. Similarly, the use of literature does also develop different kinds of skills and three functions of literature is presented in the subsequent theory chapter. The use of the term *utilitarian* in the above excerpt is regarded as important for the present thesis. According to the Oxford Dictionaries, *utilitarianism* is “the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority”⁶.

Despite the focus on the need for English skills in the society, the status of the English subject is declining as fewer pupils decide to take English in the upper secondary school. It is the course “English Literature and Culture” in vg3 that experiences the largest loss of popularity. From 2009/10 to 2012/13, the number of pupils attending this course has gone from 1900 to 1600, and there are even upper secondary schools that do not offer the course due to this. Lector Maik Griit has claimed in a chronicle⁷ published in the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten, that gates to knowledge are being closed in Norway as pupils abandon literature subjects.

⁵ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “English subject curriculum, Purpose”

⁶ Oxford Dictionaries, definition of “utilitarianism”

⁷ Aftenposten, 2013. “Kunnskapsporter stenges i hele Norge”

The position and nature of English as a second language in Norway is not the same today as it was 100 years ago. It has developed, and been subject to large changes during the last 40 years. It has grown and developed alongside with changes and needs in the society, and has not always been regarded as an academic discipline.

Today, English is an important academic discipline, in fact a complex so as it aims to serve different functions in school. There have been large differences in how English has been approached and how the edification aspect has been viewed. The edification aspect is important during the presentation of the English subject's legitimacy, and according to Børhaug, Fenner and Aase (2005:17) edification is a "socializing process that results in an understanding and the ability to participate in ordinary forms of culture. This involves ways of thinking, the potential of acting and knowledge within a varied field" (my translation).

2.3 The historical legitimacy of the English subject

Fenner (2005: 85-100) explains that the methodological development of the English subject has been heavily influenced by linguistic theory and theories related to language learning. She further suggests a culture clash between a Germanic tradition of edification and a Norwegian democratization process on the one side, and a British utilitarian and methodological tradition on the other, as sources to the dilemma about the nature of the English subject.

In order to understand the position and legitimacy of English as a school subject, it is seen as necessary to quickly look at the historical development. According to Fenner (2005:85-86), towards the end of the 1700's, schools corresponding to the upper secondary today, developed in a direction where they moved from a strong formally enlightening tradition linked to the teaching of Latin, towards a greater focus on classical texts that were considered as ideals, in order to develop own thinking and personality. Already in 1798 Kristiania Katedralskole offered English, together with French and German. Before this, Latin and Greek were the leading languages and they were still superior, even though other foreign languages were gaining influence.

During the 1800's a great debate about methodology was raised, and a utilitarian view developed, focusing on making the teaching as useful as possible. In light of this, Latin gradually came to be regarded as less useful as the language was decreasing in use. The teaching at this point was heavily concentrated around developing the ability of learning by heart, hence the content of texts was not important and the edification aspect was fully formalistic. The thought was that pupils, by reading texts over and over again, would develop

systematic and logic thinking and it was no requirement that the foreign languages could be spoken.

Towards 1900 new views and opinions about language teaching developed. Even though English was removed from schools, Ludvig Kristensen Daae argued that there were other ways of achieving enlightenment, not only through the classic languages such as Latin and Greek. This was subsequently important for the English subject's position in Norwegian schools as teachers such as Jacob Løkke who valued the ability to practice languages, highlighted the importance of personal development and that texts and other material used in school are only means to achieve individuality. Subsequently, English gained a greater importance as it was discovered to be a "real" language, and D.F Knudsen, who introduced the practice of only using English in his classes, was one of the frontrunners of this.

It was not until 1869 that the content in texts used in teaching became important. At this point, authentic texts were used in order to get an insight into "high culture" and develop thoughts and knowledge and hence become enlightened.

Folkeskolen, which was the compulsory 9-year school, corresponding to today's "grunnskole" or lower secondary, did not introduce English nationally before 1936, and it was voluntary at this point. Now, English was regarded as highly important for further education and because of this it had to be both a subject with an academic status, and be manageable to all kinds of pupils. Urban, rather than rural schools chose to implement English first, before it was decided to be a subject for all in 1969 as a result of a democratization process in the Norwegian school system.

As Fenner explains, the subject's content and the ways of teaching are as important for edification as its position and legitimacy. As a new millennium was a fact, more focus was put on the spoken language and there was a process of moving from translation and the concept of learning by heart, and instead implement methods that were more varied. Still, the process of enlightenment was formal, due to a larger utilitarian focus on learning to actually use the English language in conversation. Knowledge about the English speaking world and its culture were at this point left to be dealt with in the higher schooling, which corresponds to today's upper secondary.

The Second World War became important for the influence of English and the ways of approaching the subject in schools. The translation method and the written language was put aside to be replaced by an enormous focus on oral skills. The importance of the ability to speak English was illuminated by the war and experiences in the US. The audio-lingual

method came to play a significant role with its focus on repetition and practice on language patterns and structures. In the period after WW2 the thinking about enlightenment and edification developed differently in lower and higher school systems. *Folkeskolen* put a strong emphasis on the usefulness of the language and for that reason the content in the texts was less important. Texts were only a means to shed light on different language patterns and structures. Higher up in the system, more focus was put on the actual content of authentic texts in order to get an insight into English culture, history and literature. The texts used to serve this purpose were texts that were a part of the accepted canon with an aim of giving pupils an understanding of English speaking elite culture.

Further development in the thoughts about and development of edification led to more similar perceptions across the school system. The subsequent curriculums M74 and *Læreplan for Videregående skole* paid less attention to cultural knowledge and more on reading skills. Now, the texts were simpler and the fiction was supposed to be current. The plan for *Folkeskolen* held that the language was still a means to development of oral skills and the audio-lingual methods were believed to be the most efficient for language learning. The audio-lingual methods consisted in listening and speaking and the goal was to learn a language by using the language and imitate repeatedly (Drew & Sørheim, 2009:25).

Fenner (2005:90-91) further argues that it seems like a paradox that the plan suggests audio-lingual methods where the teacher controls the practice of language and that there are “natural transitions from practiced patterns to spontaneous use of language and independent thinking”. The focus on practice of oral skills in order to develop the ability to partake in everyday situations makes the content of texts rather trivial. Texts and books about the typical English speaking core family’s daily routine were standard texts. This results in, as Fenner (2005:91) explains, “a stereotypical view of the culture that does not reflect the English speaking multicultural society”. Because of the nature of the textbooks in use during this period, Hellesnes (1992) cited in Fenner (2005:91) goes as far as labelling the foreign language learning as a situation of adjustment and not a foundation for genuine edification.

Towards the 1980’s a paradigm shift characterized the foreign language teaching as the *communicative approach* was influencing foreign language teaching in Europe as a result of the European Council’s publication of J.A van Eek’s *Threshold level in a European Unit/credit system for modern language learning by adults*. The subsequent Norwegian curriculums are characterized by this approach, and the focus on language as a means to express meaning. Van Eek influenced the new paradigm and presented a category that he

called optimal development of personality, which consisted of *cognitive development* and *affective development*. The current curriculum was *Mønsterplanen av 87* (M87). The pupil was now supposed to develop his or her own identity. Besides learning about other cultures, there was now a focus on intercultural learning and understanding. Furthermore, the pupil was given a greater amount of responsibility and should be more independent as a result of less involvement from the teacher.

In R94 and L97, the edification aspect in the English subject changed as a result of the communicative approach. In order to fulfil the goal of gaining an insight into the language communication tool and a cultural expression, the focus was now on the use of authentic texts. Now, explicit titles on literary works mostly connected to the canon were mentioned in the curriculum in order to illuminate important genres and epochs. Fenner (2005:94) explains that one may criticize what can be labelled as a high culture ideal of edification, however, one can also claim that through this, the school would give pupils the opportunity to gain an insight into a culture that very few would meet outside school. Furthermore, Fenner claims, it is precisely this cultural capital that is a part of the enlightenment project that the school aims to develop in pupils.

In the 1990's, the requirement that pupils develop knowledge and understanding of other cultures expanded to also involve intercultural thinking. The European Council wished to make this explicit in the classroom by initiating an aim that all foreign language teaching in Europe concentrate on a common project of edification – *European citizenship*.

Although related to the Norwegian subject, this can be transferred to the English subject. It is not longer as easy to legitimate the position of literature as cultural legacy and an essential part of the pupils' cultural identity, according to Skaftun (2009:11-12). Pupils today do not always perceive fictional literature as a source to insight and experiences and there are very few that adopts this perception of literature's function today. This related directly to the position of literature, which is the central focus in the thesis.

2.4 The current curriculum

The work by the European Council was important for the development of English foreign language teaching in Norway. When compiling a new curriculum in 2005, the European framework served as a significant basis for the upcoming plan (Fenner, 2005:99). The current Norwegian national curriculum, *Kunnskapsløftet* or *Knowledge Promotion* (hereafter KL06), was implemented in the autumn of 2006 and is the latest reform in the 10-year compulsory

school and in upper secondary education and training. It replaced the previous curricula, L97 (in the lower secondary school) and R94 (in upper secondary education and training) that were subject to criticism for being too extensive and detailed, for example by requiring the use of certain methods for instruction.

KL06 is a unified curriculum defining expectations to Norwegian pupils' development in the different subjects throughout 1st to 11th grades. It includes the core curriculum, a quality framework, subject curricula, distribution of teaching hours per subject and individual assessment. KL06 provided a distinction between the English subject and the teaching of foreign languages, conceding, as Hellekjær (2007:23) explains, "that English has become an indispensable tool in personal, public and occupational domains".

When compiling KL06 the focus was on making it clearer, less detailed and integrating basic skills, as surveys revealed that Norwegian pupils' reading and mathematic skills were poor (Udir and Hellekjær, 2007:23). The five basic skills in the curriculum are reading, writing, numeracy, oral skills and digital skills. The framework for the basic skills explains that "these skills are basic in the sense that that they are fundamental to learning in all subjects as well as a prerequisite for the pupil to show his/her competence and qualification" (Udir: framework for basic skills: 5). As far as the ability to read is concerned, the curriculum maintains that being able to read "is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and for active participation in civic life" and "[r]eading development requires using appropriate reading strategies to find and process information".

Under *Basic Skills* for the courses "International English", "Social English" and "English Literature and Culture", KL06 holds that, "[b]eing able to read in English involves understanding, exploring and pondering demanding texts [...] It also involves the ability to choose a reading strategy suited to the intended purpose". These extracts from the curriculum are evidence that reading proficiency is important, and that reading strategies are imbedded in the ability to read.

The European council's emphasis on intercultural competence and the focus on language and culture being two sides of the same story with literature as an important component has not been reflected sufficiently in the early stages of KL06, according to Fenner, (2005:99). She emphasises the importance of reading and reflection of literary texts in order for the pupils to develop their own identity. Furthermore she states, "[t]he literary voice is a personal and cultural expression that provides an opportunity to insight into current and past thinking" (Fenner, 2005:100, my translation).

In addition to a framework for basic skills, KL06 introduced competence aims after year 2, 4, 7, 10 and vg2. These are important in the context of this thesis, as this is what the teachers use as a guide to their classroom practice. Skaftun (2009: 15) asserts that the school system is a world that functions on its own premises and that it is not possible to measure learning output after each lesson. He further explains that the school's overall long-term aims cannot simply be reduced to the number of competence aims achieved.

Relating to Skaftun's point about aims, an article⁸ published in the Norwegian newspaper "Klassekampen" in December 2013 sheds light on the enormous focus on competence aims, learning aims and characteristics of achieved aims in the Norwegian school system. The article is written by a dad, whose son is in 8th grade at a school in Oslo. They are about to find out the boy's homework for the coming weeks and the father is surprised by the long documents and all the aims that his 13-year-old son is supposed to master during a three-week period. The father counts the number of aims and the result is 296. He argues that not only are these too many goals, but the formulation is more complicated than one can expect a young teenager to be able to understand. He asserts that this suits the duty-fulfilling girl, and not the boy who is more driven by his own goals and he asks if this is how it is supposed to be. Eventually, he claims that it is tragic that the school system attempts to define pupil's aims in life thus also defining their purposes in life. Although this relates directly to the lower-secondary level, it still illustrates the focus on aims that pupils get used to at an early stage and which is the case until they graduate the upper secondary.

The curriculum consists of four main areas with corresponding competence aims. These areas are *Language Learning*, *Oral Communication*, *Written Communication and Culture*, *Society and Literature*. KL06, compared to the preceding curricula, is less detailed and allows the teacher to choose both texts and methods, as long as there is a focus on the principal aims. As far as the use of literature is concerned, there are very few guidelines in the curriculum. Examples of competence aims are "discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world" or "discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries". No specific authors or titles imply that teachers can decide themselves which texts to focus on in their English teaching, resulting in a large variety of texts used across upper secondary schools in Norway. Contrary to this, the literature courses at the university lists several texts, authors and genres

⁸ Klassekampen, 2013. "Målstyrt ungdom"

that the students are required to read. The following section looks at some of these demands in order to get an overview of university expectations.

2.5 Literature courses at the university

In order to be enrolled in the one-year English study at the university (as of December 2013), no prerequisites are demanded, except from the “study competence” which pupils obtain after the three-year study-preparing branch of the upper secondary. The one-year English study at the University of Stavanger contains six courses, divided equally on two semesters. These are respectively “British and Irish Literature”, “Introduction to the English Language”, “American Literature and Culture”, “English Phonetics”, “Global Literature” and “English Language Use With Didactics”. The first semester contains two literature courses and one course relating to the English language. “British and Irish Literature” gives an introduction to texts, authors and literary periods in British and Irish literature from Shakespeare till today. Relevant genres are drama, prose and poetry. The following section will focus on the literature courses, and not on grammar and linguistics.

The 2013/2014 study plans (as of December 2013) for the courses “British and Irish Literature” and “American Literature and Culture” provide all necessary information about the courses and list the reading in chronological order as far as genres are concerned. The learning advantages are presented first, with focus on knowledge, skills and general competence. The plan for the course “British and Irish Literature” states that when the student has finished the course, he or she is supposed to have acquired knowledge about basic thoughts and periods in English literature from Shakespeare till today. The student should also be able to analyse and understand modern and classic texts within English literature. More generally, the student is supposed to be able to express him- or herself correctly, varied and precisely about literature and society.

Without repeating the entire reading list for the literature courses, this section will quickly present some of the texts and authors that are required reading for these courses in order to compare it to the curriculum for the upper secondary. The reading list for “British and Irish Literature” starts with the Renaissance and the drama *Macbeth* by Shakespeare. Then three poems for this period are listed. Next, the course moves to the restoration and the eighteenth century and texts here are poetry by Milton and Gray, followed by the introduction to Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Then comes the Romantic period, including poetry and prose by authors such as Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The Victorian period requires the reading of four poems, one being

“My Last Duchess” by Browning. The twentieth century lists ten poems, among them “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Owen and “High Windows” by Larkin. This period also requires the reading of the novel *To the Lighthouse* by Woolf and “The Garden Party” by Mansfield. Finally, Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and Kane’s *Cleansed* are assigned for this period. In addition to this, parallel reading about literary history is highly recommended.

A comparison with similar reading lists from the university of Bergen, Oslo and Agder (as of December 2013), shows that the reading requirement at other Norwegian universities is similar to that of the University of Stavanger. A quick look into the literature list of the course “British Literature and Culture” at the University of Bergen shows that many of the texts and authors are the same, such as *Cleansed*, *Frankenstein*, *To the Lighthouse*, Shakespeare, Beckett and Wilde. Also the University of Oslo’s course, “Britisk Litteratur, Innføring” presents a reading list that corresponds to those of the similar courses in Stavanger and Bergen. It resembles both in terms of reading load and types of texts. Here, some authors are Mansfield, Shakespeare, Keats, Woolf, Dickens and Browning, also represented at the other universities. Finally, the University of Agder offers the course EN-103 1 “Britiske studier”. Here, authors such as Austen, Woolf, Shakespeare and Brönte are represented corresponding to the other three university in terms of reading requirement and types of texts.

The reading requirement at the university sheds light on the importance of reading skills and the ability to adjust ones reading according to the text. This is seen as an inherent skill in the transition to university. This is elaborated on in the next chapter, which presents the theoretical aspects relevant for the thesis.

3. Theory

3.1 Introduction

Literacy is one of the foundations for a society to function and “[it] is not just a formal skill; it is also a political decision” (Hirsch 1983). An accurate definition of *literacy* is according to Barton more or less an “impossible task” (2007:18). However, he suggests the use of a dictionary as a starting point. Hence, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *literacy* simply as “the ability to read and write”. Barton explains that it is a rather recent English word, originating from the adjective “literate” and contrasted to illiteracy and illiterate. Now, *literacy* is growing in order to cover more and larger views of reading and writing. Literacy also refers to being “competent and knowledgeable in specialized areas, with terms like computer literacy, economic literacy and political literacy” (Barton, 2007:19). This is naturally a consequence of the modern society and the requirement of new ways of reading and writing.

The English subject in Norway aims to serve various purposes as it is explicitly mentioned in the curriculum that the subject is both a utilitarian subject and universally educating. Literature can be used in the English subject to fulfil these aims as fictional reading develops language skills, cultural understanding and personal development, suggesting that literature is a multiple discipline. As KL06 implemented reading as a basic skill, reading has consequently gotten more attention the past years. This is often legitimized by the need for fluent users of English as a requirement of the modern, global English-speaking society. Furthermore, research has shown that extensive reading of literature is a means to improve language skills. However, extensive reading does also foster enlightenment, cultural understanding and personal development and these are other important aspects of the curriculum. The school is responsible for developing these skills in pupils, and they are important for the ability to function in the society as a whole.

This present chapter provides an account of three different functions of literature, their importance and how they benefit pupils. In relation to this, it is also necessary to look at how these are represented in the curriculum. The first section focuses on using literature as a tool for mere language development, the second on cultural understanding and the third on the aesthetic aspect of literature. First, however, some general theory about reading and reading strategies, as these are important foundations for literacy and the transition to university.

3.2 The reading skill

Reading constitutes a complex and dynamic set of interrelating cognitive and interactive processes. According to Urquhart and Weir (1998: 22), “reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the media print”. Moreover, it is an interactive process in which the reader actively creates meaning between information in a text and his or her own knowledge (Bråten, 1997, cited in Hellekjær, 2005: 60). There are many variables influencing whether or not reading is fluent. Day and Bamford (1998:13-15) present four interactive models of reading, which involves automatic word recognition, lexical access, phonological representation and prior knowledge. The following section will give an account of these, then a brief presentation of reading in a second language is provided.

First, automatic word recognition is the foundation for reading to be fluent and the reading process is eased and done with less effort for the learner with a certain vocabulary. When readers recognize words automatically they inhibit a *sight vocabulary*, which does not guarantee comprehension, but it is a basis for fluency. When a *sight vocabulary* is established, *lexical access* is allowed. This is, as well as the *sight vocabulary*, on the unconscious level. When lexical access occurs, more comprehension is allowed as the reader starts to understand the meaning of the word. Adams (1994:849) cited in Day and Bamford, (1998:13) explains that the context in which the words are placed is important as it “emphasizes those aspects of a word’s total meaning that are relevant to its ongoing interpretation”.

Moreover, the phonological representation provides the learner with a word sequence that he or she interprets while reading a sentence or briefly at the very end of it. It is the working memory that gives the reader the opportunity to keep the words until he or she has created meaning out of it. While in the process of interpreting written text, the readers “work out the collective meaning of the chain of words in memory and that meaning’s contribution to their overall understanding of the conversation or text” (Adams, 1994:856). Finally, the reader’s prior knowledge to the reading activity is important. Day and Bamford (1998:13) explains, “[c]omprehension draws on the reader’s prior knowledge of the language, of the world, of text types, and of the topic”.

As far as the distinction between reading in a first and a second language is concerned, Catherine Wallace (1992), cited in Day and Bamford (1998: 16) explains, “we draw on similar processing strategies in the reading of all languages, even where the writing systems are very different”. Similarly, Hellekjær (2009:199) suggests these reading processes to be more or less the same. Due to the fact that the processes are more or less the same, Koda

(2007:1) cited in Grabe (2009:129) claims, that because second language reading involves two languages and the interaction and adjustment between these, “L2 reading is cross-linguistic and, thus, inherently more complex than L1 reading”. Furthermore, Grabe (2005:63) states that, as far as the L2 development of reading, in comparison to L1, the shortage of “a massive receptive vocabulary that is rapidly, accurately, and automatically processed [...] may be the greatest single impediment to fluent reading by ESL student”. The lack of a sufficient vocabulary is consequently a prerequisite for successful reading to take place. Another important aspect of reading is the ability to adjust the reading according to the type of text. This will be presented in the following section.

3.2.1 Reading strategies

This section presents reading strategies and their importance for successful reading in general, but more particularly in academic contexts. University courses, as opposed to the upper secondary, introduce pupils to longer, more complicated academic texts that it is required that the student read individually. In order to manage such reading, pupils need to know how to adjust their reading to the different types of texts and the varying degree of importance between the texts on the reading list. Whether a student manages to apply accurate reading strategies has a significant impact on the degree of success in the transition from the upper secondary school to university level.

Generally, the ability to read according to the situation we are in is important. In order to read texts based on the nature of its content, length and complexity, but also the aim of the activity, the reader needs to be able to use different reading strategies. Today, individuals are surrounded by print everywhere, whether the reading is intentional, for example when choosing to read a novel, or when walking in the streets or waiting for the bus and reading flyers or the timetable (Grabe, 2009:5).

Grabe lists seven academic purposes for reading which are, *reading to search for information, reading for quick information, reading to learn, reading to integrate information, reading to evaluate, critique and use information and finally reading for general comprehension, in many cases reading for interest or reading to entertain*. Furthermore, in order to label these purposes of reading into types of reading, Davies (1995) who refers to a study by Luzner and Gardner (1979), cited in Nunan (1999:251), lists the following, which corresponds to Grabe’s (2009:7) list:

- Scanning

- Skim reading
- Reflective reading
- Receptive reading

For academic contexts, Urquhart and Weir (1998:100) define reading strategies as “how a student chooses to tackle a specific learning task in the light of its perceived demands”. Alderson (2000:397) cited in Grabe (2009:7) explains, “reading ability can be improved by teaching how to read for different purposes” and this is specifically important in educational contexts. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002:138), the ability to apply reading strategies according to situation is an imperative issue in L2 reading. Strategic readers are those who manage, among other things; to shift goals for reading, thus also succeed comprehension on a higher level. The strategic reader is also able to recognize difficulties in processing, read flexibly, acknowledge discrepancies between what is read and reader knowledge and evaluate whether the reading matches the purpose of reading. These components further extend to the motivation and attitude of the reader (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:18).

As far as the curriculum is concerned, the importance of acquiring reading strategies for successful reading is emphasized in the framework for the basic skills in KL06. It explains that, “reading development requires using appropriate reading strategies to find and process information. Functional reading is therefore characterized by the use of reading strategies adapted to purpose and text type”.⁹ However, this is more or less the only spot in the curriculum for the upper secondary English subject that mentions reading strategies explicitly. Yet, several sections focus on *learning strategies*, which is a more general term. According to udir.no, learning strategies are “steps that pupils use in order to organize their own learning. These are strategies for planning, conducting and assessing own work [...] It also implies reflection on newly acquired knowledge and the ability to exert this in new situations”¹⁰ (my translation). For example, the objectives for the specialization in English in the general study explain that, “[a] necessary part of the work with developing one’s English skills is to [...] develop learning strategies that can provide a platform for life-long language learning”.

To sum up, the four interactive models are prerequisite for successful reading. First, automatic word recognition provides fluent reading and it is eased with a developed vocabulary. The lexical access eases the comprehension, as the learner understands the words.

⁹ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “Frameworks for basic skills”

¹⁰ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “Learning strategies”

Then the phonological representation postulates a chain of words that the learner interprets meanwhile reading, strongly helped by the working memory. Finally, prior knowledge that the learner has about the topic, text types and the language deepens the understanding and provides comprehension. Furthermore, in order to continue developing reading it is important to be able to apply reading strategies according to text type and purpose. This skill is emphasized in the framework for basic skills in KL06 and an important foundation for the transition to university.

3.3 Literature as a multiple discipline in the classroom

The use of literature in the second language classroom has large benefits for pupils and there are many ways of approaching it and different skills to develop with the use of it. The English subject across the three-year upper secondary school is divided into three main subject areas, “Language and Language Learning”, “Communication” and “Culture, Society and Literature”. Literature is only explicitly mentioned in the latter, but it is also a means to language and communication development.

Collier and Slater (1989:2-7) explain that the use of literature in the foreign language classroom was seen as less beneficial in a period influenced by the focus on communication, some years before the publishing of their book *Literature in the Language Classroom* (1989). This was due to the fact that the language of literature was far removed from the spoken language, which was seen as the primary focus in modern linguistics. They explain,

Literature was thought of as embodying a static, convoluted kind of language, far removed from the utterances of daily communication. Because of this it was often tarred with an ‘elitist’ brush and reserved for the most advanced level of study.

(Collier and Slater, 1989:2)

However, they assert that fiction depicts social patterns in the country of the target language and allows the learner to get in contact with his or her own mind as literature “speaks to the heart as much as to the mind” (Collier and Slater, 1989:2). They furthermore list several reasons for using literature in the language classroom. Literature is valuable authentic material, which is enduring rather than ephemeral. It provides the learner with language enrichment and can deepen a pupil’s understanding of the life in the country of the target language. Furthermore, it can transcend both time and culture to speak directly to a reader in

another country or a different period of history. It also incorporates a great deal of cultural information, which again may fulfil important aims in the Norwegian curriculum for English.

The following sections will present three models of the teaching of literature in language contexts suggested by Carter and Long (1991:2-3). They should not be found mutually exclusive although each of them develops different skills and fulfils learning objectives. These are the language model, the cultural model and the growth model. Simultaneously, the curriculum's competence aims will be examined in order to see how the different notions of literature are covered. Due to the research sample of the present thesis, which is teachers from all the three stages of the upper secondary, the curriculum for all the years will be considered, even though it is only the first year of English that is compulsory in the upper secondary.

3.3.1 Literature as a tool for language development

The first model is that which presents literature as a mere tool for language development. In this model, literature is justified because of its significant value for language improvement thus developing linguistic skills. This model enables the learner to access a text systemically in a methodical way in order to exemplify linguistic features and pay attention to the way language is used. This function reduces the literary importance of the text, indicating that the learner engages with the text purely for linguistic reasons and practice and not for the text in itself. Hence, the focus is not on the literary text as a product, rather the process of reading it (Carter and Long, 1991:5-9).

This model is often associated with language-based approaches, which put the pupil in the centre of the teaching and is activity-based in order to focus on how the language is used. However, despite the benefits of the language model, using literature in a too instrumental manner, without any "literary goals" should be avoided. Literature requires that the reader participates imaginatively in the fictional world. When using literature in the classroom, whether it is for language or literary purposes, it is important that the teacher focuses on some of the experience from the literature in order to avoid that the pupils lose the pleasure that reading can provide (Carter and Long, 1991:8-9).

KL06 has a strong emphasis on the development of language skills. After the implementation of the basic skills, there is even more focus on this than before. The use of literature and reading as a tool to develop important linguistic features is illustrated several places in the curriculum. Under the section "written communication" for the English subject

in vg1, it is explained that the pupil shall be able to, “understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one’s education programme”¹¹ and “use patterns for orthography, word inflection and varied sentence and text construction to produce texts”. Furthermore, the subject curricula for the next two years also include aims focusing on language skills, for example, “employ a nuanced, well-developed vocabulary – for both general and specialized use” for vg2 and “elaborate on and discuss distinctive linguistic features of texts from different genres, from different periods and regions” for vg3. The requirement of language skills is also heavily emphasized under the description of the different basic skills, especially for reading, writing and oral skills.

There is a strong emphasis on the language aspect in the curriculum. This can be seen from the fact that this is what is accounted for at first when presenting the objectives of the subject. The curriculum explains that there is a need for fluent users of English because of the language’s global status. The global status of the English language does also call for pupils’ knowledge and understanding of different cultures. This is presented in the following section.

3.3.2 Literature as tool for cultural insight

Using literature within a cultural model can provide pupils with an understanding and appreciation for other cultures than their own across both time and space (Carter and Long, 1991:2). Moreover, this insight and understanding of other cultures are means to a general edification, satisfying several of the aims of the curriculum. The core curriculum explains that, “[a] meeting between diverse cultures and traditions can generate new impulses as well as stimulate critical reflections”. Critical reflection is mentioned in a competence aim for the vg2 subject “International English”, which aims at enabling the pupils to be able to “reflect on how cultural differences and dissimilar value systems can affect communication”. Furthermore, Iversen (2013) in Birketveit and Williams (2013: 212-213) asserts that “[f]iction is [...] an entryway into people and cultures distant from ourselves, and may therefore encourage cross cultural understanding and help build empathy”. Also, Fenner, (2005:95-100) sheds light on literature’s function in developing cultural understanding and respect.

In relation to the cultural aspect, E.D. Hirsch, in his bestseller *Cultural Literacy* published in 1987, claims that reading skills are not solely based on technical proficiency, but a certain and significant amount of cultural knowledge. Hirsch asserts that it is the school’s responsibility to develop cultural literacy in pupils. In order to function in a modern,

¹¹ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “Competence aims after vg1”

democratic society, a person needs a certain amount of cultural knowledge. Also, a democratic society needs inhabitants that have similar such competence in order to function (Larsen: 2005:91-92). Hirsch talks about a “common reader” and refers to Jefferson who emphasized the importance of this in a literate culture. Furthermore, Hirsch explains, “teachers of foreign languages are aware of this interdependency between linguistic proficiency and trans-linguistic, cultural knowledge” and that “acculturation into a national literate culture might be defined as learning what the common reader of a newspaper in a literate culture could be expected to know” (165-166). This can be seen in the light of the presentation of the *liberally-educated human* in the core curriculum, which states that, “[...] such frames of reference must be the common property of all the people – indeed must be an integral part of the general education – to escape difference in competence which otherwise can surface a social inequality and be abused by undemocratic forces”.

Furthermore, Hirsch claims that, “without appropriate tacitly shared background knowledge, people cannot understand newspapers. A certain extent of shared, canonical knowledge is inherently necessary to a literate democracy” (1987). Canonical knowledge comes from the degree of acquaintance with the literary canon. The literary canon is a group of literary works by a set of acknowledged authors that are generally recognized as genuine and important. These literary works are also called classics and according to Lauter (1983:436), “[t]he literary canon is, in short, a means by which culture validates social power”.

There is a heavy focus on cultural competence in the curriculum. This can be seen by looking at two of the competence aims for vg2, which aims to enable the pupils to “discuss and elaborate on cultural and social conditions in several English-speaking countries” and “discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries”.

Fiction also nourishes the development of communicative competence, according to Kjell T. Eirheim. Although published in 1983, and hence subject to M74, Eirheim, in his book *Engelsk: fra studiefag til undervisningsfag*, supports the use of fiction in language teaching in order to develop communicative competence in pupils. He argues that no other media is able to exemplify and tie socio-cultural and linguistic information together to such a degree that fiction does. He further explains, “[I]inguistic phenomenon is contextualized in a unique way through what persons say and think in novels, short stories and plays” (1983:79). Moreover, linguistic features in fiction help depict the character’s communicative intentions, their social

backgrounds, simultaneously helping the reader to identify with this. By doing so, the reader may be able to better know him- or herself, contributing to a personal growth, which is the third function of literature. This will be elaborated on in the next section.

3.3.3 Literature as a tool for personal development

By appealing to a reader's emotions and mind, literature can serve as an "entryway into people and cultures" (Iversen, 2013:212), fulfilling its aesthetic purpose. This further implies that it can be used individually for personal development. Literature can, by the involvement it fosters in readers, both contribute positively in the language learning process, but also help the reader develop his or her identity (Collier and Slater, 1987:5-6). Iversen (2013: 212-213) also explains, "On a personal level, fiction is a chance to meet others". Our individualism nowadays has made fiction into something we enjoy in privacy, rather than a social event, which was more common earlier. According to Carter and Long (1991:3), in teaching, contrary to the language-based approach to literature, this function is more student-centred, aiming at helping pupils develop an engagement with literature, which can foster a personal growth. This "growth" is not subject to assessment in terms of examinations, rather, it is manifested in the degree of engagement with literature that pupils bring with them beyond the teaching context. To illustrate its value and summing up the importance of the reading of fiction, Carter and Long (1991:3) explain,

[t]his personal growth is rewarding because it results from learning how to appreciate and evaluate complex cultural artefacts; it is fulfilling because it is stimulated by an understanding of our society and our culture and of ourselves as we function within that society and culture.

Moreover, this is also emphasised in the purposes of the English subject for vg1. KL06 states that, "[l]iterary texts in English can instil a lifelong joy of reading and a deeper understanding of others and of oneself". Furthermore it claims that diverse cultural forms of expression can provide "personal expressions and creativity". Creativity is also emphasized in the core curriculum, through the development of the "creative human being". The fact that it has gained the position as being one of the seven types of humans that Norwegian education aims to develop, shows its importance in society.

The importance of reading for pleasure is a factor author Neil Gaiman has claimed to be “one of the most important things one can do”¹² in a lecture for the Reading Agency in London. Reading, according to Gaiman, fosters literacy, imagination, empathy and understanding. Gaiman is worried about people’s attitudes towards libraries and holds that our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming. He has argued that fiction fosters empathy as the reading can make you feel things and visit places that are far away from your own world. Similarly, fiction teaches you that you are not alone and that everyone else is an individual just like you.

Gaiman claims that the 21st century humans are obliged to read for pleasure, to support libraries, to read aloud to our children and to use the language as literate children are raised if they are taught how to read and shown that reading is a pleasurable activity. Gaiman is not concerned with what children read, and explains that adults should not declare any type of book as bad for children. The importance of an access to a variety of books is important for the development of readers, especially in school contexts. There are different types of materials to be used and this is elaborated on in the following section.

3.4 Materials

Authentic texts are texts that are written for native speakers. There are both fictional and non-fictional authentic materials, the latter representing for example newspapers (Drew and Sørheim, 2009: 78). In the following, when using the term *authentic*, the focus will be on fictional texts, for example novels, short stories and poetry.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *authentic* as, “of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine”¹³. When teaching English as a second language, authentic material can be suitable, as it is “not fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching language” (Collier and Slater, 1989:3). By using such authentic material, pupils get acquainted with texts that are genuine and not constructed in order to suit a teaching context. Authentic literature reflects the language of native speakers and can help pupils to learn to cope with and get an insight into linguistic structures and conventions they otherwise would not. The opposite of authentic texts are graded readers, or easy readers, especially constructed for second language learning.

¹² The Guardian. 2013. “Why our future depends of reading, libraries and daydreaming”

¹³ Oxford Dictionaries, definition of “authentic”

These texts, in terms of language complexity, are often ranked according to their grade of difficulty (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:78).

Furthermore, authentic texts can be seen in contrast to the reading of constructed texts about the English core family's daily lives that was widespread during M74. Fenner labels this as "tedious reading" and criticizes the lack of authentic material for the development of cultural understanding and the stereotypical view that does not reflect the English speaking multicultural society (2005: 91).

In Norwegian EFL teaching, the curriculum does not put any guidelines to any specific textbooks. The learning objectives and the main teaching areas it constitutes presents what the teaching should incorporate (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:115). However, there is and has been a strong tradition of using a textbook and scholars such as Hellekjær (2005) have found a strong dependence on the textbook. In a survey among 65 lower secondary teachers, 98 % revealed that they relied heavily on the textbook (Ibsen and Hellekjær, 2003). As a result of this, Hellekjær claims that "this means that it is primarily the textbooks authors' interpretation of the English syllabus that is put into practice, not that of the teachers" (Hellekjær, 2007: 25). Drew and Sørheim (2009:124) suggest the use of authentic materials as "excellent alternatives to the textbook".

The use of a textbook does often constitute the reading of short and fragmented texts. Because of this, researchers such as Hellekjær, has advised teachers to use longer texts in the second language classroom, hence the following section on intensive and extensive reading.

3.5 Intensive and extensive reading

Reading is a complex activity that amounts to many different ways of engaging in it depending on the context and goals. Two such categories of reading are intensive and extensive reading which constitute two important reading practices. Intensive reading is focused on shorter texts in order to "exemplify specific lexical, syntactic or discourse aspects of the language or to promote opportunities for reading strategy practice" (Charboneau, 2013:54). Moreover, Tim Vicary, in Birketveit and Williams (2013: 77-78), explains that intensive reading aims at "squeezing every last drop of meaning out of it [the text]".

Extensive reading is, according to Vicary (2013:78) and Day and Bamford (2004: 7-8), the reading of longer texts, often books, in order to grasp the overall meaning. In an extensive reading approach, teachers should provide pupils with varied material on various topics, let the pupils read for longer time periods and make sure that the material is within the

linguistic competence of the pupil (Day and Bamford, 2004:7-8). Similarly, Vicary (2013:78) explains that the material should be easily read by the pupil, “as too many difficult words would put the reader off”. Krashen’s (1982) “monitor theory” states that language is acquired subconsciously through comprehensible input, also referred to as the “i + 1” theory. This theory holds that pupils learn through reading and understanding language that is on a level just beyond their current level of competence. According to Krashen, pupils develop reading skills by reading and guessing the meaning of difficult words as they read (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:27-28 and 48).

Furthermore, Krashen has labelled extensive reading as pleasure reading, strongly supported by Simensen (1987:42) cited in Day and Bamford (2004: 7) who has claimed that extensive reading can challenge “a tendency among foreign language learners always to regard a text as an object for language studies and not as an object for factual information, literary experience or simply pleasure, joy and delight”, summing up the main benefits of extensive reading.

In foreign language teaching, a combination of both intensive and extensive reading is important (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:76). Especially in relation to the transition to higher education, Carrell and Carson (1997:49-50) explains that,

[s]tudents need experience with extensive reading that is required in all academic coursework. Without the experience of dealing with large amounts of text, and without having developed intensively acquired skills and strategies in appropriate ways during extensive reading, EAP (English for Academic Purposes) students will not be fully prepared to manage reading demands of actual academic classes.

Furthermore, in relation to an extensive reading approach, Krashen’s input hypothesis distinguishes between different ways of developing language skills in a second language. He differentiates between acquisition and learning and claims acquisition to be “the dominant mode of language learning” (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:4). Acquisition is what readers “pick up” subconsciously during the reading process and can be seen as similar to the way one learns the native language. In order for acquisition to occur, learners need to be exposed to L2 material in such ways that it is pleasure related. This material should be interesting and relevant to the learner and not focused on structures or grammar. Contrary to acquisition is learning, which Krashen describes as a conscious process with great focus on studying linguistic features such as rules of grammar explicitly (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:4).

According to Krashen, acquisition occurs when reading is pleasure related. This is fulfilled if the reading material is interesting. The 21st century faces new challenges as the ways we read are changing. This is briefly presented in the following section.

3.6 Reading cultures

The information era in which we live is believed to be changing and influencing the ways we read. An increased number of people, especially the younger, are reading digitally on screens and there is a decline in the reading of the printed book and regular literary genres such as poems, plays and novels (Hayles, 2010:62). In addition to reading being a basic skill, the pupil today is supposed to be able to use digital tools and media and process information through these. The framework for the basic skills holds that, “digital skills are a prerequisite for further learning and for active participation in a life and a society in constant change”¹⁴. Although the use of technology and digital reading is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is still seen as relevant as pupils today are constantly involved with computers, mobile phones and social media. With this comes a constant use of the reading skill, but this is more fragmented and diverse and all the ways of being entertained through the various social media may have implication for the interest in reading. What is for sure is that it changes the ways we read and possibly what we read.

Author Nicolas Carr (2008) has expressed a worry that these changed ways of reading may have negative implications for our academic levels. In the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”¹⁵ he is using himself as an example,

Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I’d spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That’s rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do.

These features of 21st century reading are likely to be found among others than Carr. Furthermore, the challenge is to incorporate new ways of reading into teaching in order to take advantage of the new technology in the twenty-first-century literacies. Hayles (2010: 78) explains that, “[r]eading has always constituted complex and diverse practices. Now it is time

¹⁴ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “Framework for basic skills”

¹⁵ The Atlantic, 2008. “Is Google Making us Stupid?”

to rethink what reading is and how it works in the rich mixtures of words and images, sounds and imagination, graphics and letters”.

4. Related studies

4.1 Introduction

The transition from the upper secondary level to university is a period that has been subject to little research in Norway. Nevertheless, some studies on this particular transition have been conducted in other parts of the world in order to find solutions to the gap between the educational institutions. The number of research conducted on the use of literature in this particular transition is especially scarce.

As far as reading is concerned, the findings of Hellekjær, which has apprehended the reading skills among Norwegian pupils at the end of the upper secondary level, have implications for teaching of English in general and are central to this thesis as well. This chapter presents an overview of relevant studies within various fields that are significant for this study. These focuses on reading, transitions and curriculum, and they are all seen as important factors for the transition from the upper secondary level to university.

4.2 Reading proficiency

The PISA OECD surveys were the first surveys to raise attention to the low degree of reading proficiency among pupils in OECD countries. OECD is the organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. PISA is short for the “Programme for International Student Assessment” and measures to which degree 15-year-old pupils inhabit “knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies”¹⁶.

Nationally, Hellekjær’s doctorate degree (2005) is a study of whether and to what extent the English teaching in Norwegian upper secondary school prepares pupils for further studies at university level. The aim of the project was to gain an insight into pupils’ abilities to read academic texts, which they will meet when transferring from upper secondary level to university. The project targeted reading of English academic texts in general, independent of study program, as more academic courses use English texts, although there are Norwegian alternatives. The project was conducted before KL06 and shed light on the need for better reading skills among Norwegian pupils. Consequently, this research project examines the R94 curriculum for the upper secondary school. The study as a whole, and the results are highly relevant for the present project, and teaching of English in the upper secondary.

¹⁶ OECD, “PISA results 2012”

Hellekjær used a sample of 217 graduate pupils from seven different upper secondary schools in Norway. The pupils were asked to do the reading test “Academic English Reading Module” connected to IELTS (International English Language Testing System) which, together with TOEFL, are tests that pupils need to take in order to be enrolled in English universities. The test results in IELTS are ranged on a scale from Band 1 to Band 9. Pupils who achieve below Band 6 do not usually qualify for admission.

The results of the test point in a negative direction as far as reading proficiency and English instruction in the upper secondary are concerned. The results are evidence that pupils struggle with reading in English as two thirds of the pupils scored below Band 6, equalling no admission to British universities. Furthermore, Hellekjær suggests that the results show that pupils have problems with unknown vocabulary and a “counterproductive tendency towards careful reading for detailed information” (Hellekjær: 2005:247). Also, he mentions a lack of reading extensively. As far as the transitional aspect is concerned, Hellekjær explains (2005:244),

“[...] many students do not manage the transition to higher education. I have suggested that poor reading proficiency in English and possibly Norwegian as well, is at least partly to blame. One problem is how students who are used to reading carefully to achieve a detailed understanding of a text, will react to suddenly having to read long texts rapidly and independently as is necessary at university level.

Hellekjær’s suggestion that Norwegian pupils read in counterproductive ways is based on a claim that they often read for details in shorter texts. He claims a too extensive use of the assigned textbook to be one reason for this. The nature of the textbook provides the pupils with a range of shorter texts, consequently resulting in the application of intensive reading practices and too much focus on details. This may take away pupils’ experience with the joy and mastery of completing longer texts.

Research shows that Norwegian ESL teaching relies too much on the textbook. Although done on the primary level, Charboneau (2012) conducted a national study targeting EFL teachers and reading instruction. The questionnaires for this qualitative study were sent to 1000 schools, 716 of these being primary and resulted in 370 responses. Charboneau reports that 61,8 % of the teachers used a textbook as the basis for English reading instruction. In comparison, and interestingly enough, only 29,7 % of the Norwegian teachers reported the

same. Charboneau also explains that the literacy approach teachers used in the Norwegian subject were applied to the English subject, suggesting that the English subject is adopting practices from the Norwegian subject. Also, only one third of the teachers reported that they had enough reading material to suit the different levels of pupils implying that Norwegian schools often lack books on different levels, such as “graded” or “easy readers”. Hellekjær suggests the use of longer texts in EFL teaching and the next section presents some relevant research done on the effects of extensive reading.

4.3 The effects of extensive reading

Extensive reading for pleasure and interest as presented in the theory chapter, has through a range of studies proved to be highly beneficial for the development of reading skills in a foreign language. The following section will describe some research projects that are evidence of this. A comparative study done by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) targeted two classes of Fijian pupils, where one class was in a so-called book immersion programme, while the other was taught the audio-lingual method. A book immersion class is when pupils read books all the time whereas the audio-lingual method focuses on listening to speech and hence learn language from imitation and practice (Drew and Sørheim, 2009:25).

In their study, Elley and Mangubhai had a sample of 380 pupils in class four and five from rural areas on Fiji. The control group consisted of 234 pupils. The project found that after eight months, “pupils exposed to many stories progressed in reading and listening comprehension at twice the normal rate” (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983:53).

Similarly, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) conducted a three-month extensive reading ESL programme in the UK where they used graded readers with the aim of investigating if reading for pleasure would foster a development of linguistic skills in reading and writing. The project was inspired by Krashen’s Input hypothesis, aiming at letting the pupils read for pleasure and interest without the requirement of subsequent written tasks. The experimental study showed that extensive reading does have an impact on EFL learner’s linguistic proficiency and the results of the experiment supports Krashen’s acquisition and input hypotheses

Although research suggest extensive reading for many reasons, a varied approach to literature and reading during the school years is favoured. Carrell and Carson (1997:49-50) argues that in an EAP setting (English for Academic Purposes) there is a need for both intensive and extensive reading and that such skills need to be developed before the students

reaches the academic setting, implying that it is the responsibility of the upper secondary school.

4.4 Transition

Smith and Zhang (2009) have conducted a research project on the transition of high school students to college. The aim of the study was to assess whether students who had an academic ethic in high school did better during their first year at college than those who did not. The academic ethic is explained as the “academic intensity and quality of one’s high school curriculum and the participation in classes that demand more of them in key areas such as reading and writing”

The research project found that the academic ethic is decisive for the individual pupil’s ability to go through a successful transition to university level. Those students who had a higher academic ethic in high school earned better results in the early stage of university and hence had a smoother transition than those not exposed to an academic ethic in high school. For this reason, Smith and Zhang suggests that high schools pay more attention to the academic ethic as it has been proved to be important in the transitional period, simply because pupils are better prepared for demands in higher education. They further emphasise that colleges and universities need to establish more communication with high schools in order to signal expectations and requirements during the first year. As far as the transition is concerned, although they emphasize “the academic intensity and quality of one’s high school curriculum” as the most important factor in the transition to, they suggest other variables as important for the transition, such as parental encouragement, teachers and student culture, (2009).

Similarly to Smith and Zhang, Bangser (2008:8), National High School Center’s Issue Brief on preparations of high school students for higher education, explains that the curriculum of the high school needs to be relevant, rigorous and interesting in order to successfully prepare students for higher education. He claims that “[s]tudents’ high school experiences too often fail to prepare them for post-secondary education [...]” (2008:4).

5. Methods

5.1 Introduction

In order to explore teachers' perceptions of the position and use of literature in the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary school, a qualitative approach for data collection was chosen for this research project. The first section gives an account of the nature of qualitative data collection, while the next focuses on the semi-structured interview. Then, the subsequent sections describe the making and planning of the interviews, selection of informants, the structure of the interviews, piloting and conducting the interviews and the process of transforming the interviews into written summaries. Finally validity, reliability and ethics are presented, followed by a section on the limitations of the study.

5.2 Qualitative research

A qualitative approach for data collection was chosen for the project, as it is a flexible research method that aims to gain an understanding of and interpret social interactions (Lichtman, 2010:10). The qualitative method sets out to “describe, understand and clarify a human experience” (Dörnyei, 2007:126). Furthermore, the qualitative research focuses on a “detailed exploration of a small number of examples or participants who can elucidate a particular aspect of the social reality” (Basit, 2010:16). As for this project, the reason for choosing a qualitative method for data collection was to get an insight into such a particular aspect of society, namely how teachers think and go about the use of literature in the Norwegian upper secondary English subject.

In qualitative research, some methodological concerns have to be taken into account at the onset of the data collection. These are concerns specifically related to the role of the researcher in order to prevent biases. The researcher is central to the outcome of the qualitative research as the focus is on interpretation and analysis of meaning and social interaction. The researcher has to accept that he or she “serves as a filter through which information is gathered, processed and organized” (Lichtman, 2010: 140). A bias is “a preference that inhibits impartial judgement” (Lichtman, 2010:16) and scholars upheld that in qualitative research there is a tendency for this to occur between the researcher and the informant during the interview session with regards to how questions are asked and answered. In qualitative research, “[the interviewees] may want to impress [the interviewer], thereby giving socially acceptable answers” (Basit, 2010:115). This can be prevented by the use of different strategies. The ability on the part of the researcher to be open-minded about what

kinds of data will be elicited from the interview sessions is important. Furthermore, asking other questions to check how valid and reliable earlier responses are or request elaborate answers and examples from the interviewee are other important strategies to adopt (Basil, 2010:115).

Other views advocate that it is impossible for qualitative research to remain totally unbiased and this is due to the nature of the qualitative method. Hence, researcher bias and subjectivity are accepted and not necessarily negative (Lichtman, 2010:243). It is the researcher who plans the study and who describes, understands and interprets the data collected. He or she further integrates and organizes this to make it a complete and significant whole. According to Lichtman, researchers should not strive for their research to remain unbiased and objective, as these are traditional and fundamentalist views. This is legitimized by the fact that the researcher has “views on the topics” and would possibly not be studying a particular topic if he or she had not considered it at all (Lichtman, 2010:16). A qualitative study aims to describe the results of the data collection and interpret these subsequently. There is further a probability that there is more than one possible interpretation to a qualitative dataset, but this is accounted for if the researcher manages to gather, organise and interpret the data appropriately (Lichtman, 2010:14). Hence, a qualitative research project is naturally not completely objective because of the important role of the researcher and the choices that he or she makes.

In addition to the researcher’s role, the dataset in qualitative research is important. As this kind of research is intent on gaining depth rather than breadth, this is achieved by a presentation of results textually, without the use of numerical data (Basil, 2010:16). For this specific thesis, written summaries were chosen to present the data. As qualitative data material is often presented textually, it has a tendency to enhance as the data collection progresses and it is often messy and complex to handle. Consequently, the challenge is to generate useful data among all the material. As a result of the flexibility incorporated in qualitative research, the data collection and the analysis in such a process tend to overlap (Dörnyei, 2007:124-125).

5.3 The semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview was chosen for this research project. However, there are several ways of organizing the one-to-one interview; hence there are different versions of it. Qualitative interviews are divided into different types according to their degree of structure.

First, the structured qualitative interviews are those that have a researcher who follows a prepared and rigid interview guide with less involvement from the informant (Dörnyei, 2007:134-135). In a structured interview, all the informants are asked the same questions and it aims at minimizing the role of the researcher in order to keep it as objective as possible (Lichtman, 2010:141). Second, and quite different from the structured interview is the unstructured type. The unstructured interview “allows maximum flexibility to follow the interviewee in unpredictable directions, with only minimal interference from the interviewer” (Dörnyei, 2007:135). This is a style of interviewing that does not acclaim a certain set of questions and for this reason it can be referred to as an informal conversation (Lichtman, 2010:141). Lichtman refers to Kvale (1996) and Rubin and Rubin (1995) who respectively describe the unstructured interview as a “professional conversation” and “a great adventure [...]”.

When deciding what type of interview to use, the structured interview was found to allow for too little spontaneity, variation and follow-up questions. The unstructured interview furthermore limited the involvement from the researcher too significantly. Consequently, the third type of interview, the semi-structured one, was found to be suitable for the project. This is an interview type where the researcher formulates a certain set of questions to be asked and makes room for supplementary questions depending on each informant. Also, the semi-structured interview is the most favoured choice for research in educational contexts, as researchers “are usually aware of the constructs that need to be addressed in the interview” (Basit 2010:103).

The semi-structured interview “offers a compromise between the two extremes” (Dörnyei, 2007: 135). Due to the fact that it contains a set of pre-prepared questions, it is still open-ended and the interviewee is allowed to elaborate and exemplify its answers. Furthermore, “the supplementary questions will be linked to the interviewees’ responses to earlier pre-formulated questions” (Basit, 2010: 103). The semi-structured interview was seen as appropriate for this project as the target was to elicit personal opinions on the use of literature in the EFL classroom. It was also expected that each interview session would be exclusive, hence the need to adjust the questions based on the different informants’ answers. By using this approach, the researcher was allowed to go more into detail when the informant was talking about issues of particular interest. Also, by letting the informant elaborate on questions, the interview sessions yielded valuable in-depth response considered important for the study. Finally, Basit (2010:104) explains, “the beauty of a semi-structured interview is

that, unlike a questionnaire or a structured interview, there is no need for equivalence or asking the same questions of all participants”.

5.4 Validity/reliability

Validity denotes to which degree a research project actually measures or portrays the topics it has set out to focus on. This is important for the effectiveness of research, because if a project is invalid, it is worthless. There are different ways of assessing validity within different fields, as its concept is quite complex (Basit, 2010:63). In qualitative methods for research “validity can be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved and the participants approached” (Basit, 2010:64).

The notion of validity in qualitative research has changed in order to “strengthen the unique contribution this scientific tradition offers to knowledge development” (Whittemore, et. Al, 2001:522). One may distinguish between *criteria* and *technique* when evaluating validity in qualitative research, with *criteria* being the “standards to be upheld as ideals” and techniques the methods employed in order to reduce the possibility of threats to the validity. Whittemore et. Al explains that *criteria* for validity is gathered in a synthesis representing what different scholars see as benchmarks for the quality of qualitative research and that the reconceptualization is manifested through a grouping of primary criteria, secondary criteria and techniques. The primary criteria are necessary to all qualitative research and are insufficient in and of themselves. These are credibility and authenticity (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and integrity and criticality (Maxwell 1990, Marshall 1990, Smith 1990). Those considered to be secondary criteria postulate greater levels of quality and are more flexible depending on the context of research. Among these are creativity and artfulness as encouraged by Sandelowski (1993) and the significance of being sensitive to informants in order to maintain the “sacredness of research” (Lincoln, 1995, Whittemore et. Al, 2001:528-529).

Reliability signifies to what extent a project is trustworthy. A qualitative study is “unique and particular to a setting” (Basit, 2010: 69-70). As a result of this, it does not as a quantitative study need to seek duplication in another setting in order to be reliable. However, qualitative researchers need to ensure that the entire process of gathering data and analysing these has been “scrupulous, honest and precise, and has addressed their research questions” (Basit, 2010:70). To illustrate the degree of impact a researcher has on the qualitative study, Basit explains that a similar study on the same issues in the same setting done by two

different researchers may “yield different data and findings, which may still be reliable because they will interpret the data and report their findings in their own unique and idiosyncratic ways” (2010:70).

Reliability and validity for this particular project is first implied by the researcher’s honest and precise handling of the data material. Because a recorder was used, all the interviews were on tape during the entire period of writing and the researcher was able to go back and forth in order to secure precise references. Also, a constant focus on the research questions was important for the validity aspect of the study.

5.5 Informants

The informants for this project were seven teachers working in three different upper secondary schools in the Stavanger/Sandnes region. Among these there were two men and five women, all of them teaching English as a second language. All the schools were part of the general branch, which means that they are study preparing. This was highly important for the study as it focuses on the transitional period from the upper secondary to university. The seven teachers were spread on the different levels of the upper secondary, resulting in a greater insight across first, second and third grade. The informants were chosen via so called “gatekeepers”, who are very important within research as expressed by Miller and Bell, cited in Cohen et. Al (2008:168). Gatekeepers are persons who “control access”, according to Cohen et. Al (2008:168). This implies that they provided the sample of the research with seven teachers as informants. Staff at the university provided the researcher with contacts in the three schools, one being a teacher and two being in charge of the English section at their respective schools. These contacts are the gatekeepers of the study as they got in contact with the actual interview objects.

Dörnyei explains that, “qualitative inquiry is not concerned with how representative the respondent sample is or how the experience is distributed in the population” (2007:126). Furthermore, he emphasizes, as far as sampling is concerned, “the main goal is to find individuals that can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation” (2007:126). For this reason, seven interviews were found to be sufficient for the present study.

5.6 Planning and piloting

Prior to the interview sessions, there was a period of planning and piloting. The semi-structured interview is recognized by the use of an interview guide, which needs to be prepared by the interviewer (Dörnyei, 2007:137). This document was made in order to ensure that a certain set of questions was asked to all of the informants. Also, Dörnyei stresses the importance of piloting an interview. To pilot an interview is to test it in order to “ensure that the questions elicit rich data and do not dominate the flow of the conversation” (Dörnyei, 2007:137). Three piloting sessions were carried out for the project, resulting in more clear questions that would contribute to answer the research questions of the project. None of the informants in the pilot study were parts of the actual study. A pilot study allowed for a test of the interview guide, but also a test of the equipment to be used, which was a recorder with microphone, in order to be fully prepared for the actual interview sessions.

5.7 Structure of the interviews

The interview guide was divided into seven sections (see Appendix 1) in order to maintain a logic progression and to ensure that important themes were covered. Here follows the seven sections, with example(s) from each.

The background part was found to be necessary as it set the tone and got the conversation started. By starting with some questions related to personal information, the informant could feel competent and relaxed and this could further encourage him or her to continue the conversation (Dörnyei, 2007:137). Also, questions related to length and type of education could help explain each teacher’s perception of the use of literature. By including the teacher’s seniority, the researcher could be provided with explanations of possible different perceptions between newer and older teachers.

- How many years of teaching do you have?
- What kind of a teacher education do you have?

The second section of the interview focused on literature’s position in the upper secondary. This was in order to get the feel of the teacher’s opinion and thoughts about this in general as this is an important part of the study. Also, the project wanted to find out if there is more focus on social and cultural aspects rather than literature in EFL teaching.

- Do you think there is enough focus on the use of literature in the upper secondary English subject?

The interview progressed with some thoughts on the transition in question. These were questions labelled as content questions (Dörnyei, 2007:137), meaning they are specifically relevant to the study.

- What kinds of challenges do you think pupils meet when they transfer from the upper secondary to English studies at the university?

The fourth section was a fairly short one, targeting the teacher's reading habits. This was found to be of interest as the thesis is focusing on literature. Also, the teacher's reading habits could contribute to explain his or her use of literature in the classroom.

- Do you read for pleasure in your spare time?

The longest part of the interview was section five. This section explored the teacher's use of material and practices concerning the use of literature and reading in EFL.

- Do you use a textbook in your teaching?
- Do you teach your pupils about different reading strategies?

The section on expectations and homework was included in relation to the transitional aspect of the study and targeted the requirements of the pupils in the upper secondary school. This was seen to be important in order to look at what expectations there are in the upper secondary. This was believed to further shed light on differences between the upper secondary and university, hopefully contributing to explain possible reasons to challenging transitions to university.

- Do your pupils have homework in the English subject?

The final section included some questions about the curriculum. This was done in order to grasp the teacher's opinion on KL06. Also, the informant was asked some final questions about measures in both the upper secondary school and the university to ensure a smoother transition for pupils.

- Would you prefer to have a curriculum stating a certain list of literary works to go through during a school year?

5.8 The interview sessions

The interviews were conducted in the school of each teacher. During the process of planning and setting up dates and time for the interviews, the informants were asked kindly if they would reserve a group room for the session in their schools. This was done to secure that nothing would disturb the interview sessions. The advantage with conducting the interviews at the teachers' school was that it was more convenient for them as they did not have to leave their workspace and hence the chance that they would agree to participate was greater.

Each teacher interview was different from the others, as the teachers had different focus during the conversations. Some had lots to say, others were more concerned with answering the questions asked. Although the interview guide secured a certain structure, each session was particular in itself and each informant contributed with valuable input to the study.

One of the interviews, that with the informant Mary, is special to its case, as the session did unfortunately not go as planned due to time limits. The researcher had not been acquainted with the fact that she was teaching during the last part of the hours in which the interview sessions at that school were scheduled. Another interview was conducted before which lead to a lack of time when her interview was going to start. For that reason, her interview did only last 12 minutes, but the informant offered to answer the rest of the questions via e-mail and this was seen as sufficient.

The language employed during the sessions was Norwegian. Initially, the plan was to conduct the interviews in English, thus asking the informants if they were comfortable with speaking English during the interview. However, because of language barriers, and the risk of not getting sufficiently elaborate answers, it was decided to use Norwegian, without conferring with the informants. This was especially due to the fact that all the informants were native Norwegians. An implication for this was that the process of presenting the data also

had to consist in translating the interviews from Norwegian to English. However, the way of presenting the data made it manageable due to the translation process. How the data is presented is elaborated on in the next section.

5.9 Processing and presenting the findings

The interviews were written into summaries shortly after the sessions. This was done by listening to the audio-recordings from the sessions through earphones and processing simultaneously. Presenting the interviews in the form of summaries was found to be a clear and precise way of data presentation. Transcriptions of the entire interviews were not considered an alternative because of time limitations to the thesis. The audio-recordings of the interviews enabled the researcher to go back and forth in each interview in order to make sure that valuable information was included in the summaries. Some detailed quotes from the informants have been written out when found to be particularly relevant. All the summaries are exclusive as a result of the nature of the qualitative interview. The summaries are presented in chapter six, findings.

5.10 Ethics

Information about the project was sent to all potential informants before they accepted to participate in the study. A page was written informing about the aim of the study (see appendix 3), the methods and ethical issues stating that the study was anonymous. The same information was repeated at the onset of each interview session. The informant signed the information sheet before the recording started and hence accepted to participate in the study. They were also told that their names and the name of the school in which they represent would not be published.

Before the data collection started, the study was reported to Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). The project was found to be subject to notification (see appendix 2). This implied that the researcher had to report that the recordings were deleted and the informants had remained anonymous at the end of the project. To ensure anonymity, the informants were given pseudonyms and the names of the schools they represented were not included.

5.11 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are presented in the methods chapter as it related directly to the methods employed for the thesis. The thesis is limited in terms of representation because the sample of seven teachers in the upper secondary does not produce a foundation for generalisations to be made across the entire population of teachers in Norway. However, the qualitative interviews conducted have generated an insight into some possible tendencies as far as the perception and use of literature is concerned in the upper secondary. On the background of this, some tentative conclusions can be drawn.

The research method for the thesis may also be seen as a limitation because it to only includes one-on-one qualitative interviews. It is likely that supplementing methods such as observation of lessons, pupil focus-group interviews and study of materials, such as the textbook, could have provided more insight into the dynamics of the research question and verified what was found in the interviews to a larger degree.

6. Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the teacher interviews. Each interview has been written into a summary. All the participants have been anonymised by pseudonyms. Due to the flexible nature of the qualitative, semi-structured interview, each summary is particular to its case and will not completely follow the structure of the interview guide.

6.2 The Teacher Interviews

Katy (55)

Katy had been working as a teacher for three years. She teaches English in vg1 five hours a week as well as Norwegian. She had taken PPU and her English background was specialization from the University of York and a master in literacy at the University in Stavanger. Her MA thesis was about “presenting the self in the social media”.

When asked about the focus in the English subject, either literary or social, Katy said, “I feel there is a mix between the two”. However, she added, “[i]f the literature suits our topic and if it is related to cultural topics, we use it to exemplify, so it is not exactly literature for its own sake, it is seldom so”. She explained that she had taught the vg3 “English Literature and Culture” course last year and in that course, they used literature for the sake of literature. Then, Katy explained that many teachers are sceptical about pushing a text on pupils for only the sake of the text, without the text being anchored in a topic or context. She explained that she based her teaching around different themes and that she used culture and society related topics as starting points, and selected literature in order to suit these topics and illustrate them.

Katy believed that there was not enough focus on literature in school. She mentioned the language perspective, a focus on vocabulary and sentence structures as important incentives for the use of literature in teaching. Then she added the cognitive perspective. Finally she brought about reading for pleasure and getting an insight into another world as important. She regarded the Norwegian subject as important for covering literature, but then explained, “the pupils keep asking all the time: what are we going to use this for?” Katy then explained that this was a common attitude among many pupils. She believed this is because the upper secondary today is educating pupils who are more determined and who have already made up their minds about what to do after these years. Also, she underlined the fact that the tool aspect of the English language is getting so important within many fields, and for this

reason pupils and parents keep asking why the school bothers about old authors and texts.

Katy explained that the utilitarian aspect was very predominant and that it was important for “teachers to find the good arguments for pupils to read literary texts and find good texts that are not too long”. She further explained that the pupils in vg1 were currently working on a book project where they were “forced” to read certain books and she believed this was not a good way to go about the use of literature. On the other hand, she explained that last year they had let the pupils choose their own book, and when they were going to be assessed in an oral conversation, she found herself focusing only on the pupils’ ability to speak the English language, as she had no capacity to have complete insight into all the different books the pupils had chosen.

When asked about what could be done in the upper secondary in order to prepare pupils, the first thing Katy mentioned was “they need to read more”. She mentioned the reading of English newspapers as a way of finding out if the English skills are good enough. Also she mentioned academic texts in order to prepare them. She also said, “and using texts about the social media, things that teenagers are concerned with and that they feel they want more of”. She was followed up on this and asked what she thought about this in relation to reading of literature. She said, “if I were to connect literature to what is useful in the society I would have a hard time finding a connection”. She also explained that pupils love to read stories, often with feelings involved and plots with death and suicide, etc. and that was something she thought a lot about. She drew parallels to blogging, which implicitly are stories about the self and that this could be a reason why it is so popular today. Then she said, “once you call something literature, it is as if the pupils are immediately becoming reluctant”. She also explained that the literature had to be newer in order to engage pupils, such as *Hunger Games*, which they had read in class.

When asked about what challenges new students of English will meet as they approach university, she initially mentioned the challenge of a limited vocabulary and the need to use a dictionary in order to understand words. She explained that she did not focus on reading strategies and that it was a shame that pupils did not learn this. However, she explained that they had a literacy programme at school, which was connected primarily to the Norwegian subject. This project targeted the text in a certain context and that pupils were going to understand why they read it. About the differences between the reading amounts in the upper secondary and at the university, Katy said that she thought that teachers in the upper

secondary had to become better at expecting that pupils read during these 3 years. She also said

I keep telling them [the pupils], although I know it is pedagogically wrong, ‘when you are going to university, then you will have to figure out things by yourself’. I cannot imagine the pupils that I have now in the first grade succeeding at university. Maybe a handful... To be completely honest.

She continued by explaining that pupils have too high thoughts about their own English proficiency.

Katy read for pleasure in her spare time. However, she explained that she had stopped reading fiction, because she had developed an interest in acquiring knowledge within non-fictional fields. She read biographies and history. She conducted most of her reading in English and read 300-400 pages during a week. She said she thought it was important that English teachers read in English. For her own sake, she did it to keep her language updated and she had pleasure from it.

As far as material and practices are concerned, Katy explained that she had not used a textbook at all that year. She had followed the textbook slavishly the year before. However, she found the exercise suggestions in the textbook as helpful, but other than that she would use it rarely. This year, Katy used a theme-based teaching in vg1. One of the themes was “Great Britain: Culture, Society and Literature”, and several teachers were responsible for the distinct parts of the topic. When asked what other materials than the textbook she used, Katy explained that she would often copy from other books, or use the Internet. As far as the quality of the textbook is concerned, Katy said, “I am thinking that when that was made I guess it was fine”. However, she mentioned advantages such as exercise suggestions and establishment of important frames as long as it was up to date. Due to being a relatively inexperienced teacher, Katy said she thought the textbook was ok, although she didn’t use it. She found the references as to how to analyse films and literary expressions at the back of the book to be helpful.

Katy couldn’t come up with specific positive sides with less dependence on a textbook in relation to pupils who are transitioning to university. She did however explain that it would remove them from the compulsion of a textbook. She made it clear that she did not have anything against the use of textbooks, but she believed there had to be a healthy mix between that and other materials. She explained that changing the textbooks would be so expensive for

the school that it would not be possible at the moment. Ideally, Katy wanted the textbook to function as a reference, and then pick texts from other places that would be more up to date. Other materials she would use were much fact related Internet material, such as newspapers and the net pages of the various textbooks.

When talking about classroom practice, Katy would almost never conduct lecture-like lessons, explaining, “we are not supposed to do that here. And that is a shame. I think the pupils would have liked it”. When working with fictional texts, Katy would listen to it together with the pupils while they followed the text. It was not required that the pupils had prepared for this. The pupils were seldom given homework and they did not have any plans for homework. Because of this, Katy said that the pupils were required to read very little at home. However, she encouraged them to read at home in order to develop their English skills, and she would advise them to read something of interest to them, such as blogs and short stories. When asked about reading cultures in her class she was very clear that such was non-existent. In relation to this she said, “it is funny you ask about that, because when I was on my way down here, I walked past a pupil and heard him say: “I have not read a book”. She added that pupils today are not afraid of saying it as opposed to earlier, when it was a common truth that if you wanted to be intellectual and good at school then of you read books. Katy said as a follow up on this that today we have other texts in the society and that the book is only a small part of all the texts. Pupils read and they write, but is it so fragmented and the literature they are served by us is also fragmented”. When Katy taught “English Literature and Culture”, the texts that she taught were excerpts from texts, admitting that excerpts from Shakespeare is not the same as the complete texts. However, she explained that short stories they used were good, by authors such as Kate Chopin. When asked about what she saw as the consequences for such fragmented teaching, she said that she had previously read a doctorate by Sylvi Penne about pupils only reading bits and pieces of longer texts in the Norwegian subject. Katy believed this could be assigned to the English subject as well. The doctoral study concluded that fragmented reading would take away the pleasure of reading, as it takes away the complete understanding of a text and Katy agreed highly with this.

Katy had an important point when talking about our current society and reading. She said,

We live in a society that is completely... ‘and now, over to something else’ and then again something else. And that is how the pupils are as well; they are very seldom ‘on’ for a long

time. I see it as a problem for them to just merely to sit down and read a whole book just because they have to.

When presented with the concept *extensive reading*, Katy explained that she normally conducted this in English classes one or two times a year. For their latest extensive reading project, the teachers had chosen which book to read. The year before the pupils had chosen themselves. Katy explained that her pupils wrote a blog so that the teachers could check if they actually read. She found this as a good way to do it, because then she could see what the pupils got from the book and compare to what she got from it herself. She explained that when they had a reading project in Norwegian, the pupils were allowed to choose their books themselves and she said, “they sat everywhere in the library in chairs and read like maniacs. It was like... they found it to be fun.”

When conducting an extensive reading approach, Katy would spend about 40 minutes a week on individual reading in her class. I asked her how much time they would spend on reading of fiction in regular weeks without an extensive reading programme and she said she would not spend much time in class. Then she said, “this year, it has not been much when I think about it. It is good that you are here so that I get to think about this, because it has not been too much”. Then she reflected on the use of a textbook again, and uttered that she had served her pupils more texts when she had used the textbook more. “It is a paradox”, she said.

I had been acquainted with the fact that the school in which Katy worked did not have a vg3 class of “English Literature and Culture”, simply because there were too few applicants. I asked Katy why she thought it was like this and she said, “Because they don’t want to read books”. Then she was asked what she thought about the position of literature in school, and she said she thought this was sad, and believed it would be literature’s grave. At the same time she acknowledged that something has to be done in order to prevent this. Katy would have loved to know if any research showed whether to use an approach in school with focus on fragmented and shorter texts, or longer works in depth. Last year, when she had taught a class of “English Literature and Culture” there were ten pupils in the class, still she said they had so much fun. Katy believed this was too few, and only half of these had chosen this course because they wanted it. The rest had to take it for several other reasons than the subject itself, explaining,

Ouuh it was that cultural capital one gets from the home. It is important. But also, I as a teacher have a huge challenge in relation to this. And I have to admit my shortcomings. To be

able to explain and persuade about the fact that there is much joy in literature, especially when I now feel that I myself need a push in order to sit down with literary texts.

Katy was asked what she thought about the fact that English is only obligatory during the first year of the upper secondary. She responded that three years of English instruction in the upper secondary should have been obligatory and said, “I cannot understand how those who take English only one year can manage if they proceed to study English at university”.

Katy perceived KL06 as a bit too ambitious and she found the competence aims to be too broad. She justified this claim by explaining that it is difficult as a teacher to know where to start when one gets handed pupils who do not even know what sentence connectors and linking verbs are. When asked about her opinion about the fact that the curriculum is open to interpretation in terms of text selection, Katy believed this was a shame. She went into greater detail and said that if it is chosen to interpret the curriculum in such a way they had done at her school, by not focusing enough on literary texts, the more pupils will be handicapped when they are going to university. For that reason Katy did not believe that it is beneficial to have a curriculum that is so little detailed. When she was asked what advantages there would be with more restrictions in terms of what texts to be read through upper secondary, Katy first mentioned the fact that teachers at university would have greater insight into what their students bring with them to university. Also she said that she would have liked to know exactly what to do in order to prepare pupils for university and emphasized that at this point she was too inexperienced.

Towards the end of the session, Katy was asked about some final remarks on what could be done to ease the transition from upper secondary school to university. The first thing she mentioned was collaboration. Katy had been on a visit to the university, listening to a lecture on fantasy literature, and said that was a great experience for both pupils and teachers. If the course “English Literature and Culture” was offered at her school again, Katy said she would love to have a greater collaboration with the university. In the upper secondary, Katy believed that teachers would have to focus on opening the text and teach the pupils how to read in longer time spans. Reading for a purpose and simply knowing why they read were also aspects that Katy believed to be important. Although Katy mentioned several aspects of improvement in the upper secondary, she also mentioned that it was important that the universities looked towards the upper secondary to see what is actually going on there. According to Katy, the university could improve in terms of text analysis. She referred to her own studies at UiS and said, “when I was there, many times I felt that we only read in order to

analyse, but it was already analysed, so it was only to answer what the lecturer expected, it was like there was no room for analysis, it was how it was supposed to be”. As far as differences between the institutions are concerned, Katy said,

Either, some levels need to go up and we will have to push forward on English teaching in the upper secondary to get pupils on the level that they are supposed to be on when they transfer to university, or the level at the university needs to be lowered. That’s what I’m thinking, because right now we are not on the same path.

Finally she had a remark about the society and all its segments, using the Norwegian TV-channel NRK as an example with all its channels depending on interest in music, literature, sports, weather, news and other specialized fields. Katy explained,

Today it is not like everybody is learning the same things, and not so that all likes to read the same things. We do not even look at the same things on TV, and I think that is reflected in literature. We have the fantasy gang, some nerds are reading that, and then we have *Hunger Games* and those who are all into that. And consequently, then, Katherine Mansfield and James Joyce are only for those who are especially interested.

Caroline (45)

Caroline had been working as a teacher for 16 years. 15 of these had been on the upper secondary level. Also two of these were in vocational school. She had taken 60 credits in English and PPU in addition, together with 60 credits of sociology and a master’s degree in German. She had no specialization in reading and/or literature. Caroline teaches English in vg1 (in the afternoon for clever lower secondary pupils organized in a transitional system) and vg2 international English. She teaches English five hours per subject per week. In addition she teaches German and social science.

Caroline believed that the majority of the English subject today is focused on social and cultural themes. She explained that she thought that a utilitarian perspective was the reason for this, especially with concern to various jobs/professions later in life. When asked if she thought there was enough focus on reading and literature in the upper secondary, she said that she understood that for a person who loves to read, there is perhaps too little time to enjoy reading of literature for the sake of the literature. She also said she enjoyed it herself, but at the same time said that there should be more time to choose more freely whether to read

or what for the sake of differentiating as pupils have so many different interests and different reasons for learning English. Some, she explained loves to read, while others “are happy that they do not have to”. At one point she explained a way that pupils who do not enjoy reading can be pleased, “they can get what they want the way we do it today, as much literature is used as support for social themes and issues”.

When asked about other subjects in the upper secondary today that would cover literature teaching, Caroline mentioned German and claimed that in her opinion, the German subject, as she taught it, contained more literature and reading. Caroline mentioned development of language skills as important aspects of the English subject, such as vocabulary. In this context she also explained, “those that have a good language do often have a very long background of reading”.

Caroline said that she believed that the reading of very long and complicated texts at the university is a challenge for many new students. However, she said that for those who enrol in English studies the barrier is likely to be lower, as they are more motivated and used to read texts in English. For those who start math studies, the transition is maybe more complicated. Specifically for those who study English, she mentioned text length, level of complication and the fact that texts are not suited for foreign learners. She highlighted that if pupils had been acquainted with texts and authors to a larger degree in the upper secondary, it would be easier for them when they get to university. Caroline used Shakespeare as an example in this context.

As far as preparation for university is concerned, she said that, in her own teaching, she was more concerned with it in the German subject, as those students are in the third grade. Caroline highlighted the fact that the first year students that are originally lower secondary students, need first and foremost to get used to life at the upper secondary. “The ones in the second grade are in the middle”, she said, and the level here is often not very high, due to the fact that the most talented pupils often choose maths and science subjects. Imagining having a third grade, she said that she would have focused on longer sequences of teaching, in order to spend more time on longer texts and themes. When asked if this is how it is done at her school, she was not quite sure. Neither was she sure that they are concerned about it. At least it had not been much up to discussion in subject-team-contexts.

Caroline read for pleasure in her spare time, switching between Norwegian, English and German fiction and drama in between. She did not read much poetry and she said she focused on reading newer literature. When she was asked if she believed it was important that

English teachers read in English, she was a bit hesitant, but eventually answered yes. However, she was not sure if it would be decisive, but important in order to keep ones language in shape and develop academic motivation for teaching. Additionally, in relation to our discussion about reading, Caroline emphasized that the movie-lover and rock-lover, or the social science interested teacher could achieve the same benefits by keeping up to date within their fields of interest, without the reading of traditional fiction.

As far as materials are concerned, Caroline used a textbook for both her English courses. She said that for her, the textbook was important as she did not spend much time on selecting material other places. She perceived the structure and the overall quality of the textbook to be good. She said that she would find supplements to the textbook if necessary. Caroline found the structure of the textbook and the fact that it provides a good overview of different topics to be positive sides. She also mentioned the ability to know on which page one is and how long one has gotten in the course. When discussing this, Caroline mentioned that she found the curriculum for vg1 to be lacking a certain structure, and that the textbook helped her with that. As far as negative sides are concerned, she acknowledged that the textbook “dictates you”.

Other materials Caroline would use were novels, films, music and news from the Internet, especially YouTube. On both levels, her pupils had a specializing project where they could choose a theme of interest, guided by the competence aims. She explained that they tried to guide the pupils to use different materials during this work, and they got help from the librarian to supervise pupils individually if they wanted. For the project in the first grade, the pupils would specialize in their study direction. She highlighted the fact that they would usually tell the pupils to refer to a literary work in their project that would shed light on their topic. An example she provided was that if they worked on a project about the English school system, the pupils ought to have read a chapter of a book, a short story or a poem that could be used as a reference.

When asked if she used other literary texts than what was in her textbook in her teaching, Caroline was hesitant and needed some time to think. She concluded that she didn't do that very often. When asked if the different teachers cooperated in finding texts and literary works to use, she said that it was not quite often, and she wished it would be more of that. When listing some of the novels the pupils read, she mentioned *Small Island*, *Kite Runner* and the *Secret Life of Bees* (they would choose one of these), as they are all targeting multicultural societies and suited the competence aims for the subject “International English”.

She said that, because the curriculum asks for the reading of literature from the 50's till today, they would encourage the pupils to choose newer literature, although they did often allow them to choose more freely. When asked about the use and focus on reading strategies, Caroline said that this was something the pupils would not touch upon in her lessons. She said she knew too little about it, but that the textbook contains exercises that the pupils can do to map how they read and what kind of readers they are.

As far as extensive reading is concerned, she said that she was not familiar with the "concept" of it, but she knew that it was reading for pleasurable and relaxing purposes. In the first grade, she said that they had used a similar approach, and they were planning to do the same for the first time in the second grade that year. She said that earlier she had perceived the second grade English subject as a very busy course that did not allow time for an extensive reading program and for this reason it had not been prioritized before now. She was asked if this was something she found to be time consuming, and she said, "yes, if we are supposed to sit at school and read". When conducting such a project, her pupils would be allowed to choose their books themselves and approximately time spent on reading at school she said would be two of five hours per week for five weeks. Then she said, "I can see that it may seem very realistic in the start, and then you get there and you are supposed to get started and there are messages to be delivered and then often it is the time planned for reading that has to be sacrificed".

New fantasy literature, Dan Brown, and teenager literature were genres, authors and types of literature that she mentioned when she was asked what her pupils chose to read. Furthermore, Caroline highlighted that when they read in class, the pupils tried to make it as comfortable as possible in order for pleasure to occur and she was clear on the importance of the teacher reading her own book simultaneously for collective and disciplinary purposes. In order to motivate pupils to read, she did not highlight any particular aid, except from telling them that it is a relaxing and enjoyable activity. When asked about her conception of pupils' reading habits and interest, she said that she did not think that there were many pupils "glowing". In between, she said that they found it nice, but she should wish that more pupils would find it fun and enjoyable to read, instead she said that she experienced a perception among pupils that reading is a "school thing" and an obligation in relation to this.

When they worked with literature in class, Caroline would often use discussion groups so that pupils who had chosen the same books could sit together. When asked about what she focused on in the process of working with a text, she said that she often used literature to

highlight a particular topic. The class often used extracts of texts and special quotes when working with genre features. She found it hard to distinguish the work that they did with texts, as texts are often very different from each other. Sometimes she said that the literary text was a starting point for social and cultural topics, other times the literature was a mere reference. In the first grade she explained that the pupils were told to read according to proficiency and that the weakest pupils could be advised to for example read Roald Dahl, while on some occasions pupils had read Dickens.

When discussing homework, she explained that her pupils had homework for each lesson and were expected to read at home. In relation to motivation, Caroline would encourage her pupils to read at home by conducting class discussions where they would talk about authors and books and the pupils were asked if they had read or knew about these. In that way Caroline believed that they could be motivated to read if they understood that other pupils had read the authors and books that had been up to discussion. Then she mentioned how she told the pupils to prepare for tests, she tried to tell them that they could have a good language, but they needed to read about the author or the topic. In between she checked their homework by giving them word tests or engaging oral discussions. However, she said during this discussion, that she believed checking homework like this is a bit “too much characterized by control”.

In relation to preparation for lessons, Caroline would usually try to avoid that pupils read the text that they were going to work with in class in advance, much because it was damaging if some pupils had not done it. She added that she was under the impression that it was often the case that pupils did not do their homework. Also, by spending time on reading in the classroom, she was able to guide the pupils simultaneously. Instead, they had pre-reading and post-reading activities at home.

As far as reading culture among pupils today is concerned, Caroline believed that there were still some that read novels “in traditional ways”, but a greater amount of reading she said was done on screen, and in compound manners, such as reading with comments, etc. She also highlighted that many of the stories that one receives in today’s society are in film versions and said, “a good story that entertains me is increasingly more often through screen. I am not sure if you would call that reading or what”. Caroline then explained that today, as far as reading and interests are concerned, reading is much more customized than earlier, “each can find their niche and one can get that niche presented in all kinds of formats. It has also become shorter sequences of reading and less based on words and more on pictures”.

Caroline found KL06 to be a useful tool, but at the same time she said that it was very clear that it is a compromise between different wills and interests. Caroline contrasted the second grade, “International English”, with the compulsory vg1 subject and explained, “the pupils find it to be fun because it is so useful and it deals with media, newer literature, studying and working abroad, it directly effects their young lives”. She reflected on this, and contrasted vg1 and vg2, where she explained that the former focuses more on for example traditional, older literature and society structures whereas the latter becomes much more useful in terms of pupils’ lives, and wondered if the curriculum for vg2 is too utilitarian. Caroline liked the fact that the curriculum is open in terms of method and texts on the part of the teacher. However, she mentioned that one could risk that schools became stuck with the same material and texts that they had always used and saw this as a negative development if that was the case. She would not have liked to have more restrictions on what literary texts and authors to use in her English teaching. However, when asked if she saw any advantages in the transition to university with more requirements of texts and authors in the upper secondary, she said

yes, clearly. Then the students would bring a package, so I guess it is difficult for those who are actually handed these pupils nowadays. At the same time, one can risk that some pupils transfer directly to English studies without having taken more English in the upper secondary than the first year, and then one cannot demand that they have read the same texts.

Further, when she was asked about development and change in terms of the use of literature in school during the last years, Caroline said that many of her newer and younger university educated colleagues are increasingly focused on reading. She explained that these teachers have affected “faglag” (subject groups) in a direction that they should use literature more often and freer and argued in ways that it has inspired teachers. Caroline had always been concerned with using literary works with a certain quality, and exclaimed, “but now I am under the impression that that is old fashioned”.

Finally Caroline was asked what she believed could be done in order to ease the transition between the upper secondary school and university, and first she mentioned that she believed there was too little collaboration between the institutions. She said,

In many ways we are colleagues, us working in the upper secondary and those at the university. We should have visited each other in order for them to know where their students

come from and us to know where we are sending them. At the same time, there is supposed to be an abstraction between the institutions, but I think that we need to work more together and advice each other on this transition and the traps that pupils can be subject to.

John (28)

John was in his first year of teaching. He had taken an MA degree in English with his Master's thesis being fully literary. He teaches English in two vg1 classes ten hours a week and Norwegian eight hours a week.

When asked about the focus in the English subject, either literary or social, he was clear that he believed the latter to take up most of the time. He however, wanted to put more focus on literature and was trying to adjust the competence aims in order for this to happen. When he was asked why he believed there was a larger focus on social and cultural topics, rather than literature, he pointed to a utilitarian focus. He explained that social and cultural aspects are topics that pupils see as valuable and something they need when they continue their studies, such as communication skills in relation to studies abroad. Also, John referred to a common perception in society that looks at what can count later in life and said, "per. definition, literature is useless, as it cannot be measured. That is the deal with aesthetic subjects. They will be prioritized less than subjects that can be measured and hence provide visible results". John was absolutely positive that literature should have a position in the upper secondary English teaching. He thought so because he believed literature is interesting and it gives us important references and tells us how we cope with the world, and he drew parallels to psychology. John also emphasized literature's important function as a means to edification, but also highlighted its importance in developing vocabulary and grammar skills. For him, literature was the most important aspect of the English subject.

When John was asked about possible challenges pupils meet as they transfer from the upper secondary level to university, he referred to a misconception among many young pupils that they think, as long as they are able to make themselves understood in English, they have sufficient English skills. He pointed to the expectations on university that one is supposed to analyse written texts and know complex terminology and as long as the reading and understanding of texts is not good enough, the pupils will fall through. Also, John explained that many quit their English courses already during the first year because they for some reason underestimate the value of English teaching. John believed that the English subject

should be compulsory throughout the entire upper secondary for pupils who want to study English studies. Otherwise, in his opinion the study is undermined. He also mentioned sourcing/work with references as a possible challenge for new students. John further believed that the large text load that pupils meet when they start their university studies is a challenge and explained that when they are required to read a novel a week, after having spent half a year on one in the upper secondary, many pupils will struggle. He furthermore explained that in the upper secondary, teachers will often try to help pupils with literature because there are many pupils who find this difficult resulting in teachers nearly feeding them with so much information that they do the job for them. At the university, on the other hand, he explained it is not the same case and that it is expected that pupils are independent enough. He concluded by saying that the upper secondary school does not prepare pupils for further English studies.

Also, John said that students who manage to follow the teaching on university are those who have read and worked beside school or simply have the talent to be able to readjust and hence transition successfully. He explained that the transition is problematic if pupils do not have sufficient reading skills. On question about the most significant difference between the upper secondary and the university as far as curriculum is concerned, he pointed to the heavy reading load at the university. Also, he stated that the transition between the institutions as far as responsibly is concerned is huge and that a way of preparing pupils for further English studies is by reading. He explained that he, together with some other English teachers, were doing a reading project. The aim of this project is to “trick” the pupils into becoming interested in reading, as this is in his opinion a prerequisite for managing an English study at university level.

John read for pleasure in his spare time and mentioned science fiction, fantasy and kiosk literature as most favourable, preferably in the original language. For him, it was important that English teachers read in English in order to be updated on language and keep developing. He explained that he was not very into reading canonical works during his spare time, but since he wrote his masters thesis on science fiction he felt that there were both entertainment and depth in this kind of reading for him.

John used a textbook in his teaching, but preferred to find his own material, such as other texts, articles, media, and films. He would use the textbook one third of the time in which they would work with texts. Some fictional texts that he had used in his teaching were “The rose I Grew From Concrete”, a novel by Hemingway and he was about to start working on Shakespeare. John had planned to let the pupils dramatize one play which they could

choose themselves, “in order to establish some enthusiasm towards the drama genre and illustrate that there can be much fun with the old language”. John would use a great deal of poetry in his teaching, and focused on analysis of poems, which he had later tested his pupils in orally. Films were something else he would use, and he had worked with the film “Hooligans”, focusing on cultural aspects and biblical references. John said that he experienced that the pupils liked the movie, and for that reason they also found the analysis part interesting.

John said that he was not fond of the thematic structure of various textbooks that the school offers, and instead he would divide his teaching into “Great Britain”, “the U.S” and “the rest of the world”. He liked to include authentic texts, other than those especially designed for second language learners. By using texts that he had chosen on his own, he felt that he could more easily engage the students, as these are texts that he was interested in himself.

As far as reading strategies are concerned, John would introduce the BISON strategy for reading to his pupils. He was concerned with the pupils not reading too much for detail, and emphasised the importance of the ability of not doing this when approached with the text load at the university. He further emphasised the use of reading strategies in connection with ones aim in relation to different types of texts.

John was not familiar with the extensive reading as a concept, but he had conducted a self-selected reading program in his classes. The first program was during the fall and the pupils got to choose their own book and read for one hour each week during school time. The second program would take place the following spring engaging the entire class in the same book, but individually. His overall impression of the pupils’ engagement in reading was positive. When asked about why he believed they were positive, he said that he thought that this was due to the fact that they were allowed to choose their books themselves. John explained that he would allow pupils to choose quite freely, even though he would advise them to choose fiction. If pupils wanted to read something else, the only requirement he would give was that it was in English and that it would suit the pupil’s level of competence. John acknowledged that the pupils would get less freedom of choice in their next extensive reading program, and said that he was aware of the fact that they moved away from the extensive reading concept as far as pleasure is concerned. However, he argued that they would do it this way in order to achieve a larger ubiquity in terms of a common analysis of the book in the class.

Further, John was asked about attitudes to reading and reading culture in his classes and explained that not all pupils read, but that there were some. He also knew that some pupils did absolutely not read. However, in relation to their extensive reading projects, he explained,

they are actually quite positive towards reading, as long as they are given an incentive for it. However I think that if they get to choose their book themselves they are more willing to finish it as long as I do not put too much pressure on them in terms of genre, time span and testing, etc.

Also, John explained that when they spent time on reading in class, he noticed that the pupils sat still and read and from what he could read in their logs he got the impression that they enjoyed it. More generally he was asked about his impression of reading habits among teenagers today, and he claimed, “I am often thinking that that culture is characterized by a lack of reading actually. There are other ways to quickly get entertained”.

John would give his pupils homework based on what the next class would concern, and explained that, “I am not giving them homework only to give them homework, but I will give them some tasks based on what they will need for the upcoming lesson, based on the topics we are working on”. He would not give homework for all lessons, but for what he believed they would need for specific lessons. When asked what he thought about this in relation to the university, John believed it was more or less the same structure.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, John perceived the competence aims as clear and easy to relate to. However, he also added that the result of so many competence aims would not allow him to go very much into detail of the works that he used in his teaching. When John was asked if he would like to have more guidance and specific titles and authors to focus on, he said,

If I were to spend time on all the literature that I really want to, it had been fine if there were restrictions on how much time spent on a literary work and which, because now I do not feel that I can go into detail in anything, and at the same time focus on the curriculum as a whole. So consequently there is only time to look at a short story by Hemingway and some poems.

As far as the transition is concerned, John could see advantages with a common reading list in the upper secondary. He believed that then pupils would have certain knowledge about

canonical works, as there are many such titles that are taught in the British and American literature courses at the university. Then, John pointed to his exchange to York, and the focus on both canonical and classic literature being a part of the general education there. John believed that there should not be too many literary works/texts that all pupils should know at the time they graduated the upper secondary, but at least a couple and he mentioned Shakespeare. In this way, pupils would have more references when they started working with more complex texts at university level.

On discussion about the transition from the upper secondary school to university, John initially pointed out making English compulsory across the entire upper secondary. Also, he highlighted a possibility to focus on fewer literary texts, but longer in order to prepare for more extensive reading at university level. When he was asked what he believed the university could do in order to ease the transitional period and whether it should approach the upper secondary, he was not sure that the university should do so. John's opinion was that it is the responsibility of the upper secondary to adjust to expectations and teaching at university, as he believed the academic level at the university should stay as it is. He also emphasised, "one is not supposed to know everything as one transitions to university, but at the same time the teaching here should not be completely Greek to the person who enrolls", suggesting more use of novels and canonical literature in the upper secondary.

As far as responsibility is concerned, John believed that teachers in the upper secondary should find a balance between placing expectations and providing pupils with help so that they develop independence. He did however not think that the university should be stricter in terms of responsibility. In his eyes it is the students' responsibility to adjust to the circumstances at university, otherwise they are not ready for it.

Lisa (32)

Lisa had been working as a teacher for three years. She teaches English in two first grade classes and two third grade classes. She also teaches history. She had taken a Master's degree in Literacy and 60 credits in History and PPU.

Lisa believed that the social and cultural focus of the English subject is the largest in Norwegian schools. The reason for this she explained is because literature is seen as too little of interest for people in general and that it appeals more to a "high culture". Also she explained that many regard literature as something that pupils don't like and that teachers do

not want to put up a fight with their pupils to include literature, rather they would appreciate focusing their teaching on something that the pupils are satisfied with, such as politics, social science and geography. Also, she added, “I don’t think that teachers have discovered the value of extensive reading for language development”, rather she believed that the focus on shorter example texts had been used for a way too long time and she called this an ancient tradition. Furthermore she claimed that the decreasing focus on literature in school was expressing a typical egalitarian Norwegian culture where some people would be seen as more suited to read “posh” literature and have a greater ability to reflect than others, and that this was something “we are not really supposed to be doing”.

Partly based on her own practice and partly on research she had read, Lisa would not assume that she believed that there had been enough focus on literature in the upper secondary school, because then the reading skills among Norwegian pupils would have been better. She also said that the focus on science subjects had been so large the last 10-15 years that reading of literature had been less important and only seen as “cake decoration”. She highlighted the lack of a reason as to why to focus on reading, and she believed that if teachers knew more about this, then there would have been a larger focus on reading in upper secondary schools. Lisa strongly believed that literature has a central position in school, and emphasised that it was a large part of her practice. When asked why she believed it was important she mentioned an edification perspective, which according to her personally was important as it prompts reflection, but she also highlighted language development. At one point in the conversation she said:

In my opinion the edification perspective is probably the most important, but that is more politic on my part, it is not the teacher in me, but more the politician actually who means that. The society needs to go a step away from the constant utilitarian perspective and it needs some more unpractical humans. As a teacher I would say that it is an important symbiosis, it is either the chicken or the egg and I cannot say which one is the most important, I would say they are equally important.

Lisa did not believe that any other subject would cover the literature part in school and when she was asked if she believed that English teachers leaned on other subjects for covering literature teaching, she said she did not believe so, but that the English subject had become a social science subject for some reason that she could not explain. Lisa found literature to be the most important aspect of the English subject.

As far as the transition between the upper secondary school and university is concerned, Lisa explained that she believed that pupils' greatest challenge would be the fact that they inhabit a too narrow vocabulary and that this have implications for reading of texts, resulting in an excessive use of a dictionary. As far as a transition to English studies and the reading of literature, Lisa claimed that the pupils who had chosen the course "English Literature and Culture" would be better suited than those attending "Social English" in vg3, hence that challenges in the transition in terms of literature were linked to these pupils. She claimed that many of these would experience challenges with complex terminology, the composition of reflective texts and the ability to be focused on a thesis statement. Lisa also believed, in relation to reading loads at the university, that many pupils are too concerned with details when they read and that this contributes to an exaggerated use of a dictionary and too much time spent on specific texts. She found a focus on meaning in texts, relaxing with texts and focusing on more self-confidence among pupils in the upper secondary to be an important measure for preparation for university. Lisa would usually tell her pupils that literary texts say something important about human life and that they should focus on what the text conveys, explaining to them, "what is it trying to say about relations? It is not important how yellow that car is, try to focus on the meaning and the message", she explained. She would also explicitly tell her pupils to reduce the use of a dictionary and they would write a reading-diary in order to grasp the meaning of the text. Moreover she did not believe that it necessarily was the subject "English Literature and Culture" that prepared pupils for university, but how the teacher approached it.

Lisa conducted reading projects in her English classes and she told me that nearly all the English teachers at her school had started to do the same. At the start of the year, the teachers would explain to the pupils' parents that they spend much time on reading and what the aims for this are. The pupils would also be told how and why they write a reading-diary, and the fact that this is not for testing, rather a tool for themselves to improve English skills. However, her pupils would have an oral test at the end of the year, where they could choose one of the texts they had been working with. Lisa was asked if an extensive reading approach existed at her school when she started working there three years ago, and she said no. However, a co-worker of Lisa had started to use reading projects a year before she started and she had taken part in it and developed it. More teachers had adopted such approaches in the last years, but this was not without some disagreement, linked to the time spent, the choice of books and assessment. Lisa explained that she did not believe in forcing pupils to read one

specific book during all book projects or basing written tests on it. She further explained that gradually, all the vg1 classes conducted self-selected reading projects, so that the pupils could choose a book themselves, rather than forcing one particular book on them. However, she was considering using one book that the class read together for their next reading project, but had not decided whether she would do this in vg1. In the literature course in vg3 she would do that. This class was going to read Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* the coming spring, and she explained that it was relevant for several competence aims, such as the play genre and modernism. In relation to this, she explained that she used texts as a basis for many topics, implying that the literary texts would be her focus and these would illuminate cultural and social topics.

Lisa read for pleasure in her spare time, but explained that she did not read as much as she wanted because of the lack of time. She would read poetry, essays on social and philosophical issues, but she explained that she read fewer novels than before. She would read in English and Norwegian, and found it important that English teachers read in English in order to maintain their language, explicitly mentioning structures, semantics and grammar. She would read both for pleasure, but also in order to develop her own academic language and said,

academically, I think it is very important that teachers read, otherwise they will probably stagnate. One reads so many poorly written texts during vg1 that one risks that it would effect our language proficiency, and for that reason I am trying to calibrate my language by reading texts written by more proficient users of English than me.

As far as materials are concerned, Lisa used a textbook in vg1 the first months of the school year and after that she did not use it, because she found the quality of it to be poor. According to Lisa, the texts are childish, boring, irrelevant and unstructured. She also found there to be a too large focus on indigenous peoples which she found to be a bit out of date and she asserted that the book focuses too much on learning by heart and memorizing facts, rather than developing argumentative and reflective skills. She would copy materials such as articles and short stories and poems from other textbooks in vg1, use hand-outs and give small PowerPoint presentations. In vg3, she used the textbook frequently as she found it to be very good. She would supply with literary analyses as examples for the pupils and essay, either from her own educational run or pupils'.

As far as reading strategies are concerned, Lisa said that she did not focus enough on this. She would however highlight some points in relation to learning and reading strategies at the start of the year, which she believed that they did not remember in vg3. She said that she probably should have done more exercises based on developing reading strategies, at least try to remind the pupils about it more frequently, but at the same time she was focused on plot, theme and other features while reading literary texts in the class.

Lisa would encourage pupils to read by first and foremost letting them choose their own books as well as focusing on the basics of fiction. She would tell her pupils that fiction gives you entrance to the inner life and universe of an individual and simultaneously you will get entrance to something that is universal for mankind, explaining that mathematics is important, but that we are born and we die and that it is important to talk about that as well. Furthermore, Lisa explained that, “literature it is not art only for the sake of art, it does also have an agenda”.

Lisa would not give her pupils much homework, but they were required to read in their book at home. When asked if she was under the impression that the pupils actually did this, she explained that more pupils in vg3 did it than the ones in vg1, explaining that the pupils in vg3 were enthusiastic about reading and that they would read more than one book during a semester, and sometimes their readings were complex literature such as Dostoevsky.

When Lisa was asked about teenagers’ reading culture today, she said that she was under the impression that many actually read. She mentioned Harry Potter, Tolkien and the Norwegian crime waves as major inspirational factors for younger readers, and explained that many read these kinds of books in English, signalling that they are concerned with authenticity. She further pointed out that, “they read much fantasy, and one may critique that kind of literature, but I am thinking that as long as it does the trick, the end justifies the means”. Lisa added that she had an impression that a common opinion among many pupils is that once reading is connected to school contexts it instantly involves a focus on details. Furthermore she pointed to the time dimension, explaining that a lack of time could be a reason for it, because pupils have so many aspects to consider, and that that has a negative effect on the overall understanding of subjects. She was asked more about the focus on details and explained that she believed it to be a reflection of our society asserting that,

everything is supposed to be budgeted today. We have removed ourselves from the integrated human being and a holistic view of the society in general to be focusing on various directorates to the degree that it effects people’s interaction. The utilitarian perspective is

prevalent and visible in the understanding that everything has to provide immediate reward and usefulness. This is further reflected in the distribution of research facilities. If research is not an immediate benefit to the society, it is not even considered, and I believe that pupils, to a certain degree are a product of this.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, Lisa found KL06 to be well designed for vg1 and vg3 (“English Literature and Culture”). To her, the open curriculum was perfect and she would not prefer a more guiding plan. Furthermore, she explained that the teachers at her school are individualists and that some likes to focus on grammar, while others on literature. Lisa added that she would use literature as a starting point for other aspects of the subject, but acknowledged that for teachers who follow the textbook slavishly and that do not have the same educational background as her and other newly educated colleagues, a curriculum that stated explicit methods and text would be an advantage. However, she highlighted that she would not want to change the curriculum, rather that there should exist more guidelines and aids for teachers who are not self-confident enough. She further believed that the curriculum held a complete and good overall educating perspective.

In vg3 “English Literature and Culture” Lisa taught *Hamlet* and focused on the holistic human being. Other authors such as Oscar Wilde and Beckett were some she mentioned, aiming at developing a tolerance in pupils of not necessarily understanding a text and the fact that there is not always a meaning to it and accept that. She also said that she was focused on letting pupils get time to discuss literature, often in groups. She was also going to use the film “Copenhagen”, explaining that she would like to engage those who are interested in physics, often boys. Furthermore, Lisa would use poetry in her teaching, especially T.S. Eliott (“The Wasteland”), William Carlos Williams and Joyce. She would not require that the pupils had read the text before the lesson, but rather that they read it in pairs during the lesson. She believed this was important to make the pupils believe in themselves and be confident when reading literature.

Lisa suggested initial courses at the start of the university in order to prepare new students on requirements at the university, related to literature, reading strategies and writing skills. She believed that smaller groups and more tutorials where pupils actually had to speak English could be measures towards making students more independent and ready for university. Lisa also believed that it should be a requirement that pupils had taken three years of compulsory English in order to go on to English studies at university and that this could

contribute to improving the status of the subject. She claimed that pupils lack basic knowledge without having taken English in vg2 and vg3, especially if they are continuing their English studies.

In the upper secondary, Lisa believed that more text input and output was important to prepare pupils for university. Process writing was another important aspect according to Lisa, in order to improve language and reflection skills among pupils. Another aspect was self-selected reading to foster the joy of reading among pupils. She highlighted the importance of a well-equipped library and that pupils get introduced to it and learn how to use it. Then she said, “first they need to know what a librarian is. Many do not know that. They think it is a person who moves book between the shelves”. In her classes, she would invite the librarian to hold lectures, and she would take her pupils to the library to learn about sources and referencing. Moreover, Lisa explained that many of her pupils had noticed how much they had improved in terms of language skills as a result of extensive reading, and for that reason she believed that reading projects in the upper secondary are among the most important measures for preparation.

She claimed that in Norway, not all pupils are actually qualified for the studies that they enrol in and she drew parallels to British high schools and universities and explained that they are more used to work in the same way as they do at university and the value of literature is more anchored in their society than ours. She further claimed that in Norway, lower and upper secondary are like vacuums, and when pupils approach the university they are introduced to the real world and there is absolutely no congruence as they are not taught how to think themselves and to take their own choices. However, she highlighted that there is in fact a language barrier, as we do read much in Norwegian during “grunnskolen”.

Finally Lisa told me that she felt a bit sorry for her pupils, as they live in an era where it is nearly difficult to be passionate about literature and that one can risk being looked on as abnormal because of this. Lisa’s school did also offer some Latin classes, which was actually seen as a bit attractive and cool, but nerdy at the same time. Literature, Lisa further explained was something that the pupils just had to do, hence not something that many actually chose to engage in. Her final comment was that she believed that newer, younger and fresher teachers could inspire reading of literature so that pupils could actually see the worth of it.

Thor (59)

Thor had been working as a teacher for 32 years, 30 of them in the upper secondary. He had taken a master's degree in English with additional courses, resulting in what resembles today's lector with additional courses. As far as extra courses relating to reading and/or literature are concerned, he had taken a summer course at UCLA about American literature in the 20th century that gave some credits. Additionally, his dissertation was literary. Thor teaches English in first and third grades. The third grade English subject was the social English course. He would teach five lessons per week in each class and he also taught French.

Thor was asked about the focus of the English subject today, and he said that he assumed that there was more attention on social issues, such as culture and history, rather than literature. Simply he explained that a reason for this was that large topics relating to society and culture take up so much time that there is less time to spend on the use of literature. When he was asked if he thought there was enough focus on literature in the upper secondary today, he was not quite sure. He said:

I often wish that I had more time to spend on literature, but then that time would have had to be taken from something else and I think there are so many other exciting topics. However, when I teach the social science related English, of course the literature is less prioritized.

He also added that this course is different from the first year course as the first year is the general course that has other topics alongside literature. Thor said that he absolutely thought literature is important in educational contexts, because it exemplifies good language, develops the pupil to "get into a social life", as well as it can give pleasurable reading experiences.

When asked if there were other subjects in school that could cover the literary spectrum, Thor mentioned other language subjects, explicitly Norwegian and history. Thor found a general language competence independent of text type as more important than reading of literature. He explicitly mentioned a good vocabulary as the most important, but also the ability to vary the language, and he highlighted the importance of getting an insight into British and American societies in order to be able to talk about the Norwegian society. When focusing on vocabulary, Thor gave the pupils many texts to read, and referred to it as amount reading. These texts were often articles taken from the Internet. Focusing on written tasks was also important to him, and he tried to remind pupils to vary their language.

As far as the transition is concerned, and concerning possible challenges new university students would meet, Thor initially said that he believed that things had changed from what it was like when he was a student. Still, he found responsibility aspect to be

prevalent, explaining that pupils would “not be looked after all the time” and the absence of obligatory lessons. When going more into the English subject in the transition, Thor said: “students will meet English in more or less all subject on the university, so English is a tool subject to a large extent and for this reason it has large utility”. As far as syllabus is concerned, he stated that the curriculum in the upper secondary is very open, whereas on the university, students have a list that they will have to read, hence few choices.

When asked what is done in the upper secondary in order to prepare pupils in terms of literature reading on English studies he said that the upper secondary is “a general preparation for pupils who are going to read longer, whole texts”. Also, he said the upper secondary gives a basic introduction to literary analyses, although not too profoundly, pupils will learn about characters, settings and point of view, etc. When asked if this is what he would do, he said: “it is a part of it, in literature reading there will be focus on the most basic elements of analysis. But one has to adjust this, as not all pupils are able to handle more than a simple plot summary”.

Thor was then asked about the fact that pupils can graduate and enrol in English studies at the university without having taken English in the second and third grades. He said that science courses have a larger popularity among clever students and many of these do not choose to proceed with English after first grade. Then he said and eventually laughed, “many of these [pupils] read much and meet much English beside educational contexts, so they will manage, still. I was about to say unfortunately”.

Thor read for pleasure during his spare time. He preferred to read crime novels in both Norwegian and English. Once in a while he would read a French book. He would read about 30 - 40 novels a year, but it depended on time available. He said that it was important for him as an English teacher to read in English. When asked why he thought so, he mentioned English teachers’ interest in the language and the fact that they have studied the language. Also he highlighted all the availability of literature in English by British and American authors.

As far as materials are concerned, Thor said that he used a textbook. When asked if he thought it was important, he was a bit hesitant, and said, “it is less important than the one I use in French”. Also he said that some years he had taught English in vg1 without using a textbook. He found the quality of the textbook for vg1 to be ok, while the one for vg3 was in his eyes a wrong evaluation on his part and he did not like it. When asked about the positive sides to a textbook, he initially highlighted the importance of pupils reading from paper, not

on screen all the time to be able to control what the pupils work with. Thor mentioned that he preferred the textbook for basic topics that are not related to literature, because it provides a good foundation and structure. Thor said that a negative side to the use of a textbook was that it quickly gets out-dated. He added that this would not be a problem as long as one used other sources in addition. Especially he mentioned news on the Internet in relation to this.

When asked about the fact that textbooks often contain fragments of longer texts and are designed for second language learners, Thor said that was something he thought was difficult, as “many authors write novels, and one wants to present that particular author”. Then he explained that reading only excerpts of novels becomes too fragmented. He also explained that when he did not know a novel sufficiently and used it in class, he would almost treat it as a short story because he would lack the deeper understanding of it, just like his pupils. Contrary, if it was a novel that he knew very well, he would want to say too much about it and that could be boring for the pupils as long as it was only an excerpt. He explained that when he was choosing a textbook, he would take one that had many short stories and less excerpts of novels. When he was asked about reading for pleasure in relation to this, he said that a short story in a book has a beginning and an end and gives a whole reading experience, contrary to a fraction of a novel, which he explained would be similar to watching 20 minutes of a film and hence not getting what the author wants to convey.

Thor would not use the textbook systematically. Sometimes it would be present in all the lessons during a week, sometimes it disappeared as a result of work with other things. He said the following about the textbook, “it is about referring to things, and use it as one or more aiding tools, not necessarily sit down and scan it”. Internet, and especially news channels such as The Guardian, Washington Post, BBC and CNN would be tools that Thor would use in addition to the textbook. He also mentioned Wikipedia for background information and films and extracts from films. As far as fiction is concerned, he mainly used new literature (from the last 50 years). In social science English he preferred to choose fiction related to particular historical periods. Some short stories he used out of old habit, as it was easier. A short story by Graham Greene he used to portray WW1 so the pupils would, “get a grip of the feeling in England at the time”. Also he concluded that the texts he used “is examples of literature that builds up on what they are supposed to know about English and American societies”. In vg1 he explained that the choice of literature was decided based on what had been popular and trendy the last years. He mentioned fantasy literature, Roald Dahl and Somerset Maugham.

Also, he used novels from South Africa/India in order to portrait another English speaking countries than Great Britain and USA.

The way Thor approached texts with his pupils varied a lot. He highlighted spending time on texts, often listening to some of the first paragraphs on a cd, then let the pupils work more with the text on their own. As far as reading strategies are concerned, he said that his pupils would be taught this, “to a certain degree”. He also added that this is not only for the English subject, but also Norwegian. He said, “I try to remind pupils when to skim and scan and search for details, or now they can just relax and have a good time”. Thor also believed that it would be a benefit for pupils in the transition to be able to be conscious about their reading.

Thor had used an extensive reading approach in his English classes. But for him, the reading conducted in relation to this, was not mere fiction, he also included newspaper texts as part of such an approach. He added, that when reading such articles, pupils were not going to go into detail, only getting an overview by reading newspaper articles extensively. If they would choose to read novels, the pupils could choose freely themselves. However, he explained that since the word novel/literary work recently had been removed from the curriculum in vg1 and hence is not required in the competence aims, lately he had started thinking if reading a couple of short stories rather than a novel would be better invested time.

When talking about the reading of novels he said “some pupils do not experience it as reading for pleasure after a while, so I don’t think that always works as the intention”. He further explained that when he would let them read a self-selected book, many would just watch the film instead of reading the book. He found it to be a bit complicated to read the same book in a class because pupils read in different speeds and for different purposes. He explained that some would read for pleasure, while others would strive through the material without being motivated. He said that he had also tried to select two or three books that the pupils could choose between so that they read in groups, but there were advantages and disadvantages to that as well. He said that it would work to a certain degree.

In sum he was not sure about his opinion on extensive reading. This was much because the curriculum for vg1 does not require the reading of a novel. Also, he was not sure about to what degree a teacher should force a pupil to read a novel, explaining that “the old thought in me says that reading novels are important, but simultaneously, I am thinking that maybe in school contexts, several short stories can be as pleasurable”. Thor had used dramatization tasks with English classes after reading novels. He spent much time working

with plot and characters. When pupils had read different novels, he often gave them an analysis form that they should work with.

Thor explained that his pupils had sporadic homework, as he experienced that it was very varying to what degree pupils actually did it. However, he also added “they are very concerned about being prepared if they hear the word *test*”. Also, he tried not to base a lesson on the fact that pupils had done their homework. He meant that by not giving homework to every lesson, he could obtain that more pupils did it when they were actually given one, as they understood that it was important for that particular lesson. He explained that homework that he gave them could be reading, but also other things, explaining that he had recently given his vg1 class a homework that required them to interview their parents and grandparents about music. Later the pupils were to present the interviews in class.

Thor would encourage his pupils to read, and tell them that no matter what they were interested in they would always find texts in English about it. He hoped that his interest for literature could shine through in order to inspire pupils. When asked if he thought there was a reading culture in his classes he said “no” and added,

at least not in relation to literature. It is varying and I think that home conditions are decisive in relation to this. Those who are used to parents who read will read and those who are not will not read that much.

Furthermore when asked about reading cultures among teenagers in general today, he believed that this was very varying. He claimed that, “only a minority of teenagers read literature without getting told to do that in school”. Most pupils will meet English texts in other contexts, unconsciously because that is where they find literature about their interests, referring to himself and explaining that he started to read English because he was interested in pop music. He believed the case was the same for many teenagers today.

He also explained that they did not have a class in *English Literature and Culture* in vg3 that year, as there were not enough applicants, explaining that nationally the case was the same. Thor said that he wished there was a combination of the two courses in vg3, because when he taught the *Social English*, there were pupils there who had wished to take the literary course. He suggested one course in order to suit all interests, needs and competence aims. He said he believed that the split between these subjects would end in the coming years as it is ruining, as schools cannot offer literary courses, simply because pupils are not choosing to take it. He believed that the reason why pupils are not choosing this course is that very clever

pupils, “those who actually read literature”, he said, will choose to take science courses. Those who choose to take English, does it as a rather negative choice as they cannot handle science subjects and also because it is related to social science.

When asked about KL06 he said that he thought the curriculum for vg1 and vg3 were good, but that he thought that the fact that the split in the English subject in vg3 had given such negative results was sad. The curriculum for vg2 he found to be too similar to vg1 and explained that it was difficult to decide whether exam tasks were for vg1 or vg2. He was positive to an open curriculum in terms of methods and literary texts, as teachers are so different to each other, as long as the competence aims are fulfilled. He explained that there are certain restrictions in the curriculum in terms of what the pupils are supposed to know when they graduate, and he also believed that “it is less important in the English subject than the Norwegian subject that pupils have been acquainted with a so called canon”.

When asked about the differences in literature teaching the past 20 years, he explained that when he started working as a teacher, there was more focus on details in literature. A short story would have been divided into three or four parts, and there were much focus on checking homework and reading out loud. He believed this was a way to kill the joy of reading. Today he explained that rather than dividing texts up, he preferred that pupils would read one short story on one sitting. Also he added that he believed that one reads fewer short stories today, as we have access to so many other sources of information and that this has to be at the expense of something else.

Finally, when he was asked what could be done in the upper secondary in order to prepare pupils for university studies, he first explained that he thought that the university had gotten more similar to the upper secondary, with more class structures and more exams per year and more control earlier. Also he added, “I don’t know if it is necessary, well, there is a transition in both being 19 years old and go out and experience new things. I think it is natural that one should feel that one is finished with school and have gotten so grown up that one is about to do something completely new”. He said that he sometimes to be too much focus on making this kind of transition easier. Finally, Thor suggested, however, that certain initial courses at university could be a way to ease the transition for new students. This was both related to the responsibility aspect, but also academically for each course and what expectations there are. He added that this was something he believed that the university should be responsible for. When asked if he believed that the upper secondary should not approach the university in any way, he explained that, “yes, we can conduct a lecture now and

then, but lectures have become a scary word in the upper secondary”. This was based on the rule that at the school in which Thor works, they had been told that there should not be conducted lectures of more than 20 minutes. Their way of organizing teaching was based around so called, “triplettsamarbeid”, where three classes were put together and three teachers were responsible for each topic.

Lillian (62)

Lillian had been working as a teacher for 16 years, all of them in the upper secondary. She taught English in vg2 and vg3 “Social Studies English”, a total of ten hours a week. She also taught religion in vg3. Lillian is responsible for the English subject at her school. She had taken a Master’s degree in 2003. Her thesis was within linguistics, but did also have a literary aspect to it as it focused on linguistic features in Hedda Gabler.

When Lillian was asked about the focus of the English subject, she initially explained that she and other teachers were strongly dissatisfied with the solution of dividing the English subject into two separate fields in vg3. She would have liked to have subjects that were a mix between social science English and literature. She further highlighted the fact that schools do often not have enough money to offer both courses. At her school the pupils were equally divided on the two courses of the subject, but she explained that that was not the case everywhere.

When asked about whether she found the English subject to be a tool or an edification subject, she put the emphasis on the tool aspect, explaining that English is something that many pupils need when apply for jobs, especially in our region. She did not think that there is enough focus on literature in English teaching and said she thought there was too little fiction in the social science English course in vg3, although the subject involves a range of political systems and complex terminology. Lillian explained that there are pupils who want to read books and watch movies and this is also something that the teachers wish that they did. Also she was focused on not only basing the English teaching on factual topics such as politics. However, she added that pupils get tired of analysing texts, which they often do in Norwegian. She was followed up on this, as I asked her if there were other subjects that would cover literature instead of English. She would say Norwegian, but added “but that is

not in English. And I am thinking that treasures such as Shakespeare, although it is complicated, it is absolutely wonderful”.

Lillian also underlined that in order to develop vocabulary and knowledge pupils need to read more. She said she would tell her pupils to read and listen, because if they would find pleasure in reading that would help them develop their vocabulary. And then she added, “and maybe the cultural understanding”. Lillian was then asked what she believed the benefits of reading for pleasure would be, other than the vocabulary aspect, and she said knowledge about the culture and the society. Then she brought about films, and said she believed that to be an important way of acquiring such knowledge and skills, since there is a focus on compound texts today. Lillian believed films were important and underlined that we should not underestimate the value of this kind of literature. Then she emphasised the importance of the joy of reading fiction, not only news articles and fact books, to acquire metaphors and idiomatic expressions.

When asked if she found other aspects of the English subject more important than literature reading, she would not say more important, but equally important. She highlighted proficient basic skills and claimed that many Norwegian pupils overestimate their English proficiency. Lillian would often use authentic texts in her teaching, and explained that she found the textbooks to be a bit too informal, so that it would affect pupils negatively.

When asked about the transition to university and what possible challenges there would be, Lillian immediately said that she had wanted a cooperation between the upper secondary and the university for a long time. She believed that many pupils would get a shock once they approach the university because of the workload and the expectations. Her assumption was that there were too many subjects in the upper secondary and the teachers and pupils do not have time to go deep enough into these.

Lillian was then asked about how she believed the use of literature in the upper secondary could prepare pupils for further English studies at university, thereby suggesting that the upper secondary school could look explicitly at the syllabus of the university and discuss with lecturers here what to focus on in terms of texts, authors and literary periods.

Lillian said she tried to develop her pupils to become more independent. Also, she would try to help them see connections between the subjects and take advantage of it thus getting an overall understanding. She further highlighted the use of study techniques and the use of the English in classes as the only language allowed. This she paralleled to complex exam questions and analyses about literary devices and linguistic features, and she claimed

that pupils would get much for free if the English language was the only language spoken in English classes.

Lillian read for pleasure in her spare time. She read both in Norwegian and English, but she would prefer the original language. Her favourite genre was crime novels, but also other things in between. However, she added, “I do not necessarily read the newest literary works”. Then she explained that the reason why she read that genre was because she needed to relax. She would read approximately one book in two weeks. Yet, she acknowledged that she had problems with updating herself on new literature, and that that was something her pupils would do more often.

Lillian would conduct reading projects in her classes and would let her pupils choose which novel to read, at least once during the year. During some projects, they had read *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. This novel she explained was relevant for both English courses in the third grade. She held that it would apply to the “English Literature and Culture” subject as it related to the American Dream and the culture in Pakistan, and to “Social Studies English” as it involved terrorism. Lillian explained that they had seen the film afterwards and compared it with the book. Finally on this topic she said that she believed that it was important that English teachers read authentic English literature.

As far as material is concerned, Lillian used a textbook in her teaching, but she was not satisfied with it. She would use Internet pages such as NDLA (Norwegian Digital Learning Arena) and the textbook’s homepage to supply. She would use the textbook every week. Lillian found the structure of the textbook to be positive and she explained that for inexperienced teachers, it would be too much to teach without the textbook, but that in some subjects at their school, they did not use a textbook because of established text collections. Yet, Lillian explained that some pupils needed a rigid structure in the different courses and a textbook could provide that. She concluded with the fact that she would agree to teaching without a specific textbook, but there needed to be physical books and literature involved, as there was something about sitting down and reading books. Other than the textbook, Lillian would use Internet pages, specifically British and American newspapers, as competence aims in the curriculum hold that pupils have knowledge about international news. She would seldom copy from other places, as her experience as a teacher had provided her with a large collection of resources.

In “Social Studies English”, Lillian explained that there were short stories and poetry involved in illustrating periods they worked with. She explained that when they focused on

important parts of the history, they would work with how that period would be reflected today. One example was when they worked with the USA and African Americans, they would go back and focus on what their position were and if they were there voluntarily. Then she said, “and then we can look at literature for example *The Help*. That is current. So in that way there is literature, short stories and poems. And we read no less than two books during a school year”. Lillian explained that the pupils would be asked later during the school year to choose their own novel, as long as they could legitimize it according to the curriculum. In that way, Lillian believed pupils would grow up and be more prepared for challenges at university.

On the final exam in “Social Studies English”, the pupils would more or less only be given only questions related to the social aspects of the subject, not the literary. She saw this as negative, as there was supposed to be a certain focus on it according to the curriculum. When she was asked what she thought about not including literary topics on exams, she couldn't find an accurate answer. However, she explained that she thought there was a gap in relation to this, as she found there to be too much focus on literature in “English Literature and Culture”. Lillian would liked that different aspects of these alternatives of the English subject would be addressed, so that pupils would get to develop both cultural, historic and literary understanding.

Reading strategies was something that her pupils would not specifically be taught in the English subject. She did not know whether this was done in the Norwegian subject, but she believed this was something they had been introduced to on the first year. Lillian was thinking that this was an area where they had to improve in relation to collaboration with the university. Also, she added that she would often tell her pupils to paraphrase texts, especially when she taught the “English Literature and Culture” class and they would work through Shakespeare's works, such as *Hamlet*. Additionally, Lillian explained that she would advice her pupils not to read each single word of a text in order to understand it, but to instead read it from the context. However, that could be a dangerous strategy if pupils would lose the understanding because of that.

When asked about possible reasons to why pupils read for details, Lillian immediately mentioned the primary school and a large focus on for example translating words across the languages. Also she added the large segmentation instead of using the language naturally such as one acquires the first language.

Lillian would apply an extensive reading approach twice during a school year. She said that some pupils chose to do a literary project, and then they would read more. She would

use about an hour during these projects, but added, “I think that is smart, but it is not always that we dare, because some pupils are absolutely not used to reading”. She was under the impression that her pupils did read their novels during these projects, as they in some way or another had to prove that they had through oral or written activities. Furthermore, Lillian added that the negative side to this is that these readings are obligatory because it is in school contexts and because of this the pupils are assessed. She explained that when the pupils had to do their analysis they had to discuss literary devices and features and underlined that it would be difficult if they had not done the reading. She also said, “In a way, they should be allowed to just sit down and read, because it is entertaining and fun and it gives them something”.

Lillian would give her pupils homework and it was expected that they read at home. That week she had given them a reading comprehension task on political systems. She would tell them that they would be evaluated in class, based on their contribution in a discussion. Lillian believed that the fact that her pupils had topics they needed to prepare at home before focusing on it at school would prepare them for the lecture-type based teaching at university. She would say that there was a reading culture among her pupils in her English classes. Although she believed it was very varied among pupils and that many would rather watch a movie. Lillian would also encourage them to watch news.

Lillian found it to be negative that the curriculum for vg2 “International English” is very similar to that of vg1. Her biggest wish was however for the third grade English’s two alternatives to merge into one with literature, culture and social studies, so that pupils could not choose not to study literature or social studies. When she was asked why she wished for this, she said, “Because I think that they separate it too much. It is either or. It would serve as a better preparation for further studies if they could attend courses that would incorporate all these topics”. She also added that she found the fact that exams in vg3 would not include topics on literature to be a scorn against literature’s position, although it is present to some degree in the “Social Studies English” curriculum. Lillian did not want to have more guidelines or restrictions on which texts or authors to use in the English subject in the upper secondary. She did however acknowledge that this could be helpful if it was based on the same syllabus that pupils meet when enrolling in university studies.

Finally Lillian was asked about what measures she believed would be the most effective in order to ease the transition from upper secondary school to university. First, she mentioned to look at the reading lists of the university and try to prepare some of the same material so that pupils would be introduced to these texts on an earlier stage. Then she

mentioned more communication between the institutions, suggesting more visits from the upper secondary to university. This was according to Lillian something that could give the cleverest students more motivation, as they would “be able to smell what is coming”.

Mary (27)

Special case. 10 minutes of recording and an additional document with written answers.

Mary was in her first year of teaching. She taught two vg1 classes English and history. She had taken a bachelor degree in history with English and PPU.

When asked what she found the English subject in the upper secondary to be focusing most on Mary said cultural aspects and referred to the curriculum, emphasising that it is more or less what teachers make of it themselves. Mary explained that she liked to use literature and when asked if she believed that there was enough use of literature in the upper secondary, she said that she at least tried to incorporate much of her interest into her teaching. Mary believed the use and focus on literature to be important as English is spread all over the world and the fact that one can read so many different genres from different authors from all over the world could teach us a lot about different cultures. Apart from cultural understanding, Mary highlighted other incentives for the use of literature such as reading in order to improve vocabulary and linguistic skills.

When asked what kinds of challenges pupils would meet in the transition from upper secondary to university Mary had a hard time pointing to any specific ones. After a while she would mention grammar and phonetics. She was then followed up on this and presented to the challenge of differences in terms of reading requirements between the institutions and Mary said, “I at least remember that what I found to be specifically fun at the university was the fact that there was so much focus on literature. Because I find that to be much more interesting than all the grammar and phonetics courses”.

With regards to what can be done in the upper secondary in order to prepare pupils for the transition to university, Mary believed it was important to introduce pupils to different kinds of texts from different kinds of periods and authors. Linking texts to the history would according to Mary give pupils a greater insight into why texts were written in the ways they were. Also, she would highlight the importance of analysing texts in order to find a hidden meaning beyond a piece of literature.

Mary read for pleasure in her spare time. She would read historic novels and preferred the original language. She had just finished the book *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which depicts the Nigerian civil war.

She would use a textbook in her teaching, and when she was asked how important she found it to be, she explained that because she is a brand new teacher the textbook had been very important to her as she could use it as a recipe as there are texts, tasks and references in it. She did however assert that when she has been working for some years and built up her own text collections, she was likely to be focusing more on the things that she found to be important, explaining that you do not necessarily need the textbook, as long as you follow the competence aims. Mary found the quality of the textbook to be good, but explained that the reason for using it was because she was so inexperienced. She would like to only use her own material.

In addition to the textbook, Mary would use Internet pages, often related to the textbook. As far as reading strategies are concerned, Mary explained that she had barely touched upon it, but said, “I wish that my pupils are conscious about how they best learn themselves and the fact that there are many way of handling a text all relating to which type of text one is presented with”.

When Mary was presented with the concept of extensive reading, she could only vaguely relate to it and claimed that this was something that she did not apply in her teaching. Then, when she was asked how she used literature in her teaching, she explained that she would either read a text together with her pupils, or let them read it themselves. Then she would try to work together with the class on the theme, plot and characters in terms of analysis. She then explained that she had applied a project where the pupils could choose their own book, as she found it to be important that the pupils had chosen their own reading for it to be fun and pleasurable. Mary found it difficult to estimate the total amount of time spent on reading during a week, but she said, “it is hard to say because the book is more or less only texts, factual, stories and short stories. So I guess we spend quite a lot of time on reading I would say”.

Mary would not give her pupils homework or expect that they read at home before class. Rather, she would read the text together with her pupils, or listen to it on tape. She believed that some pupils read at home, but would not say that there was a reading culture in her classes. Generally, Mary was under the impression that teenagers read little today, but she was not sure that was a fact.

A greater cooperation between the upper secondary and the university was Mary's initial suggestion as far as creating a smoother transition between the institutions is concerned. She believed that if the university knew what the pupils had been through academically in the upper secondary and the new students knew more about what is expected and required of them when they start their higher education, transitions could be smoother.

7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings based on the seven teacher interviews. The main aim is to look at general trends and differences among the teachers in terms of perceptions of and practices related to the use of literature in English teaching and the transition to university. Furthermore, the discussion aims to look at what the teachers believe can be done in order to ease the transition to university.

The discussion is carried out in such a manner that it focuses on interesting findings from the different interviews, these further accompanied with other corresponding or contrasting findings on the same issues from the other informants. The structure of the chapter is arranged according to the research questions of the thesis, *how do Norwegian upper secondary teachers perceive the position and use of literature in the English subject? And what are the challenges in the transition to university, and what measures can be taken to ease the transition?*

All the interview sessions developed differently in terms of order and focus due to the natural progression of the qualitative method, hence the discussion does not consistently follow the structure of the interview guide. Nevertheless, a certain focus on bringing up the same issues has contributed to the impression that the findings have provided comparable data.

7.2 The position of literature in the English subject

According to the teacher informants the largest focus of the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary today is that which encompasses social, cultural and historical topics and not that which emphasises learning about and reading of literature. Lisa for example, claimed that the English subject had almost become a social science subject.

Although the teachers were spread across the upper secondary school on different grades and courses of the English subject, all of them more or less explained that they believed that there was too little focus on reading and the use of literature in English teaching. Evidently, there seems to be a common agreement about a utilitarian aspect as a reason for less attention to literature in English teaching. Several teachers featured the fact that literature in today's society is not always seen as useful because it is not believed to provide immediate reward, compared to many other fields, such as the development of communicative skills and

cultural insight. Among those who claimed so was John, who had taken a literary Master's degree and who tried his best to implement as much fictional reading as possible into his teaching. He explained that literature and other aesthetic subjects cannot be measured and consequently many pupils today do not regard it as valuable.

It may seem as some teachers are operating with a rather narrow definition of literature, which isolates the different components of the English subject, such as society, culture and literature so that they are not seen in relation to each other, but as fragments of the subject. These aspects are however important components of literature as the latter presents features that relates to a certain society, culture and historical period and a holistic approach to it can contribute to an understanding and insight into the worlds of others, as well as one's own. One possible explanation to such a focus of the subject is the curriculum. Firstly, because the English subject curriculum divides the subject into different areas, the focus is easily put on these alone. Moreover, it can be argued that the curriculum's heavy focus on the importance of development of language skills, as well as cultural and social understanding, results in literature not being a subject in its own right. The result of this can be that the pupils lack necessary literary competence and hence motivation and incentives for the engagement with literature.

Secondly, the focus on competence aims subsequently broken down to learning aims, and in some cases aims for each lesson, may result in a too extensive focus on goal achievement on a detailed level so that the overall understanding of the subject is weakened. This can be seen in relation to the Norwegian father's claim that the pupil becomes a product of the competence aims rather than develops the ability to set its own goals for life. This is further in compliance with Skaftun's (2009:15) assertion that learning output cannot simply be measured at the end of a lesson and the school's general, long-term aims cannot be reduced to the number of competence aims achieved. This is also problematized by P.D. Pearson (2007), cited in Skaftun (2009:15) who claims that the American school system's foundation is under threats because learning input and output is formulated too explicitly, consequently resulting in a weakening of the teacher profession, the transferability of learning and individual teaching. The large focus on competence aims can have implications for future school years and subsequently the transition to university as it may hinder the pupil from developing an overall and general understanding of the subject and their ability to reflect and understand the world. Lisa's assertion that "we have removed ourselves from the integrated human being and a holistic view of the society in general [...]" illuminates a possible result of

the focus on competence aims and what is useful in life, consequently minimizing the use of literature.

Bearing in mind the diverse groups of pupils attending the three different upper secondary schools, many of the teachers said that quite a lot of the pupils had already made up their minds about educational paths and jobs, before starting the upper secondary school. Caroline pointed to this and explained that pupils are to a large extent focused on what they need for further studies. The large focus on communicative skills in the curriculum can be an obvious reason for this. Furthermore, John explained that communicative skills and knowledge about other cultures are aspects that pupils see as useful, as this is something they are going to need when they continue their studies abroad, or in general in the society. As several of the teachers pointed out, many of the pupils that are clever and that put a lot of effort into school work, do not choose to attend English courses after vg1 as they rather choose science subjects and maths. On the other hand, both John, Katy and Lillian claimed that many Norwegian pupils overestimate their English proficiency, which is often, more or less only acquired through TV and other media. Hellekjær (2007:13) has claimed that pupils' shortcomings in terms of language proficiency manifest itself during the transition to university where a growing amount of syllabus is consistently in English.

This could further serve as an incentive for the English subject to become compulsory beyond the first year of the upper secondary school. This is not only related to further studies in general, but also directly tied to the English year study, as the university risks having students who have not taken more English than the first year. This particular challenge is even more prevalent as the English subject is divided into two different courses in the third grade, which contributes to pupils graduating the upper secondary level with a varied English competence.

The two courses that pupils can choose between in vg3, "English Literature and Culture" and "Social Studies English", are not equally popular among pupils. The former is not attended to the degree that the latter is. In one of the schools that interviews for this thesis were carried out, they only offered the "Social Studies English", as there had not been enough applicants for the literature course. Katy, who worked at that school, believed that this was a contribution to literature's death, strongly supported by Maiké Griit (2013), who has claimed that gates to knowledge are being closed in Norway as pupils abandon literature subjects. Griit (2013) states that both references, insight and language skills vanish as pupils choose not to take literature courses and goes as far as claiming that English literature from all over the

world is disappearing from schools and subsequently from the society in general. Katy said that pupils simply do not want to read books and that measures need to be taken in relation to this. Thor, at the same school, and also Lillian at one of the other schools, found it negative that the course is divided in two and they believed that this had to be changed in the coming years. Griit (2013) suggests one common English course in vg3 so that pupils at least enrol in university with some literary competence. This was a thought she shared with both Thor and Lillian, which may imply that teachers are afraid that pupils are missing out on too much valuable material by choosing either social or literary English in the third grade.

7.2.1 Reading cultures and attitudes to literature

Clearly, there is a common perception among the teachers that fictional reading among teenagers today is not very widespread. Relating to the mentioned focus on utilitarianism, the teachers seem to struggle with legitimizing the use of literature to the pupils and ways to engage them in it, as many of the teachers told of other ways among the pupils of being entertained, such as watching films. John would apply a lack of reading of literature to teenagers today, as they find entertainment in various other channels. Caroline held that there were not many pupils “glowing” when they had to read and Thor explained that he was under the impression that “only a minority of teenagers read literature without getting told to do that in school”. Thor and Katy also asserted that home conditions are decisive in relation to who reads, Katy explicitly mentioning “the cultural capital one gets from the home”. A common belief among the teachers was that when reading is done in school contexts, the pupils automatically attach it to something negative that is forced on them, and it gets focused on details.

The low degree of literature reading that the teachers reported is in compliance with Hayles’ (2010:62) claim that people, and especially the younger, are reading less regular literature such as novels, plays and poems. Katy pointed to the fragmentation of our information society due to all the different ways of being entertained, explaining that, “pupils are not on for a long time” and that she struggles to keep pupils’ attention for a longer period, asserting that they are engaged in so many things nowadays, shifting from one thing to another. There is no doubt that this is due to the large impact of screens and the amount of time spent surfing, reading fragments of texts and multitasking. This can be seen in relation to Carr’s (2008) statement about how his own reading has changed and the fact that he struggles to stay on for a long time. It is very likely that this is also the case for many others, especially

pupils in the upper secondary judging by what the teachers say about their pupils' engagement and attitudes to literature. Consequently, new ways of reading and other types of literature call for new ways of teaching and engaging pupils in literature and it is seemingly a need for this in the upper secondary. Likewise, there is also a need at university level to modernize the teaching in order to capture new students and take advantage of the resources that they bring to university in terms of digital skills. By doing so, pupils can continue building on the competence they acquired in the upper secondary school when they approach university.

It is even more critical that the institutions develop a corresponding idea of what literature is and what it is good for. Furthermore, is it important to remember that many of those in the upper secondary and subsequently English studies at university, are our future teachers. Griit (2013) poses a worry that if literature keeps being abandoned, new teachers will not spend time on the field of literature because they cannot use it in their future jobs. It is important that the upper secondary maintains the use of literature so that these future teachers will consequently spend time on literature in the English subject, in order to develop language skills, cultural insight and personal growth.

7.3 Functions of literature

The English subject in Norway is both a tool for language development and for general edification, according to KL06, and the former seems to be of primary concern among the teachers. The word "useful" was mentioned frequently during the interviews implying that often, the focus is on acquiring the instrumental benefits of the subject, such as language skills. The curriculum has a huge focus on the importance of acquiring necessary language skills in order to be able to function in the society and this focus no doubt effects teacher practices. The fact that English is a global language is yet another incentive for the large focus on development of linguistic skills and communicative competence.

Across the interviews, it often seems as if literature is used for the sake of developing these language skills, and not because of the aesthetic functions of it. Katy stated that she did not use literature for the sake of literature, but rather in order to illustrate cultural topics and Thor said that he would use examples from literary texts when working with British and American Societies. Caroline explained that she would expect pupils to read a chapter of related literature if they were working with topics such as the British school system. However, cultural topics are relevant as the curriculum focuses on the cross-cultural knowledge, but in this context it seems as if the literature is only used as examples which implies that the pupils

do not get to read whole texts, only extracts. However, this way of using literature corresponds to and fulfils aims of the cultural model, which “enables students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own” (Carter and Long, 1991:2). At the university, on the other hand, the literary work or text is often the starting point of a lecture and factual texts on history and culture are used as supplements.

Moreover, the edification perspective seems not to be of greatest concern and there are many possible reasons for this. When asked why they used literature in their teaching, several of the teachers mentioned the development of language skills, such as vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar. This way of using literature corresponds to the language model, where literature is justified because it develops linguistic skills (Carter and Long, 1991:2). It is highly likely that this is why many teachers use literature in English teaching, as they know that pupils need to develop their English proficiency. It is even more attractive to the pupils as it gives them an incentive to keep reading. John and Lisa were the only two who first highlighted that literature provides pupils with important references, how to cope with the world and develops the ability to reflect and to participate in the society. Lisa claimed that since there had been a large focus on science subjects during the last 15 years, reading of literature had been regarded more as “cake decoration”, implying that this was not for everybody. Furthermore, she pointed out that if teachers had known more about the advantages of reading, both in terms of overall education and language development, there would have been used more literature in school.

Lisa’s claim that society needs to step away from the focus on utilitarianism and the fact that we also need some unpractical human beings is interesting as it breaks away from the practice of many of the other teachers. Seemingly, she uses the term “unpractical” because she is aware that literature is seen as less important among many, not providing necessary skills in the society, and often not appealing to teenagers. She is focused on the pleasure aspect of reading and highlights that her approach does not put any pressure on the pupil in terms of when to finish, what to read and complex subsequent evaluation. This is a focus Lisa shares with John.

Lisa and John’s view of reading correspond to author Neil Gaiman’s. This is a view of literature and fiction which is seemingly guided by something that resembles the growth model, which focuses on developing pupils that are encouraged and who engage with literary texts and that it is not important what they read. John also highlighted that he was focused on letting the pupils read more or less anything, as long as it suited their level of proficiency.

This is in compliance with Vicary's (2013:78) assertion that pupils need to read texts that are easy so that they avoid too many difficult words and an excessive use of a dictionary, which Hellekjær has shown is a habit among Norwegian pupils. Learning in the growth model, as opposed to the language or cultural model, is not easily tested in terms of examinations, but rather how well the teachers succeed in developing pupils who "carry with them beyond the classroom an enjoyment and love for literature which is renewed as they continue to engage with literature throughout their lives" (Carter and Long, 1991:3).

Gaiman is concerned with the preservation of libraries and their enormous importance in developing pleasure reading among children, and the fact that it provides information of all types. Gaiman refers to a delusion among people that a library is only "a shelf of books" as it then can seem antiquated. Interestingly, Lisa refers to her pupils and the fact that many believe that a librarian is "a person who moves books between the shelves". She emphasised the importance of learning pupils how to use a library and the librarian, this being important in the subsequent transition to university.

7.4 Materials

All the teachers except from Katy used a textbook in their teaching. Katy, however, had used one slavishly the year before and claimed that she used more texts in her teaching then. This may be due to the fact that she was fairly newly educated at the point of the interviews and found the textbook to be helping her in terms of structure and texts during her first years. As far as the teachers' satisfaction with the textbook is concerned, they had diverse opinions about it, but quite many of them were critical about the textbooks at their respective schools. Katy, Thor, Lisa and Lillian found some of the textbooks not to be suiting their needs, as they were out-dated, but that's it would function as a reference. Mary and Lisa claimed that many of the texts were childish, out-dated and unstructured. This is possibly another opinion about the use of constructed texts for second language learners, reflecting what Fenner (2005:90-91) claimed about texts that targeted the English core family's daily life in textbooks used in M74, contributing to a stereotypical cultural view. There is however 40 years between M74 and KL06, and it is a shame that there are still such, "tedious" reading present in textbooks today.

The textbook tradition also incorporates the dimension of fragmented reading as textbooks often include excerpts from novels or drama, which can be directly damaging to the

pupil's motivation for reading, as it does not give them the satisfaction of reading a complete text. Thor explained that he was not sure about the use of novels in English teaching, as it is problematic to work through it because of time limitation. Rather, he suggested more use of short stories for the pupil to experience finishing a text. The reading of a series of short and fragmented texts, contributes to a focus on details, as Urquhart and Weir (1998:103) explain, and this can have further implications for the transition to university when pupils are introduced to longer and more demanding texts. It seemed as if the teachers were aware of this difference between texts in the upper secondary and on university.

John was not fond of the thematic structure of the textbook and had divided his teaching into different modules, such as "Great Britain" and "the U.S.", resembling the teaching structure at university. Others, such as Caroline, found the textbook to provide a necessary structure and help her navigate in the subject. It differed across the teachers how important they found the textbook to be for their teaching, but the overall impression from the interviews was that they all supplement with other materials resulting in a highly diverse teaching across classes and schools. All the teachers explained that they used the Internet as a source, and the use of newspapers seems to be quite widespread. Again, this shows the large focus on usefulness in English teaching. Lisa for example claimed that there was a large focus on "aspects that the pupils are satisfied with such as politics, social science and geography".

Due to the variety of different grades, classes, courses and schools, there does not seem to be a certain pattern as far as the use of fictional texts are concerned. The main reason for this, however, is the fact that the curriculum does not list any texts in detail. Yet, the different titles that the teachers featured during the interviews are all fairly recent, most likely because of the competence aim in KL06 stating that pupils should be able to "elaborate on and discuss a selection of literature and factual prose from the period 1950 up to the present"¹⁷. Nevertheless, these titles, for example the novels, *The Help*, *Hunger Games*, *Secret Life of Bees*, *Small Island*, *Kite Runner* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are all titles published after 2002. It may seem as if these are used in order to try to engage pupils, as several of the teachers explained that they have a hard time legitimizing their use of literature to their pupils. For instance, Thor explained that he would use literature that had been trendy during recent years.

When given the opportunity to choose their own book, these are some of the books that pupils choose because it is something they want to read. This is decisive for the pupils'

¹⁷ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. "English curriculum for the upper secondary"

motivation and interest to read and conforms to the foundations for extensive reading proclaimed by, among others, Day and Bamford (2004: 7-8), Vicary (2013:78). One may also argue that they have been chosen as most of them have been made into films, providing yet another incentive for the pupil to choose it as there is no doubt that many would rather watch the movie than read the book. According to Thor, this particular fact was contributing to him not being sure about applying such reading projects in his classes, because he knew that pupils consciously chose books that had been made into films to avoid reading the book.

7.5 Classroom practices

All the teachers had conducted extensive reading programs in their classes, even though not all of them were familiar with the term “extensive reading”. All the teachers except from Thor required the reading of fiction during these projects. Thor found the reading of newspapers in such programs to fulfil the same aims, as the pupils read many articles without going into details. This view corresponds to the language model, but it is argued to be far removed from the growth model and the cultural model, as it does not involve the reading of fiction. Most of the time, the teachers would let their pupils choose their own books, sometimes the whole classes would read the same one, two or three books. The time spent on reading books during these projects varied across the teachers, but seldom they spent more than one hour during a week. John and Lisa highlighted that as long as the pupils had chosen their material themselves, the material suited their linguistic level, they were allowed to choose something else if they changed their mind and they did not have any pressure put on them in terms of when to finish, it seemed to be successful. This is in compliance with some important prerequisites for successful extensive reading programs, suggested by scholars such as Day and Bamford (2004:7-8), Vicary (2013:78) and Drew and Sørheim, (2009:27-28 and 48). They hold that letting pupils choose their own books, not putting time limits on the reading or too much pressure on the pupil in terms of evaluation, providing them with enough time to read and enough material, and encouraging reading are important factors for extensive reading to be experienced as pleasurable by the pupil.

It may seem that some of these prerequisites are lacking in the projects initiated by some of the teachers. The time aspect is a challenge in school contexts as there are only two to five hours of English a week. Caroline explained that when she spent a lesson reading with her pupils, much time would get lost in delivering messages and helping pupils find a new book if they had forgotten it. Seemingly, there have also been quite a lot of evaluation

included in the extensive reading projects that some of the teachers referred to. This can be a possible explanation as to why pupils regard reading in school contexts as something forced on them and the reason as to why pupils maintains a focus on details.

The way that the teachers approach literary texts in the classroom is completely different from the traditions at university. This suggests that there is a huge transition between the institutions in relation to the use of literature. Most of the teachers would either listen to the text on a CD or let the pupils read it in pairs. Katy and Thor worked in a school where lecture-like lessons were not preferred implying that they seldom were lecturing pupils on literary texts or other topics, rather use more discussions. Apparently, discussion of texts is common strategy among the teachers. Lisa explained that she was concerned with letting pupils read the texts together with a peer in order to make them believe in themselves and be confident when reading literature. This is possibly an important aspect of improvement at university as reading together or in groups is seldom conducted here. Besides, there seems to be a need to develop self-confidence in pupils as far as reading of literature is concerned, as the teachers state that there are negative attitudes towards literature among pupils.

Furthermore, it seems as if literary texts are frequently used as mere references in the upper secondary school. Seemingly, social and cultural topics are the main focus, and literature is used, as Lisa explained quite ironically, “as cake decoration”. This is illustrated by Katy’s claim that, “if the literature suits our topic and if it is related to important cultural aspects, we use it to exemplify, so it is not exactly literature for the sake of literature”. This practice is likely due to the fact that this is what engages pupils and something they regard as useful. This again shows the use of fragmented texts is quite common in the upper secondary. Lisa’s approach to literature is more similar to that on university. Additionally, several authors and texts on her syllabus are also present in the syllabus for the literature courses at university, such as T.S Eliot, Samuel Beckett and *Hamlet*. However, Lisa teaches the “English Literature and Culture”, which does naturally have a larger focus on the use of literature. Her classroom approach however corresponds to that of the other teachers with a focus on discussion and reading in pairs.

7.6 Expectations in the upper secondary

Not many of the teachers would give their pupils homework on a regular basis. Only Caroline said that she gave homework for each lesson. John, Thor and Lillian would give pupils occasional homework, often based on what they would need for upcoming lessons, or topics

they had already been working with. However, nearly all the teachers said that they encouraged pupils to read at home, but often it was not required. In relation to the notion of voluntary reading, many of the teachers were under the impression that reading literature is not common among pupils today.

A surprising finding was that nearly all the teachers preferred that the pupils had not read the text at home prior to the lesson, but that the class read the text together. Several of the teachers explained that this was because it was damaging when some pupils had not done it. This further implies that it is common that many pupils do not conduct the assigned reading and that teachers are adjusting their teaching according to this. This is in large contrast to the practices at university, and an indication that the difference in practices between the institutions may contribute to a complex transition for pupils.

At university, more or less all lectures have a topic, whether it is related to grammar, history or a particular novel, and there is always expected that the student has read prior to the session. From university perspective, it may seem as there is not put enough expectations on pupils in the upper secondary today. By letting pupils go through three years (provided that they have chosen English) without demanding regular work and reading, the transition to university is going to be hard for pupils who attend the English year-study. On the other hand, one may even argue that there are less demands put on students at the university, as it is taken for granted that students do their reading prior to a lecture. The seemingly loose structure in terms of preparation requirement in the upper secondary may influence the pupils negatively in a transitional perspective, as a greater amount of responsibility is required when they approach the university.

Paradoxically, it is likely that pupils would protest if they were confronted with the fact that they are not given enough homework in the upper secondary school. This is because of all the competence and learning aims that they are expected to fulfil across all their subjects, and it is probably the voluntary reading that they sacrifice as a result of this, simply because there is not enough time. Adding to this that the pupil did not choose the “Literature and Culture” course in vg3, one understands that pupils may struggle to keep up with English studies and its requirements. This was also highlighted by both John and Thor, who claimed that those who actually succeed are those that read outside the school context.

It seemed that across the interviews, the teachers overall impression of the curriculum was that it was a document with some positive sides and some negative. Katy found the competence aims to be too broad and ambitious, the latter she shared with John, who did not

feel that he could go enough into texts because of the lack of time. More or less all the teachers seemed to be satisfied with the fact that the curriculum enables the teacher to choose freely between methods and texts. This is believed to be due to the teachers being individualists, also explicitly pointed out by Lisa. Paradoxically, although they preferred the structure of the curriculum as it is in terms of openness and interpretation, they could all see possible advantages with more guidance on texts and methods to use. All the teachers acknowledged that this would ease the transition to university, as pupils would inhabit a more similar academic background. Caroline, for example, explained that the pupils would have a “package” when they approach the university, consequently making it easier for those who are handed these new students.

7.7 The transition to university

The transition from upper secondary to university may seem as an aspect that has not been focused enough on in the upper secondary and vice versa from university perspective. The overall impression when confronting the teachers with this particular transition was that it seemed that they believed that university was something distant and removed from their everyday. Surprisingly, many of the teachers struggled to point out possible challenges pupils meet during the transition to university. This sheds light on the fact that there is not enough communication between the institutions, and that there needs to be so in order to make the educational system more continuous. Also, it may seem as the teachers, especially those who are not newly educated know too little about the current teaching at university and many of them asked for more cooperation and communication across the system. Caroline stated that, “in many ways we are colleagues, us working in the upper secondary and those at the university. We should have visited each other in order for them to know where their students come from and for us to know where we are sending them”. This sheds light on the importance of communication between the institutions and provides an incentive for more visits and discussions.

Although the focus on more communication is needed among the teachers, they frequently highlighted that there should still be abstraction between the institutions as they are traditionally separate. John asserted that the university should keep its academic level, and it was the responsibility of the upper secondary to adjust to this. He further claimed that there is supposed to be a certain distance between the institutions, supported by Thor who asserted

that as a new student, the feeling that one has finished school and is ready for something completely new is important.

7.7.1 Challenges in the transition to university

The large text load at the university and a limited vocabulary were two of the challenges in the transition to university that the teachers featured most frequently. In relation to a limited vocabulary, several of the teachers also mentioned the excessive use of dictionaries by pupils in order to understand words, thus engaging in a too detailed reading that complicates the overall understanding of the text. This is in compliance with Hellekjær's (2005) findings that Norwegian pupils read too much for details. A too narrow vocabulary is additionally in agreement with Grabe's (1988:63) claim that "the shortage of a massive receptive vocabulary [...] is the greatest single impediment to fluent reading by ESL students", suggesting that the teachers are aware of this factor and they seem to be trying to compensate for it with the use of extensive reading projects.

They further suggested making the English subject compulsory in vg2 and vg3 and more reading of longer texts as measures to be taken in the upper secondary. Setting up introductory courses at the university was another suggestion in order for pupils to be explicitly informed about the requirements and the expectations put on them. They believed that such introductory courses at the university, teaching new students about reading strategies, writing skills and literature could be a step towards preparing them for university

Although the teachers suggested several ways of easing the transition it is surprising to see how little focus they had on the subsequent transition to university. Too little knowledge on what to do to prepare pupils and too many competence aims are apparently two reasons for this. However, there should not be a dichotomy between preparing pupils for university studies and fulfilling competence aims, but it is likely that the large focus on the aims prevents a holistic approach to the subjects that would provide pupils with abilities to reflect and be critical. Lisa's claim that the Norwegian lower and upper secondary schools are vacuums and that pupils are not met with the real world before they approach the university, is likely to be true, based on both the fact that lecturers are sensing that pupils are not managing all the reading assigned, but also the overall impression of the interviews.

The teachers were aware of the large text load awaiting new students at the university. Still, more or less all acknowledged a lack of focus on reading strategies. This will be discussed in the following section.

7.7.2 Reading strategies

The ability to adjust ones reading according to the different types of texts one meet with is an important prerequisite for proficient reading to occur (Grabe, 2009:7, Anderson, 2000a, Urquhart and Weir, 1998:100). These skills are decisive and a requirement for successful transition to university, because of the dynamics and the complexity of the syllabus. Reading strategies are inherent in the development of reading and are mentioned in the framework for the basic skills in KL06.

The teachers revealed a low focus on reading strategies in their teaching. Thor explained that he had focused on it “to a certain degree”, explicitly mentioning that he tried to “remind pupils about when to skim and scan and search for details” and tell them when they could just relax with the text. John mentioned that he was concerned with the pupils not reading too much for detail and adjust the reading according to the text type and the aim. The latter is in compliance with what both Grabe and Stoller (2002:138) and Urquhart and Weir, (1998:100) emphasise in relation to reading strategies. John also mentioned that he would introduce the BISON strategy to his pupils. This is not directly related to the notion of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning, but rather a learning strategy. According to Udir.no, it focuses on working with pictures, introduction, headings and difficult words in texts¹⁸. The other teachers acknowledged that they did not focus on reading strategies in their teaching, simply because they did not know enough about it or because they didn’t see it as important enough. On two occasions, the teachers mentioned that this was something they believed would be put more focus on in the Norwegian subject.

This particular finding was not a surprising one, and it is likely one of the reasons as to why new students struggle to follow the teaching at university, simply because they do not know how to adjust their reading according to the type of text (Hellekjær, 2007). This is not only in relation to literature, but all kinds of texts. The one-year study at the university offers a range of fictional texts, but it also requires the reading of complicated factual texts and the student need to be proficient enough to be able to apply different reading strategies.

A possible explanation for the insignificant focus on reading strategies could be that it is not explicitly mentioned in the competence aims for the English subject, hence it is not seen as important enough because there are so many other aims to be concerned with. Reading strategies are however featured in the framework for basic skills under *reading*, but it is likely that this is something that teachers are not conscious enough about. Furthermore, the teachers

¹⁸ Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. 2010. “BISON-blikk”

are seemingly undermining the value of such strategies because it is required that pupils can master reading when they have gotten so far in the school system as the upper secondary level. Consequently, knowledge about different reading strategies, how to apply them and their importance for academic reading seems to be a field that needs to be put more emphasis on in the upper secondary.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed at exploring how upper secondary teachers perceive the position and use of literature in the English subject in Norway. The topic grew out from a need at the university to know more about the position and use of literature in upper secondary school in order to have a greater insight into the backgrounds of new students. Thus, this study has also looked at the transition between the upper secondary and university in terms of the challenges in the transition to university and what measures can be taken to ease this transition.

The following research questions were raised, “How do Norwegian upper secondary teachers perceive the position and use of literature in the English subject?” and “What are the challenges in to the transition to university, and what measures can be taken to in order to ease this transition?”

The project included seven interviews with English teachers in three different upper secondary schools in the Stavanger/Sandnes region. These interview sessions provided valuable insight into the position of literature in their subject, their practices and their thoughts about the transition and possible measures to ease it.

The interview sessions indicated that the teachers find literature’s position in school to be weakened as they told of a larger focus on social, cultural and historical aspects in English teaching. For this reason, the English subject has seemingly gotten closer to a social science subject. However, across the interviews, the teachers explained that they believed there was a too low focus on literature in the English subject. The concept of utilitarianism was featured frequently as one reason for this. Seemingly, pupils are very interested in learning about things that they need beyond the upper secondary, and politics, social science and culture are such aspects that are often seen as more useful. A consequence of this is that fewer pupils are attending the vg3 literature course.

An overall impression of the interviews is that it seems as if the use of literature in the English subject today is one big compromise between the teacher and the pupils and it is no doubt that the teachers are struggling to legitimize their use of literature. Once the reading is associated with school contexts, it becomes an obligation and pupils regard it as something that is forced on them. This implies that there is need for a reconsideration of the use of literature and there needs to be developed new ways of engaging pupils with fiction. However, it is not only the upper secondary that needs a reconsideration of the use and importance of literature. Because of the new ways of reading as a result of our modern

technology era, the university has to rethink what reading and literature is in order to engage newly enrolled students who have gone through three years of upper secondary with much use of other types of media than the printed book.

The use of literature in the upper secondary classroom is very different from the practice at the university. The teachers explained that they would go through texts with pupils, listen to it on a CD, discuss it in groups, and they would not require the pupils to have read the text prior to the lesson. The teachers would not give homework on a regular basis, which implies that pupils are not used to prepare for lessons in the upper secondary to the degree that is expected at university. The use of literature by the teachers often corresponds to the language model, which aims at using literature as a tool for the development of linguistic skills. This is in compliance with the fact that the focus on utilitarianism has a strong position in the upper secondary school. Furthermore, the culture model is also represented in the teaching, showing that cultural knowledge is significant and seen as useful beyond the school context. The growth model, on the other hand is only shown in the teaching of two of the teachers, seemingly because literature within such a model is difficult to assess in school contexts.

Extensive reading approaches that aims to develop reading for pleasure was used by all the teachers, but it varied to which degree the factors for successful reading programs were present among the different reading projects applied by the teachers. It seemed that a lack of time and frightening evaluation forms would hinder the pupils experiencing pleasure in the reading.

This study has indicated that the university and the upper secondary are on two completely different paths as far as the use of literature is concerned. The transition from the upper secondary to university is a field that has been subject to little research and consequently there is little connection between the two. The university appears to be something that the teachers are not conscious about and initially the teachers seemed to be struggling to find possible challenges that new students can meet. However, a limited vocabulary and a heavy text load at university were factors that many of the teachers featured as challenges in the transition.

All the teachers were interested in more communication between the institutions although they acknowledged that there should be a certain abstraction between them. More visits and more discussion across the system they believed would contribute to making the challenges of the transition more visible and in the future providing lecturers with more

insight into what pupils bring to university in terms of reading and literature experiences. Similarly, it would provide teachers and the pupils in the upper secondary with more knowledge on what is required and expected at university level.

Because the teachers have very little knowledge about the teaching at university, the study has shown that there are taken very few measures in the upper secondary in order to prepare pupils for higher education. Although the teachers asserted that more reading had to be conducted in the upper secondary school, the most apparent finding is that which shows that the teaching of reading strategies are more or less absent in the upper secondary English subject.

The use of literature in the upper secondary in relation to the transition to university is a young field of research in Norway. The findings in this study suggest that there is a need for more and closer research into topics relating to the use of literature and the transition to university. It is seen as highly important that more research is done on the use of reading strategies. It may also prove valuable to the field that research on reading strategies includes other methods of data collection. A quantitative study targeting a larger sample of teachers could provide a greater insight into this aspect of English teaching. Furthermore, the alarming rejection among 3rd grade pupils to take the literature course calls for studies on why literature is important and why it should be emphasised in school. Studies on how to build readers and reading cultures are also seen as necessary in order to strengthen the position of literature in school.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview guide

Opening remarks

This interview is done for the sole purpose of obtaining data for my Masters Thesis. All informants and their schools will remain anonymous. In order for me to be able to accurately refer back to the interview session, the interviews are recorded and later transcribed into written summaries.

I am looking at the transition from the upper secondary to the university, with a specific focus on literature. How is literature taught in the upper secondary school and what is done in order to promote reading among pupils. I will not point any fingers and my focus will not be on finding out whether or not the informant is doing his or her job correctly.

Background

1. How many years of English teaching experience do you have?
2. What qualifications do you have in English in higher education?
3. Do you have a teacher training background or a university background?
4. Have you attended any in-service courses?
 - a. In that case, any courses relating to literature?
 - b. Where they meaningful?

Opening questions

1. How would you say that you use literature in your teaching?
2. Do you think there is enough focus on the teaching of literature in the upper secondary?
3. Do you have in mind the fact that you are preparing pupils for further studies at university level?
 - a. What do consider as important for preparing pupils for further studies?

- b. What do you actually do to prepare pupils?
- 4. Are you familiar with the term “extensive reading”?
 - a. Do you use an extensive reading programme?
 - b. Who decides what is going to be read?

Reading habits

1. What do you read for pleasure during your spare time?
2. How much time do you spend reading during a week?

Materials

1. What kinds of materials do you use in your teaching?
2. Do you use a textbook?
 - a. How important is the textbook in your teaching?
 - b. How often do you use the textbook in your teaching?
 - c. What do you think of the quality of the textbook?
3. How do you go about choosing other literary material for the class?
 - a. Do you cooperate with other teachers on this?

Teaching practices

1. Do you use literary texts in your teaching?
 - a. What kinds of texts?
 - b. What are the main reasons that you use literary texts?
2. How much time is spent reading in your English lessons during a week?
 - a. What do the pupils read?
 - b. How do they read? Individually, out loud or in groups?
3. How often does your class work with a literary text?
 - a. How do you go through a text with your pupils?
 - b. What is your main focus?
 - c. What genres and other literary features do you focus on?

Homework

1. Are pupils expected to do homework during the week?

- a. In that case, what do they usually have for homework?
- b. Do they have an explicit plan that says what is to be done at home?

Resources

1. What do you think about the KL06?
2. What do you think about the fact that it is very open to interpretation in terms of literature teaching?

Final comments from the informant

Appendix 2

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



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N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
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Org.nr. 985 321 884

Brita Strand Rangnes
Institutt for kultur- og språkvitenskap Universitetet i Stavanger
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4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 06.11.2013

Vår ref: 36036 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 24.10.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

36036	<i>The transition from the upper secondary to university: practices and conceptions of the teaching of literature</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Brita Strand Rangnes
Student	Ane Herigstad

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillende kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.05.2014, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrr.svarva@svt.ntnu.no
TROMSØ: NSD, SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@sv.uit.no

Appendix 3

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

”The Position and Use of Literature in the Norwegian Upper Secondary and the Transition to University”

Bakgrunn og formål

Dette prosjekt er en masteroppgave ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Formålet med denne studien er å se på overgangen fra videregående til universitet når det gjelder litteraturundervisning i engelskfaget. Problemstillingene som vil bli behandlet i studien er følgende: Hvordan oppfatter lærere i den norske videregående skolen litteraturens stilling i engelskfaget og hvilken praksis er tatt i bruk i litteraturundervisning? Hva er utfordringene i overgangen mellom videregående og universitet og hvilke grep er tatt for å forberede elever til videre studier?

Utvalget er blitt til ved at studenten har tatt kontakt med ulike skoler og forhørt seg om deres interesse av å være med i studien.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltakelse i studien går ut på at intervjuobjektet tar del i et semi-strukturert intervju. Dette krever aktiv deltakelse. Intervjuobjektet bestemmer hvilket språk intervjuene skal gjøres på. Hvert intervju regnes til å ta mellom 45-55 minutter. Spørsmålene vil i hovedsak omhandle lærerens praksis i engelskundervisning, hvordan litteratur blir brukt og hvorfor, overgangen til universitet, bruk av læreplan, forventninger til elever, deres egne lesevaner, kort om utdanningslengde og år i læreryrket. Dataene registreres ved hjelp av lydopptak.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun studenten og veileder vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet. Informantenes navn vil erstattes med pseudonymer, slik at de ikke er identifiserbare.

Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 15.05.14. Opptak vil da bli slettet. Ingen personopplysninger er tilgjengelige da alt er anonymt

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Ane Herigstad på tlf. 92867448.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at opplysninger om meg kan innhentes fra

helsepersonell/ fastlege/register

**Jeg samtykker til at personopplysninger kan publiseres/ lagres etter
prosjektslutt]**